



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1982

NUMBER 1

Jesus And Preaching

W. A. HOLLEY

Jesus was and is the greatest preacher who ever lived. He, in his sermons and teaching, relied upon the Sacred Scripture. How wonderful it would be if all preachers followed the example of Jesus in their preaching!

That preacher who does not rely upon the Scriptures is not a gospel preacher, no matter how eloquent he may be. When one hears a sermon that is filled with quotations from men, he is listening to a man who may be able to tickle his ears, but he is not hearing the word of God preached (II Timothy 4:1-8). A preacher cannot preach the word without preaching the word!

Jesus relied upon the Scriptures to prove his Messiahship, saying: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:43-47).

When Jesus faced Satan and temptation, Jesus used the Scripture to turn aside his thrusts. Following Jesus' baptism the devil sought to bring Jesus into subjection to his demands. The devil tempted Jesus three times and three times Jesus refused to bow to Satan's overtures, saying, "It is written" (Matthew 4:1-11). Notice that Jesus quoted the Scripture to Satan. If we wish to resist sin and temptation, we hide the word of God in our hearts, keeping it ever ready to hurl from us Satan's methods (Psalms 119:11; I Corinthians 10:13).

In preaching, Jesus referred to David, Jonah, Lot's wife, the Queen of Sheba, the men of Nineveh, Abraham, Moses, etc. He was thus corroborating and confirming the Old Testament record (Luke 11:29-32; Matthew 12:38-42).

One of the finest examples which shows Jesus' respect and reverence for the Scriptures is found in Luke 4:16-21. These verses show Jesus, in the city of

Nazareth, entering a synagogue, where "there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down" What a marvelous

picture here portrayed for all the world to see!!

Jesus, in his preaching, spake Scripture. His last words to suffering humanity are found in the records of the Great Commission, four in number: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:22-23. Listen to the preaching of Jesus. Believe what he says, repent of your sins, and be baptized in his name for remission of sins. When you do this, the wonderful promises of God are yours. Do not wait; Do it today. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

A Tribute To Christian Parents On Their 50th Wedding Anniversary

VIRGINIA PHILLIPS

On January 2, 1932, in Lamar County, Alabama, Lonnie J. Randolph and Ruby C. Tate were united in marriage. To this union were born four daughters: Peggy, Virginia, Tallulah and Linda, and two sons: Douglas and Kenneth. One daughter, Tallulah R. May, passed from this life on December 26, 1963.

This tribute comes from a heart filled to overflowing with love and thanksgiving to God for such parents and to our parents for the riches and blessing of a happy childhood.

Having begun their married life and family during the depression years, Daddy and Mother have known hard times. Daddy made a living for us by cutting pulpwood and sharecropping (with one arm). Mother worked hard in the cotton fields along with the children who were old enough to work. Thinking back, their love and concern for us stand out more vividly than any deprivations we may have suffered.

Daddy lost his right arm when only a boy of twelve years. Yet, he always worked and did anything anyone else could do. We children hardly even noticed that he didn't have two arms.

Daddy and Mother taught us many valuable

lessons. One of which was that there is no dishonor in being poor, but rather there is honor in work. We learned early in life the joy of reading — perhaps as a result of Mother's reading the funnies to us from the daily newspaper. They taught us to be fair and truthful in our dealings with others. We learned, painfully, that there is punishment for wrong doing. We were taught to go to school regularly, study hard and do our best. Through their sacrificial lives, all six children finished high school; four completed at least two years of work in a Christian College, one of these earning a degree. Daddy and Mother taught us to honor God and his word — partly through the practice of making us sit down on Sunday mornings to listen to brother Gus Nichols, or some other gospel preacher, on the radio. Perhaps most important was that we always felt secure and loved. Daddy came to each of us after we were tucked in bed and kissed us goodnight.

We were not carried to worship regularly until the three oldest children were in high school. However,

Continued on page 2

Words Of Truth
 (USPS 691-760)
 "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
 — Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
 1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
 FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
 P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
 RON HARPER Circulation Manager
 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

A Tribute To Christian Parents

Continued from page 1

the training we received at home was a good foundation for faithful Christian lives when we were older; all are now faithful children of God. One son-in-law and a son serve as deacons in the Lord's church. One son is a gospel preacher and Bible teacher at Alabama Christian College.

The other three sons-in-law are gospel preachers. Mother and Daddy have 16 grandchildren. All of them who are of age are faithful Christians; one is a gospel preacher.

While our parents were not perfect — and neither are their children — I will be eternally grateful to them for having given us the training that helped to mold our character and make us useful servants of God today. — Route 3, Box 337 Vernon, Ala. 35592.

The Lord's Supper

The shadow of the cross had fallen across the path of our Lord. His public ministry had come to a close. The final passover he would observe was approaching. The occasion was where Judas would leave to go and betray the Master. It was the event where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:17-20).

Jesus and his apostles met in "a large upper room" (Mk. 14:15) to keep the passover. Because in a few hours, he was going to die on the cross, it was an occasion of sadness, yet of sweetness.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IS BUILT AROUND THE LORD'S SUPPER. Paul and his company after leaving Philippi and came unto them to Troas in five

Continued on page 4



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

FROM
THE EDITOR

"He Had Compassion"

The words which form the title of this article were used by our Lord of the Samaritan we call good. They point up the basic difference between him and the priest and Levite who passed by without giving aid to the one who had fallen among thieves. Look at the statement in Luke 10:33,34: "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."



BOB DUNCAN

Worthy of note is the fact that what the Samaritan did he did, not because it was his duty, but because he had compassion. The word here rendered *compassion* occurs twelve times in the Greek New Testament, and each time it is translated by the same English word. The lord who forgave his servant a debt of ten thousand talents did so because he had *compassion* (Matthew 18:27). A man who wanted Jesus to cast a demon out of his son asked Jesus to have *compassion* (Mark 9:22). We are told that Jesus had *compassion* on the widow of Nain whose son was dead (Luke 7:13). And when the father of the prodigal son saw him coming when he was yet a great way off, he had *compassion* on him (Luke 15:20). The other occurrences of the word are in reference to what our Lord felt toward the multitudes because they were hungry, or because they were afflicted or diseased, or because they were as sheep having no shepherd.

Compassion is that feeling of care and concern for those who have fallen upon hard times, and it causes one to be disturbed to the point that he responds to effect a relief of those hard times. And this response is not from a sense of duty, but from a feeling of genuine pity and unrest over the misfortunes of another. This noble feeling is what caused the Samaritan to do what he did.

We live in a world which is largely void of compassion, and yet where true compassion is so sorely needed. Some of the saddest words ever written are recorded in Psalm 142:4: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." Have you ever had that feeling? There are aged men and women in lonely houses and apartments, in nursing homes and hospitals, all across the length and breadth of our nation who have concluded that no one really cares for them. Well, do we? Is a genuine feeling of pity and unrest really stirred within us by their loneliness?

What about those whose children are in trouble, like the man who asked Jesus to help him and his son? Do we have compassion on them?

Do we have compassion on those whose loved ones have died, as Jesus had compassion on the widow of Nain? We cannot raise the dead, as did Jesus, but we can make an effort to comfort and console, if we really have compassion.

What about our compassion for those who have gone into the depths of sin, and yet, having recognized their folly, have returned to ask our

forgiveness? Do we, like the father of the prodigal son, have compassion on them? Do we run forth to meet them, throw our arms around them, and seek to help them mend their broken hearts?

Do our hearts really go out to the sick and the hungry, as did the great heart of our Savior? Do we have compassion on them? Yes, there are some unworthy of help. There were some who ate of the loaves and fishes provided by the miracle of Jesus who were unworthy also (John 6:26), but Jesus had compassion on them nevertheless. It is a great mistake to put one in charge of the church's benevolent program who is unfeeling toward those in need.

And what about those who are lost — those who are "as sheep having no shepherd"? Do we really care? Is there a feeling of tender pity for them because they have no claim upon salvation and the blessings that accompany it? If we have compassion on them, like the Samaritan had, why do we treat them like the priest and the Levite treated the man who had fallen among thieves? We pass them by without making any effort to rescue them from their lost condition.

Having compassion can be very inconvenient. It was in the case of the Samaritan. It can be very time consuming. That may be the reason the priest and Levite had no compassion on the man who had fallen among thieves. Perhaps they were extremely pushed for time, and had no time for compassion.

Having compassion can also be expensive. It cost the Samaritan to do what he did. We have no reason to believe he was ever repaid in the coin of this world for expenses incurred in caring for this poor unfortunate. Perhaps it was the tight budget of the priest and the Levite which prevented their having compassion.

But now, nearly two thousand years after Jesus gave this account, the priest and the Levite are infamous for their lack of compassion. The Samaritan, on the other hand, is immortalized on the pages of the Bible as one who had compassion, and is universally acclaimed in every generation as being good.

Be Not Righteous Over Much

Man universally tends to extremes in religion. Only with special effort can a man abide in the middle road of truth avoiding the twin ditches of legalism and liberalism.

The wise man Solomon advises us, "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself" (Eccl. 7:16). The Scripture presents numerous examples of people who in their quest for holiness denied themselves that which God allowed, and made for themselves rules more strict than God's.

God commanded one day of fasting each year (Lev.

Continued on page 4



JOHN WADDEY

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

(No. 3)

At this time we continue with our investigation relative to our facing and overcoming daily temptations. Be it recalled that in previous studies we stressed that temptation and sin are not synonymous terms. Temptation comes first. We either yield or resist. The yielding constitutes the sin; the resisting means no sin has been committed and thus we have been strengthened for the next ordeal. We suggested that not every



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

man is tempted in the same way. Temptations also vary at different periods in one's life. Mention was made that temptations are common and universal to all people. A great preacher was once ready to leave a certain city that he had found to be so full of sin. He said to some of his acquaintances that he was going to do something to that town that the devil had never done. When asked what, he replied, "Leave town." The implication was that Satan had never left town. Such can be said of every town and city on the face of God's green footstool. The Bible says in Luke 4:13, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." A Christian man once contemplated that verse and said in essence, "The Bible says that Satan departed from Jesus for a season. In this I am not like the Savior. Satan has never departed from me for a season." This was simply his way of suggesting that he faced temptations of one kind or another every day. My friends, are you pondering carefully at this point? Is it not that way with you and me each day that we live? Like Paul in I Corinthians 9:27 we have to keep under our buffet our bodies lest we fall and ultimately be rejected from the heavenly reward.

In our overcoming of daily temptations let us view the matter negatively first and then take a look at the matter within a positive framework. We cannot overcome daily temptation if we pitch our tent toward Sodom and allow Sodom to come into our hearts and lives as happened to Lot and his family in the ancient past. Lot made a disastrous decision as far as his family was concerned. The Bible tells us in Genesis 13:12,13, "Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Lot was in somewhat of a little different situation than we face in our world today. He had to *pitch* or *move* his tent to Sodom. Now Sodom has moved to us; it is all around us. There is really nowhere else to pitch one's tent than in Sodom in our evil era. Therefore we have to decide whether to let Sodom come into our lives or keep it out. Sodom was and is the way of sinful pleasure. Sodom was and is the way of perversion. Sodom was and is the way of homosexuality. Sodom was and is the way of pride. Sodom was and is the way of filthy communications. Sodom was and is the way of lasciviousness. Sodom was and is the way of Satanic domination. Will any deny that such surrounds us on every hand? How did all this affect Lot nearly four thousand years ago? How did it affect his family? Peter gives us an inspired insight into its disastrous effects upon Lot. He wrote in II Peter 2:6-8, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed

his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)." Though Lot basically retained his righteous deportment and character among such vile and wicked sinners, his family did not fare so well at all. A consideration of all the evidence in the book of Genesis leads us to form the belief that a part of his family were left behind in burning Sodom. Counting himself, only four of the family left in obedience to the angelic instructions given him in haste and urgency. His wife disobeyed God in the fleeing process and became an instant pillar of salt. Later his two daughters succeeded in getting Lot, their own father, drunk on two different occasions and each committed incest with him and he fathered a child by each one. When Lot moved to Sodom much of Sodom moved into the hearts of his family. Even Lot did not come out totally untouched by all this enormous evil he witnessed there daily. We cannot overcome daily temptations when we move into a position that makes it very easy for Sodom to come into our homes, hearts and lives.

We cannot overcome daily temptation if we, like David, in a night of weakness and idleness, look upon a beautiful woman, lust after her in heart and ultimately commit adultery with her. This is what happened long after David was a grown man; long after he had become the Shepherd king; long after he had been designated as the man after God's own heart. Second Sammuell, the eleventh chapter, tells this sordid story, the blackest in the life of an otherwise illustrious man. His crime is all the more inexcusable when we realize that David had a number of wives, any one of which he could have spent the night with for the satisfaction of his aroused physical desires. But like many a man or woman today he turned from a relationship that God would have smiled upon and engaged in an ugly episode that God surely frowned upon and that caused a stench in the nostrils of every righteous person in all Israel and throughout his entire family framework. People commit the same sins in our day. A man will leave the companionship of his own wife where the smiles of Heaven would approve of what they did in the warm embrace of marital love and will seek out an illicit relationship that God frowns upon and all righteous people deplore. Many a woman will do the same. She will leave the companionship of her own husband where her marital bed is without defilement and will seek for the pleasure of an illicit night spent in infamy and sinful vice. She will risk exposure of her sin and the destruction of home, name, family and everything she once counted as dear and precious for a few minutes of sinful interlude. Many of these sins are begun by men and women who frequent the very types of environment where such is triggered. I have reference to honky tonks, night spots, X-rated and R-rated movies, dance situations or the modern beach resorts where the "bare" season encourages lascivious thinking and ultimately immoral escapades of fornication and adultery. Looking and lusting after bathing beauties is not the way to overcome daily temptation. Looking and lusting after men with handsome features and athletic builds is not the way for women to overcome daily temptations. And all the looking and lusting after those of the opposite sex is not on the part of men by any means.

We cannot overcome daily temptation if we associate eagerly and willingly with those of wicked dispositions and sinful habits. Except to try and help these people to overcome their vicious habits we should never associate with them. And we should never have fellowship with them in their sinful deeds. The powerful book of Psalms is prefaced with the practical point, "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. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3). Couched in these weighty words is priceless wisdom that most of the world knows nothing about in our evil day. In the opening chapter of Proverbs the wisest of the ages, Solomon, said it so well: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path . . ." (Prov. 1:10-15). This has been a part of God's recipe for overcoming daily temptation and avoiding sin for some three thousand years and it is still very applicable today. The New Testament says it so well: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Paul told the easily swayed Corinthians, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33). — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The "Non-Smoking" Section

In recent years many of the finer restaurants have divided their dining areas into two areas, one for smokers and one for non-smokers. This same practice has been observed by the airlines for a number of years. When one enters the restaurant or purchases an airline ticket the hostess or ticket agent, depending on one's objective, will ask, "Smoking or Non-smoking?" Whereupon one makes his choice and follows the rules without disturbance.



BILL CLAYTON

In contrast to the above some Christians (?) appear to lose their Christianity when asked, in essence, the same question (i.e., "Smoking or Non-smoking?"). The response, by the Christian (?), when asked this question leads one to believe he (the smoker) has more love, concern, and respect for the airline or the restaurant than he does for the Lord's church.

Can you imagine the smoker boarding the airplane and sitting very peacably in the "Non-smoking" section, and then suddenly he decides the rules are not for him. He lights up and those around begin to object. Whereupon, the smoker immediately begins to recruit sympathy. Not only does he recruit sympathy, but he through various means, begins to destroy the airplane from within. He will use about any means available to convince those with whom he is flying, that the airline has no right to make rules against smoking — after all he claims to have his rights. Some, it would appear, just do not have respect for the rules of God or man.

God, by means of Paul to Timothy, has stated some

Continued on page 4

The Lord's Supper

Continued from page 2

days; where we tarried seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:6-7). Many today do not do what they came together to do. That is they have lost the spirit of the worship of the first century. All items of worship except the Lord's supper are observed.

One objection that is presented is "observing the Lord's supper makes it common and it loses its meaning." The truth is absence does not make the heart grow fonder. The divorce rate is much higher among couples who are separated from each other long periods at a time. Parents send their daughter to another location and successfully stop her from seeing an objectionable boy. The more we commune with Christ the closer the communion becomes. With four meaningful words we shall describe it.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A MEMORIAL. In directing the church at Corinth in its observance Paul said, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

It is not a memorial of granite, marble, gold or silver. It is a memorial that the poorest of people can afford and in which they can participate. The fruit of the vine is a fitting representation of the blood of Christ. This is true also of the bread as it exemplifies the body of Christ.

IT IS A COMMUNION. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10:16). A communion brings us into a more intimate relationship with the person with whom we commune.

The communion is two fold in nature: (1) We commune with the Lord. He is a silent and unseen communicant at the table. It is the Lord's table. When Jesus had instituted his supper he added, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). The church and the kingdom are synonymous (Matt. 16:18-19). (2) We commune with each other. Paul urged, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (I Cor. 11:33). A time needs to be set on the Lord's day to come together to commune with each other and the Lord.

IT IS A PROCLAMATION. Paul said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). The death of Jesus is the highest expression of God's love — the depth of it, the breadth of it, the height of it, and the length of it. All men should know of this matchless love. In taking the Lord's supper we show or proclaim to the world the love of God. Though silent, it is a powerful proclamation.

IT IS AN ANTICIPATION. The expression "till he come" refers to the final appearance of Christ to man on the earth. The sacred supper turns our thoughts also to the future. "Till he come" is an expression of faith and hope.

The observance of the Lord's supper should be preceded by a self-examination. In setting in order the Lord's supper in the church at Corinth Paul taught, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (I Cor. 11:28). Let each person ask himself: (1) "Am I in the kingdom?" The table is there (Lk. 22:29-30). (2) "Have I life?" The dead do not sit at feasts. (3) "Have I known the Lord?" If not, how can I eat and drink in his memory? (4) "Am I clean?" How unbecoming to eat with filthy hands! Penitence and prayer should precede the observance. (5) "Have I appetite?" Unless we delight in the feast, it will not profit. (6) "Am I aware of the Lord's presence?" He eats and drinks with us, adding to the sweetness of the

occasion.

May we realize the importance of the Lord's supper. It is imperative to realize the Christian must

observe the Lord's supper each week on the Lord's day (the first day of the week). — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Be Not Righteous Over Much

Continued from page 2

16:29-31), but the Pharisees fasted twice weekly (Lk. 18:12). God's law forbade servile work on the Sabbath day (Deut. 5:12-15), but the Pharisees would even forbid a physician from ministering to a sick person (John 9:13-16). These efforts of the Pharisees were failures on several counts. Such super efforts bring no special blessing or recognition from God. All such righteousness is as filthy garments (Is. 64:6). They violated God's word by daring to add their own laws onto his (Prov. 30:6). They often made void God's commands by their traditions, and in so doing, their worship was declared vain (Matt. 15:6,9). In their strictness over excessive practices, they were seeking the recognition of their peers. Such was their only reward, for God would not accept it (Matt. 6:5).

SOME MODERN DAY EXAMPLES

To avoid doing something wrong, some do nothing at all. This was the mistake of the one-talent man (Matt. 25:24-30). This attitude has hobbled multitudes of churches and kept them from reaching out to evangelize the world for the Lord. For fear of cooperating in a wrong way, many churches do not cooperate at all. Fearing they will use a sinful method, many make no attempt to minister to the unfortunate.

To avoid being "denominational" many have denied themselves valuable tools and methods in doing God's work that are harmless in themselves. Some brethren refused to use the class method of teaching Scripture because the sects used it. Others refused to use individual containers for communion. Still others refused to have gospel preachers to avoid the denominational pastor system. All of the above are authorized by generic authority in the New Testament. While it does not make one any less a Christian to deny himself their use, it does limit and hinder his degree of success in the Lord's work. And in most cases, those who so thought were not content just to deny themselves, they sought to bind their restraints upon others. This was and is clearly condemned (Jas. 4:11-12).

To avoid being "worldly" some would be more strict than God. While many movies are sensual and degrading, not all are that way. Yet some would forbid Christians from seeing even a "Walt Disney" family movie. The same applies to television. Wisdom would suggest that we censor out the bad and enjoy the good.

In opposing the sin of mixed swimming in immodest apparel, some have concluded that all swimming is wrong.

In their zeal against beverage alcohol and drug abuse, some would oppose the use of medicines that contain alcohol or pain controlling agents.

While opposing the immodesty of women wearing short-shorts, some have condemned women wearing pants.

Some brethren, seeing the dangers of false philosophy and intellectualism, have opposed advanced education altogether. Not only have they rejected it themselves, they have questioned those who have pursued such, even though their faith was untainted. The student of Proverbs knows that God puts no premium on ignorance. Paul was a highly educated man (Acts 22:3). A gospel preacher surely needs all of the knowledge he can get in the work.

In opposing some abuses among our people, some would reject an otherwise good activity or idea. For

example: reacting to some problems in our Christian schools, some would shut them down. They evidently have not considered what option this would leave for their children's education. Some brethren see the abuses of "the prayer partner" practice which others are using. In reaction to these abuses, they end up opposing two Christians praying together. God forbid that we should ever discourage anyone from praying. A similar reaction is seen to the "soul talks" that have stirred controversy. It is one thing to oppose an abuse, it is altogether different to oppose Christians studying the Bible with each other or non-Christians. We have been encouraging folks to do that for years. How can we consistently oppose it?

SOME PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

If one wishes to limit himself in some non-essential area, he has that privilege. Paul did that (I Cor. 8:13). But he has no right to impose his restrictions on others (Rom. 14:2-4).

It is not necessary for me to try to be stricter than God has demanded. It does not impress God and it doesn't help me. It might make my neighbors think I am foolish, and thus hurt my influence on them. (How many take the Amish folks seriously?)

It is often the case that in being righteous over much, we sin, for our fears keep us from doing the things God has assigned us to do. Thus, as the one-talent man, we stand condemned as a wicked and slothful servant (Matt. 25:14-30).

"Be not righteous over much . . . why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" — Route 22, Beaver Ridge Road Knoxville, TN 37921.

The "Non-Smoking" Section

Continued from page 3

of the rules for his people and in these rules clearly condemns ungodly influence and impure living (cf. I Tim. 4:12). Using the same instrument (the apostle Paul) God told the Corinthians that a Christian's body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit . . ." (I Cor. 6:19). Furthermore, the church is the body of Christ (cf. Eph. 1:22,23) which consists of individual members. It then follows that defilement of an individual member is defilement to the temple of God (cf. I Cor. 3:16,17). Paul wrote, very clearly, in verse seventeen, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

The Christian (?) smoker defiles his body ("the temple of the Holy Spirit") by smoking, and this defilement is injurious to the whole church. The smoking Christian's (?) influence is neutralized and that of the church is weakened. This is evidenced even more so by the smoker and his agents as he takes his place in the congregation and begins to flex his muscles as he sows seeds of discord. This, I am sure, is divisive and a march toward worldliness, through toleration, by those from within (cf. Acts 20:29,30).

The church has no authority for a "Smoking" section. On the contrary, the church has authority for a "Non-Smoking" section, for the abstainer from tobacco and the sower of seeds of righteousness. Will the destroyers of the temple ever learn this side of judgment? — 1815 Glencrest Av., Yazoo City, Ms. 39194.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble, but speak forth
the Words of Truth and soberly."
— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 1982

NUMBER 2

Words Of Truth Index — 1981

(It is hoped that the following index will be helpful to those who may be permanently filing *Words of Truth*. Each author is listed alphabetically, and then each article by that author is listed under his name in chronological order. The numbers in parentheses denote the month and day of the issue in which the article was published. — Editor)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship (9-18)
- Preachers of Today* (3-27)
- The Fort Worth Lectures (12-18)

ANONYMOUS

- The Preacher's Salary — An Appeal to Elders (3-27)

BAILEY, Hoyt

- Ahab's Illicit Covetousness (3-6)
- Bad Habits vs. Self-Control (3-20)
- It Is Right For Us To Obey (5-8)
- The Course of Sin (6-26)
- Believe In Greater Accomplishments (7-10)
- Divine Discipline (9-18)

BASS, Mark

- Spiritual Malnutrition (3-20)
- Will They Never Learn (7-3)

BRADFORD, Virgil

- Off Again, On Again, Gone Again (7-3)

BRAMLETT, Jerry T.

- Preaching And Observations (6-26)
- The Kingdom (7-24)
- Why I Preach (8-21)

BURKETT, Rocky W.

- Bearing The Reproach Of Christ? (6-19)

CAMP, Franklin

- A Christian Cares (3-6)
- Brother Blazer Says, "Thanks" (4-17)

CHILDERS, Tom

- \$10,000 Reward (8-21)

CLARK, Winfred

- If The Church Does Not Matter (1-30)
- "What Thou Oughtest To Do" (5-22)
- One Thing Can Make A Big Difference (8-21)
- The Expositor (8-21)

COBB, Wayne

- Think Of These Things (1-16)
- The Call To Repentance (2-20)
- Immortality (5-8)
- The Center Of The Christian Life (6-26)
- The Soul Of Man (7-17)
- Happiness In The Home (9-25)
- Whatever Happened To Justice? (10-30)
- Fornication And Its Causes (12-25)

COLLEY, Glenn

- When In Rome . . . Do As The Romans? (3-27)

COLLIER, Dave

- Unity Restored At Cross Plains (6-5)

COURINGTON, David

- Would You Give Your Child Away? (10-2)

CUNNINGHAM, Barry H.

- A Minute For The Master (1-2)
- A Minute For The Master (1-23)
- A Minute For The Master (1-30)
- A Minute For The Master (3-6)
- A Minute For The Master (4-3)
- A Minute For The Master (4-17)
- A Minute For The Master (5-22)

DAVIS, Roger, Jr.

- Do You Pray For The Hostages? (1-16)
- Caring One For Another (2-13)
- Don't Play With Fire! (2-27)
- How To Be A Survivalist (3-27)
- "That's The Most Bible I've Heard In A Year" (4-10)

DFTORO, Paul J.

- "Doctrine Is Not Important" (3-20)

DOWDY, Curtis

- Learning The Value (2-27)
- The Life Principle Of Faith (4-24)
- The True Vine (7-24)
- Some Thoughts On Praising The Lord (9-11)
- Revelation And Confirmation (9-18)
- Christian Be Watchful (10-2)
- The Law Of Giving And Receiving (11-6)

DUNCAN, Bob

- Why Preachers Choose To Move (1-2)
- Building A Doctrine Upon An Obscure Passage (1-9)
- Have Ye Not Read? (1-16)
- One Of The Best Men . . . (1-23)
- Drinking To Avoid Alcoholism (1-30)
- Moral Purity (2-6)
- W. C. Quillen (1913-1981) (2-13)
- This Ointment Might Have Been Sold (2-20)
- A Question About The Lord's Supper (2-27)
- These Things (3-6)
- Can A Woman Speak In A Bible Class? (3-13)
- The Number 1 Problem (3-20)
- A Question About Withdrawing Fellowship (3-27)
- Two New Journals Begin Publication (4-3)
- Problems Of The Sexual Revolution (4-10)
- Man's Fall And Redemption* Theme Of Lectureship (4-17)
- "If Any Would Not Work" (4-24)
- Masada (5-1)
- "Curse Ye Meroz" (5-8)
- When Did You Last Attend A Funeral? (5-15)
- Some Observations On Matthew 19 (5-22)
- Infant Baptism (5-29)
- The Shooting Of The Pope (6-5)
- The Influence Of Children (6-12)
- New Theory On Early Earth (6-19)
- "Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind" (6-26)
- Procter & Gamble Throws In Towel (7-3)
- To All Who Write (7-10)
- Paul's Wish For False Teachers (7-17)
- Excluding The Excellent (7-24)

Continued on Page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



FROM
THE EDITOR

Words Of Truth Begins Nineteenth Year

Eighteen years ago this past December 6 the first issue of *Words of Truth* was published. With few exceptions it was published every Friday except those Fridays following fourth Sundays — or about forty eight times a year — for the next thirteen years. In May of 1976 it was decided that *Words of Truth* would be published every week in the year, instead of skipping those Fridays following fifth Sundays. Since that time it has been published fifty-two times every year;



BOB DUNCAN

and this year it will be published fifty-three times unless something unforeseen happens, for there are fifty-three Fridays in 1982.

Words of Truth is one of the very few brotherhood periodicals still being published on a weekly basis. And the cost is still an unbelievably low eleven cents per issue, mailed directly to each subscriber. This is why a number of congregations see fit to send each family in the congregation the paper. It actually costs less in many cases than the cost of sending their own church bulletin to each family. This is not to say that congregations should send *Words of Truth* instead of their own church bulletin; it is to say rather that the paper can be an effective tool to be used along with the church bulletin, and to supplement the preaching which is done from the pulpit.

We are dedicated to publishing only those articles which teach the truth. We make a special effort also to publish articles on a variety of subjects, written by outstanding preachers of the gospel. But one does not have to be well known for his articles to be published. Each article is selected on its own merits, and not on the basis of who wrote it.

Most of our articles are relatively short. We live in a busy world, and many people will not or cannot take the time to read lengthy articles. But they can and will read shorter articles.

An effort is made to deal with current problems in the church, but not to deal exclusively with problems. We are convinced that most of the problems in the church could be avoided if members of the church could be sufficiently taught. Elderships would do well to see that at least one sound gospel paper is placed into the hands of each church member every week. This will help keep them informed and avoid their being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

Words of Truth has nothing to sell, no business to maintain or promote, no prospect of making a profit, no investment of money to be guarded. Such being the case, there is no temptation to cater to any person or any party. The only reason the paper exists is to accomplish all the good it possibly can.

Words of Truth is owned by the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama, whose reputation for soundness has been recognized for many years. The editorship of the paper is under the direction and oversight of the eldership of the congregation.

We solicit the prayers of faithful brethren as we proceed in our nineteenth year of publication.

A Tennessee husband gave his wife the following instructions when teaching her how to drive his car: "Go on green, stop on red, slow down when I turn white."

No one ever stumbled onto anything worthwhile while sitting down.

Dignity is often a mask we wear to hide our ignorance.

Even if you are on the right track, you may get run over if you sit there long enough.

Among the few things more expensive than an education these days is the lack of it.

Words Of Truth Index — 1981

Continued from page 1

"Communal Worship" (7-31)

The Fearful (8-7)

Abraham And Lot (8-14)

1981 GNWOT Lectureship (8-21)

A Little Leaven (8-28)

Interesting Admissions (9-4)

Rex Turner To Be Honored (9-11)

The Love Of Money (9-18)

Sound Conclusions — Faulty Reasoning (9-25)

"The Wolf Shall Dwell With The Lamb" (10-2)

Dictating Moral Convictions (10-9)

"If Not Us, Who? If Not Now, When?" (10-16)

"Why Do You Ask?" (10-23)

Which Is Worse? (10-30)

NBC's Instant Cure (11-6)

The Love Chapter (11-13)

Amos & Amaziah (11-20)

"His Grace . . . Was Not In Vain" (11-27)

The Order Of Baptism And Salvation (12-4)

Have You Made Your Will? (12-11)

"I Changed My Mind" (12-18)

Stealing Hearts (12-25)

ELAM, Demar

"I Can't See Any Purpose In Baptism!" (7-10)

How Do We Appoint Elders? (8-28)

ELLIOT, Raymond

Hostages Freed (1-30)

Praying For The Dead (2-27)

More Is Better? (3-13)

Eli, A Good Man But A Bad Father (4-10)

"Which One?" (5-1)

Love "Believeth All Things" (6-1)

Christ Sent Me Not To Baptize (5-15)

Now That I Am A Christian (5-22)

"Set Thy House In Order" (5-29)

The Disciples' Prayer No. 1 (6-12)

The Disciples' Prayer No. 2 (6-19)

The Disciples' Prayer No. 3 (6-26)

The Disciples' Prayer No. 4 (7-3)

The Disciples' Prayer No. 5 (7-10)

"Keep Thyself Pure" (7-31)

The Man From Ethiopia (8-7)

Doing Evil That Good May Abound? (9-25)

The Great Physician (10-2)

Attitudes Behind Translations (10-9)

What Happened To The Brazen Serpent? (10-16)

Heal The Handicapped (10-23)

Are All The Children In? (11-6)

Attacks On The Christian Home (11-20)

Attacks On The Christian Home No. 2 (11-27)

Attacks On The Christian Home No. 3 (12-4)

Performing Surgery On The Sword Of The Spirit (12-18)

FIKE, Barry

Evangelistic Success (7-24)

I Love My Wife (10-9)

Mine Would Never Do That (10-23)

Evangelizo Manifesto (11-27)

Evangelizo Manifesto No. II (12-4)

FLOURNOY, Dan

Peace On Earth? (12-25)

FULFORD, Hugh

Is The Alien Sinner Amenable To God's Spiritual Laws? (1-16)

Divine Directives For Abundant Living? (2-6)

Repentance Is A Universal Command Of God (3-20)

FULLER, James Roy

Time Stands Still (4-17)

Search And Research (5-22)

Victory (6-26)

Our Strength (10-2)

Deceitful Workers (10-30)

GRAY, Phillip

A New National Ethic? (1-23)

The Christian's Response To Immorality (2-13)

Who Is My Judge? (11-6)

Continued on page 3

Words Of Truth Index — 1981

Continued from page 2

- GRAY, R. W.**
 An Appeal To Pentecostals (1-30)
 Pride Goeth Before Destruction (2-20)
 What Is Truth? (4-24)
 Let Us Reason Together (5-8)
 A Place Of Safety (5-15)
 "Preach The Word" (8-7)
 Keeping Our Equilibrium (9-4)
 The Indestructable Kingdom (11-6)
 Christians And "Christmas" (12-25)
- GRAY, S. G.**
 Misunderstood Bible Words (1-2)
 The Parts That Make Up The Whole (1-23)
 Unrecorded Bible Stories (2-6)
 What The Preacher Expects From The
 Congregation (5-15)
 Abuses Of Authority (11-13)
- GRUBB, John M.**
 The Anniversary Of "Black Monday" (1-30)
 Catch-Phrases (2-13)
 Brother, Doctor, Reverend, Father (4-24)
 Come On In, The Water's Fine (7-31)
 The Silent Majority (8-28)
 Someone Has To Tell Him (10-16)
 We Need Our Young People! (10-30)
 The Foyer (11-20)
 Giving Thanks To God (11-27)
- HARPER, Ron**
 A Word Of Caution (1-2)
 Where Will It End (7-10)
- HARRIS, W. Douglass**
 Worship That Pleases God (3-13)
 God Hates Putting Away (6-5)
- HAWK, Ray**
 Mind Control (7-10)
- HAYES, Alton**
 The Father Of All Them That Believe (2-13)
 Christian Women Lose Again (2-27)
 Keeping The Ten Commandments (8-14)
- HENNESSEE, Winfrey**
 Forgetfulness A Blessing (6-19)
 Persistence (7-17)
 The Atheist And The Rose (10-2)
 Hands Tell A Story (10-23)
 Fence Mending (11-20)
 Complacency (12-11)
- HOLLEY, W. A.**
 The Great Need For The Christ And The Gospel
 (1-23)
 A Story So Forlorn, So Miserable (2-13)
 The Church Of Christ — What It Is Like (2-27)
 Must One Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ
 To Be Saved? (3-27)
 "What, Could Ye Not Watch With Me An Hour?"
 (4-3)
 Living So As To Love Life And See Good Days (4-24)
 A Wonderful Gospel Meeting (5-15)
 Worship In Spirit And In Truth (5-22)
 The Christian Priesthood (5-29)
 Is The Church Of Christ Essential To One's
 Salvation? (6-5)
 The Blood Of Christ (6-19)
 The Numeral One (8-7)
 The Virtue Of Godliness (8-14)
 The Wonderful Power Of The Word (9-11)
 Crime In The Streets (9-25)
 In The Land Of Wine (10-2)
 Successfully Navigating Life's Ocean (10-9)
 Jesus' Beatitudes vs. Satan's Beatitudes (10-30)
 The Second Annual Gus Nichols Words of Truth
- Lectureship (11-13)**
 "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" (11-20)
 The Purity Of The Church (11-27)
 Reverence (12-4)
 The Blunders Of Three Men (12-11)
 The Curse Of Gambling (12-18)
 Who Can And Who Cannot Be Saved? (12-25)
- JACKSON, Roger**
 Called Of God (10-9)
- JACKSON, Wayne**
 The "Design" Argument (5-8)
 The Route From Egypt To Canaan (5-29)
- JENKINS, Ancil**
 What Is A Man Profited . . . (1-2)
 The Prayer Of A Scientist's Mother (1-23)
 Lost (4-10)
 "Behold, I Thought . . ." (5-1)
 "Deadly Denial" (5-29)
 The Six Hundred Trillion Dollar Man (6-12)
 The Thrill Of Victory (6-19)
 Laborers Together (7-10)
 Honest? Honest? (7-31)
 A Belated Present (8-28)
 How Big A Fool Are You? (9-18)
 "History" Is "His Story" (10-23)
 "The Storm Without . . ." (10-30)
 "What Are We Giving Our Children (11-13)
 Filling The Cup (12-4)
 Courtesy (12-11)
- JONES, Edwin S.**
 Real Problems (5-8)
- KEARLEY, W. Edwin**
 Faith vs. Opinion (2-6)
 Understanding The Bible (3-13)
 Spiritual Integrity (4-17)
 The Law Of Moses vs. The Law Of Christ (5-22)
 Saving Faith (5-29)
 Repentance (6-5)
 Is Burial In Water Essential To Salvation Of The
 Soul? (6-19)
 Confession (7-10)
 Denominationalism (7-31)
 The Christian Life (8-21)
 Baptism Of The Great Commission (10-30)
 Unity In Faith Demanded (11-6)
 Worship Of God (11-20)
 Continuing Stedfastly In The Apostles' Doctrine
 (12-4)
 Is Jesus Coming Soon? (12-11)
 Giving As Worship (12-25)
- KEY, Dalton**
 The Godhead (1-2)
 Obeying From The Heart (1-23)
 A Few Reading Tips (3-6)
 A Thinking Religion (4-17)
 Smooth Things (5-15)
 Vacation Or Vocation? (5-22)
 Love For Jesus (6-26)
 What's In A Name? (7-17)
 Such Foolishness (8-14)
 The Tongue (9-25)
 Some Things Are Still Wrong! (10-16)
 The Drinking Problem (11-13)
 God's Powerful Word (11-13)
 From Thanksgiving to Thanks-Living (12-11)
 Especially For Fathers (12-25)
- KIDWELL, Paul Sr.**
 Seed Sowing — A Program Of Radio Evangelism
 (4-10)
 A New Church — The Electronic Church (5-15)
- KNIGHT, Kerry**
 The Rapture Is NOT In The Bible (5-15)
 I Corinthians 7 — Was It Merely Paul's Opinion
 (6-12)
- MAYO, L. W.**
 Mayo-Jenson Debate (11-13)
- McGEE, J. Pat**
 The Bible Still Says "Be Not Unequally Yoked . . ."
 (2-20)
- METHENY, D. Julian**
 The Worship Of Idols: The Past And The Present
 (2-6)
- MILLER, Eddie J.**
 Jesus Didn't Speak In Footnotes (9-18)
 A Crime By Any Other Name . . . (10-23)
- MILLIGAN, Doug**
 "Let Your Moderation Be Known . . ." (11-13)
- MURRELL, Don**
 "Stir Up What You Have" (4-17)
 The Abundant Life — The Life Of Overflow (5-8)
- NICHOLS, Gus**
 The Christian And Modest Apparel (6-12)
- NORRIS, Bobby**
 "You Might As Well Say It As To Think It" (12-11)
- PACE, Martel**
 Let God Be True Though Every Man A Liar! (8-7)
 The Wonderful Blessings Of Faith (11-20)
 We Must Die In Order To Live (11-27)
 We Must Die In Order To Live (No. 2) (12-4)
- PILGRIM, James**
 New Bible Series Announced (9-4)
- PRICHARD, Bob**
 Television Teaches What It Means To Be "Gay"
 (11-13)
- REED, George**
 A Confused People (2-13)
 What About Immodest Apparel? (7-17)
 Was God A Man? (9-11)
- REYNOLDS, Gerald R.**
 A Review Of Studies In Titus And Philemon (7-3)
- RICKARD, Rick**
 Are We Frightening Our Prospective Preachers?
 (5-1)
- ROSE, Earlene**
 Faults (3-13)
 A New Life (5-22)
 Childhood Dreams (6-12)
 Perfect Peace (7-31)
 A Merry Heart And A Happy Smile (11-13)
 As You Walk In Sorrow's Way (11-27)
- RYAN, Stanley R.**
 Marriage, Divorce And Remarriage (4-10)
- SEXTON, Arnold**
 The Baptism Of John (3-6)
- SHELLY, Rubel**
 How Much Is Marriage Worth? (5-29)
 Beverage Alcohol: Satanic Tool Of Destruction
 (9-11)
- STOUGH, Ron**
 Facing Criticism (3-20)

Continued on page 4

Words Of Truth Index — 1981

Continued from page 3

- SULLINS, J. R.
The Importance Of Planning (11-20)
- TAPPE, Craig
Conservatism vs. Liberalism (6-26)
- TAYLOR, Robert R., Jr.
Words Of Truth Editor To Speak At Voice Of Freedom Breakfast (1-9)
Lofty Goals Set For 1981 (1-9)
The Success Of New Testament Evangelism (4-3)
Premillennialism And "Christian Growth Guide" No. 1 (4-24)
Premillennialism And "Christian Growth Guide" No. 2 (5-1)
The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation No. 1 (12-18)
The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation No. 2 (12-25)
- THOMPSON, Bert
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 1 (1-2)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 2 (1-16)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 3 (1-23)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 4 (1-30)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 5 (2-13)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 6 (2-20)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 7 (2-27)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 8 (3-6)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 9 (3-13)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 10 (3-20)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 11 (3-27)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 12 (4-3)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 13 (4-10)
Creation Or Evolution — The Fossil Record Speaks! No. 14 (4-17)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 1 (7-17)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 2 (7-24)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 3 (7-31)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 4 (8-7)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 5 (8-14)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 6 (8-21)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 7 (8-28)
The Doctrine Of Special Creation No. 8 (9-4)
An Important Change In Evolutionary Thinking No. 2 (10-9)
An Important Change In Evolutionary Thinking No. 3 (10-16)
An Important Change In Evolutionary Thinking No. 4 (10-23)
An Important Change In Evolutionary Thinking No. 5 (10-30)
- TINER, John Hudson
Indifference Is The Number One Problem (2-20)
- VEST, Jimmy R.
The Grace Of God (2-6)
- WADDEY, John
Worthy Of Double Honor (2-6)
Frank Huber Jr. Passes (2-20)
Preaching That Changed The World (3-6)
EXPO 82 — Evangelism Opportunities (4-24)

- Handicapped (6-12)
The Proper Working Of Every Member (7-3)
A Father's Two Problem Sons (7-24)
Eroding Medical Ethics (8-28)
Should Infants Be Baptized? (10-2)
Feeding The Mind (10-16)
Ritualism (10-23)
The Burdens Of Being A Preacher (11-6)
Jesus, Lord And Master (11-27)
Happiness Sought And Found (12-11)

WALDRON, Jim E.
Every Man (7-3)

WALKER, Don

Not Only To Believe, But Also To Suffer! (5-1)

WEST, Dolores Raines
Who Shot J. R.? (6-19)

WILLIAMS, Don
Jesus — Who Is This Man? (3-20)
"Give Of Your Best To The Master" (12-25)

WINKLER, Dan
"I Can Know And Understand The Bible" (4-3)

WINKLER, Wendell
Our Giving Is A Spiritual Barometer (1-16)
The Fort Worth Lectures 1982 (10-23)

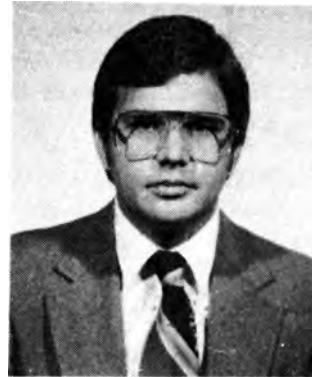
"Is It Wrong To Be Issue - Oriented?"

When the question is asked, "Is it wrong to be issue-oriented?" by the word "wrong" we mean "sinfully wrong" and by the term "issue-oriented" we mean "constantly concentrated on the major problems that face the church of Jesus Christ."

To clarify this question further we ask "Is it wrong for an elder, deacon, preacher or an individual Christian to be issue-oriented?" And even further involved we ask, "Is it wrong for our Christian colleges, preacher training schools and our gospel papers to be issue-oriented?" And even further involved we ask, "Is it wrong for our Christian colleges, preacher training schools and our gospel papers to be issue-oriented?" This author says, "No, it is not wrong to be issue-oriented as long as one does not become imbalanced in his view of and his presentation of the gospel."

The fact that every Christian is to be balanced in his view of and presentation of the gospel is clearly seen in Paul's statement rightly to divide the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings (cf. II Timothy 2:15-16). The true Christian is to be "not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). He is to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they "gender strifes" (II Timothy 2:23). His need of the correct concept of the gospel is that he might save his soul from sin (John 8:32), guard himself from false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), be set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17), earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3) and save others with the truth (I Timothy 4:16).

Each generation sees its share of church problems. These problems come from forces outside the church and many arise from within. These are actually assaults from Satan. His attacks upon the church come in every deceptive form he can conjure up. Leaders of the church have the awesome responsibility of informing, warning, and protecting the flock. The elders have this responsibility (cf. Acts 20:28). If a congregation has no elders then the more spiritually mature must do this. The pulpit must bring forth a balanced gospel proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Involved in that proclamation is the preacher's responsibility to withhold *nothing* that is profitable (Acts 20:20). Paul exposed the Judaizing



GARY L. GRIZZELL

false teachers, yet maintained himself as a balanced preacher. He exposed the false philosophy of the Colossian heresy and maintained his balanced view of the gospel. Although he concentrated heavily on the false apostles at Corinth and exposed them, he managed to maintain his balanced presentation of the gospel. Paul was issue-oriented! As one studies his epistles it can be seen that Paul's attention would continually allude back to the major problems facing the church. He knew where the front line was and wanted to stand and fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Yet today it can be heard, "Don't be issue-oriented, be gospel-oriented!" What these murmurers can't understand is that true gospel preaching is preaching that discusses, exposes, warns against and preaches the truth about the major problems facing the church. Brethren who will not be warned are like the ostrich who stuck his head in the ground and refused to come up. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and today problems such as the Crossroads heresy, liberalism, modernism, atheism, evolution, pentecostalism, premillennialism and marriage, divorce and remarriage are but a few that need discussion.

Every Christian should be "issue-oriented," and certainly the leaders of the church should be. Again, this is not to say that we should not be balanced. And it is certainly possible to be such without being a hobbyist as some would accuse. Is a soldier who concentrates on the enemies' weapons and attacks a hobbyist? Only in the sense of being an alert and prepared soldier! Brethren, we must be issue-oriented in the sense that we recognize the major assaults of Satan to our faith and do what is necessary to save ourselves and those around us. Beloved, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). — 7006 81 Street Tamarac, Florida 33319.

An educated person is one who knows how to be ignorant intelligently.

A loafer is one who continues to live even though he complains that he can't live on the wages he turns down.

May education never become as expensive as ignorance.

You can't make a hit with the bat on your shoulder.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691)

the

— set forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 1982

NUMBER 3

The Salvation Army

The young man or woman dressed in black standing by a red kettle and ringing bells has become a customary sight during the Christmas season. A shopper can hardly enter a department store or walk around a street corner without being asked to make a financial donation to his cause. To avoid feeling embarrassment and awkwardness at refusing to give, most make a donation and go on about their shopping. Such has become a distinctive identifying feature of the Salvation Army.



WAYNE COBB

Although the Salvation Army has become one of the nation's most widely recognized charitable organizations, few of the general public understand that the Salvation Army is a human religious organization unauthorized by the Bible. *The World Book Encyclopedia* describes the Salvation Army as a worldwide "religious body with semimilitary structure." Mr. Robert Bagley, the chief Salvation Army officer of Morgan, Limestone, and Lawrence counties of Alabama, called the Salvation Army "a church with a super welfare arm" (*The Decatur Daily*, Ap. 22, 1978). Recent news reports state that the Salvation Army has started its second century in America with a major campaign to make its spiritual mission as visible as its social programs. One of the goals of its "Second Century Advance" is to step up evangelism and recruitment. Since its founding in 1878 by William Booth, a revivalist preacher, the mission of the Salvation Army has been a religious mission.

The Salvation Army is a human religious institution which teaches many doctrines which are diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Word of God. They teach hereditary total depravity and a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion. They reject baptism and the Lord's Supper.

New Testament Christians should not support the Salvation Army. They are leading souls to eternal

destruction with their false doctrine, and to support such is to propagate false teaching. The scriptures forbid a Christian to give any sort of encouragement

to a false teacher. To do so is to become a partaker in his error (II Jno. 9-11). — P.O. Box 2161 Florence, Ala. 35630.

"The Truth Between Extremes"

This is the title of an article written by the late Foy E. Wallace, Jr. while he was editor of the *Gospel Advocate*. This article is preserved in his book, *The Present Truth*. The purpose of the article was to discuss the truth between the extremes in regard to Sunday schools and missionary societies.

Through the years it has been a difficult task to find the truth between extremes. The extreme of anti-ism has plagued the church for years, while the extreme of liberalism now attempts to restructure or destroy the church. There are the extremes of preaching only "positive" sermons or "negative" sermons. The Bible stresses a balance of both (Jeremiah 1:10; II Timothy 4:2-4).

In this article, we intend to look at some extremes that exist today, and attempt to find the truth in-between.

First, the extreme position is taken that one cannot fall from grace. The position is taken that once one is saved, he will always be saved. The Bible refutes this theory (I Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 5:1-4; Hebrews 6:4-6; II Peter 2:20-22). On the other hand, there are those who teach that one cannot know he is saved. Again, the Bible refutes this extreme (I John 5:13; II Peter 1:5-12). The truth between extremes is that one can know he is saved, and he can fall from grace!

Second, the extreme theory is set forth that one can divorce and remarry for more than one cause. On the other hand, there are those who would contend that




JOHN M. GRUBB

there is no scriptural reason for divorce and remarriage, as a reaction to the other extreme. There are many in the church who hold one or the other of these positions. The truth is, there is one and only one cause for divorce and remarriage — fornication on the part of the guilty party put away (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).

Third, the extreme is set forth that the *King James Version* of the Bible should be thrown in the trash in favor of the modern translations and paraphrases. The claim is made that the *King James Version* can no longer be understood by the masses of humanity. The other extreme is to suggest the use of the *King James Version* to the exclusion of all others. The truth between extremes is to use the *King James Version* and *American Standard Versions*, comparing the newer translations and paraphrases with them. There is no question as to the danger of many of the newer "Bibles" now on the market. There are many young people studying the newer versions and paraphrases exclusively who have little grounding in the truth. There is a distinct danger of being misled doctrinally by most of the newer versions. This is especially true of the popular *New International Version*.

Fourth, a recent extreme is to emphasize evangelism to the minimizing of everything else in Christianity. This extreme, no doubt, is partly in response to the other extreme which is largely to ignore evangelism in the Christian life. The truth between extremes is to live the full Christian life, bringing glory to God. This will include: teaching the lost (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:4); worshiping God (John 4:24); meeting family obligations (Ephesians 5:22-32; 6:1-4; I Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 22:6); being an example to the world (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:14-16; Ephesians

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



FROM
THE EDITOR

“They Ceased Not From Their Own Doings”

The words which form the title of this article are found in a paragraph summarizing the situation which obtained during the days of the judges (Judges 2:16-19). The Israelites were now in possession of the land of Canaan; each tribe had received its inheritance. Joshua, their mighty leader, had died. We are told that “the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel” (Judges 2:7). But now a new generation had arisen, “which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (verse 10). “And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger” (verse 12). This sin brought upon them the anger of the Lord, and their enemies began to spoil them, and they were greatly distressed.



BOB DUNCAN

own doings, nor from their stubborn way.” It is *their* way; they have chosen it. It is not God’s way. The theme of a beautiful song is, “I did it my way.” The sentiment of that song is not so beautiful when viewed in light of the fact we are to let God have *his* way with us. Some seem to take pride in the enormity of their sins, and explain that they are just “doing their own thing.” This is not new. It is exactly what the Bible says about the wicked people during the period of the judges.

Even in the realm of religion there are those who cease not “from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.” They have chosen the way they will follow in religion, and they follow it stubbornly, even though it is contrary to God’s way. The way of justification by faith only is man’s way — not God’s. The way of salvation before and without water baptism is man’s way — not God’s. The “church of your choice” idea is man’s way — not God’s. The “nothing in a name” concept is man’s way — not God’s. Most religionists will readily agree that God’s way — not man’s — must be followed in the moral realm. But in the realm of religion they cease not “from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.”

The only real solution to this problem is embraced in the words of Isaiah 55:6,7: “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*” (Emphasis added).

The following paragraph, recorded in Judges 2:16-19, describes in a nutshell the things recorded in the Book of Judges:

“Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; *they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way*” (Emphasis added).

This last statement is a statement that describes the nature of sin. An essential element of sin is selfishness — doing one’s own will instead of the will of God. This is precisely the situation which obtained in connection with the sin of Adam and Eve. God’s will for them was that they not eat the fruit of the tree which was in the midst of the garden; their desire was to eat the fruit of that tree. They performed their own will instead of the will of God, and death resulted.

All the sins listed in Romans 1 and Galatians 5 are committed by those who will not cease “from their

“The Truth Between Extremes”

Continued from page 1

4:25-32; Colossians 3:22-4:1); etc.

Truly, the path to heaven is “strait and narrow” (Matthew 7:13,14). We must constantly strive to follow the truth between extremes. May our efforts be successful. — 332 Karen Street, St. Charles, Missouri 63301.

What’s The Matter With Parents?

When a man begins with a congregation to work with the young people he often hears many things that are perplexing and confusing. Activities, devotionals, campaigns, etc. are drawn up only for the minister to hear, “I can’t make them go to church and such activities,” or, “They had other plans and I had to let them go.” Probably the most used excuse is the old, “Well, they are young. Let them sow their Wild Oats and they will straighten out. I know they aren’t coming to the activities at the church but they are not that important anyway.” These may not always be said just that way but actions do speak louder than words. When I read scriptures like, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (II Timothy 1:5), I can’t understand why a parent



BARRY FIKE

Continued on page 4

Indecision

Carl Sandburg tells of a chameleon that went for a walk one day. As he went, he happily changed his color to fit whatever he walked on. Suddenly, he stumbled on a piece of Scotch plaid cloth that contained seven colors. There, according to the story, he died at the crossroads of indecision.

Decisions! They face us every day. How easy they are to postpone. How hard they often are to make and even harder to carry out.

There are some decisions that are vital. To postpone them, to fail to make them is fatal. Joshua called out to God’s people, “Choose you this day whom you will serve . . .” (Joshua 24:15). Elijah trumpeted forth the choice of the children of Israel: “If God is God, serve Him, if Baal is god, serve him” (I Kings 18:21). This choice, given to men thousands of years ago, is still ours to make.

You must choose. You must choose every day whether you will serve God. Choose — choose now to serve Him. Don’t be like the chameleon. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

(No. 4)

In our previous study I had begun to enumerate some negative factors which hinder and retard us in successfully meeting and overcoming daily temptations. More needs to be said along this very line.

We cannot overcome daily temptation if we, like the prodigal son in Luke 15, leave the Father's house and go into the far-off country of sin. In this "Pearl of the Parables," the Lord said, "A certain man had two



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:11-13). The sequel of the story is well known by all students of the Bible. With his money gone — and sin has a way of bankrupting the most affluent one way or another — he sought out an occupation in the land that had now become a prison house to him. The glitter was now gone; the galling bondage to sin was now his. He was given the lowest of occupations to a Jew. No man cared for his soul it appeared. He found out that there are no promotions in sin; they are all demotions, as Brother B. C. Goodpasture so often pointed out in his classic sermon on "The Parable of the Wonderful Father," as he desired it be called. He was without and far away from home. Finally, he came to his senses (every man is out of his head while serving Satan and sin) and made the decision to go home. When he did the Father received him back as a penitent son, not as the servant the son intended to become.

The far-off country is not necessarily one of distance. It is one of attitude of heart and action of hand and deed. The far-off country of sin is the place where temptation is turned into sin; it is the place where surrender is so easy; it is the place where yielding is the order of the day. We cannot ever hope to overcome daily temptation if we turn our back upon the Father's house and head our faces toward the lascivious land of sin and vice, of wickedness and corruption. We cannot overcome temptation by walking the rebellious route the prodigal son took in the early verses of the "Pearl of the Parables."

We cannot overcome daily temptation if we follow Jesus from afar as did Simon Peter the night of Christ's betrayal. Early that evening the Lord told Simon Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31,32). Peter was overly confident he would never do this. In face of the Lord's words Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33). The Lord then told him that he would deny him thrice before that night passed (Luke 22:34). When Jesus was arrested and taken before the Jewish officials first, the Bible tells us in Luke 22:54 that Peter "followed afar off." The very next verse in Luke's account reveals that Peter sat in the midst of the Lord's enemies and before a fire that had been kindled by the Lord's foes. It was while Peter followed Jesus afar off and while he was warming by the devil's fire that Peter denied any knowledge or affiliation with the tried Jesus, the condemned Christ.

Reader friends, no one who professes to be the

disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is ever safe when he is following Jesus "afar off." He is never safe spiritually when he is warming himself at the fire kindled by the Lord's enemies, the disciples of the devil. Peter did not overcome temptation by following Jesus afar off, and neither can we. Peter did not overcome temptation by warming at the devil's fire, and neither can we. Jesus knew that the flesh of his disciples would be weak that crucial night in his and in their lives. He knew that their spirits were willing to serve him. Therefore he cautioned them by saying, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

We cannot overcome temptation if we are ignorant of God's word. The Sadducees in Christ's day were one of the two primary Jewish sects of that era. They were rich in worldly ways and were spiritually destitute. They were on the wrong side of truth in every mention that we have of them in the New Testament. They opposed John the Baptist; they were in opposition to Jesus Christ. They were the first foes to persecute the infant church in Acts 4:1,2. They denied the reality of the spirit world; they rejected a belief in angels; they denied there would be a resurrection; they were the materialists, the modernists, the liberal theologians of their day. Why did they err so greatly, so grievously, so glaringly? The Bible says in Matthew 22:29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." Ignorance of God's law was their besetting sin. A rejection of the power of God kept them from accepting the truths about the fundamentals of the faith. When they were tempted to do the wrong and to teach false doctrines they did not possess sufficient knowledge of God to resist such temptations. Many of the moral and religious wrongs of our day are taught and practiced by people who do not know the ABC's of the Bible or the basics of the gospel of God's dear Son. Ignorance does not excuse people who fail to overcome daily temptation just because they do not know the

difference between right and wrong. Dense and darkened ignorance of the Bible has never been the proper way to resist the temptations that confront us on every hand. The person is greatly handicapped in the meeting of daily temptations if he is ignorant of God's will. If he knows nothing relative to the nature of sin and what it is capable of doing to the souls of men, he will be in grave and great disadvantage in the meeting of temptation and the overcoming of sinful tendencies.

We cannot overcome temptation if we love the world and the things that are in the world. The apostle of love wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I Jno. 2:15-17). James describes that religion that is both pure and undefiled as consisting of two things: aiding the fatherless and widows in their affliction and the keeping of himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27.) He also affirmed in chapter four of his practical and inspired epistle that friendship with the world means one is on terms of enmity with the God of heaven. Demas, a former co-laborer with the apostle Paul, discovered that he could not be faithful both to the Cause of Christ and be a lover of the world at the same time. Therefore he chose the world over continued fidelity to the Heavenly Cause (II Tim. 4:10). In the deeply familiar parable of the sower and the soils Jesus declared that the care of this world and the riches of this earth choke out the world, and it becomes unfruitful in the life of its superficial recipient. Love for the world will not allow one to overcome successfully the daily temptations he faces. The Bible has taught this all along. Thus our attitude should be, "The Lord said it. I believe it; that settles it." — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

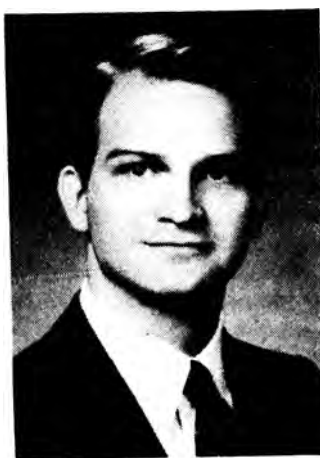
A Dangerous "ism"

We believe the modern theory of premillennialism to be false on many counts. The most essential elements of this fanciful fairy tale are either absent from or directly contradictory to the clear teachings of the Bible. Notice a few of these elements in light of divine testimony.

(1) The Jews are to return to Palestine to receive the "land of promise," which promise God made to them but has not yet kept. Joshua 21:43 flatly contradicts this mistaken notion, revealing that God fulfilled this land promise some 1400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ.

(2) God's saints are to be raptured. The word "rapture" is not in the Bible. Neither is the idea. Inspiration affirms Christ will come with a shout, and will be seen by every eye (I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7; I Corinthians 15:52). The so-called rapture is to be silent. Again, no hint of this is found anywhere in the Bible.

(3) There are to be two "second comings" of the Lord: one FOR his saints, and one WITH his saints. Inspiration speaks only of "the coming" of the Lord.



DALTON KEY

The Bible never refers to "coming number two," or "coming number three." Read I Thessalonians 4:15.

(4) Seven years of the Great Tribulation are to be followed by the bloody Battle of Armageddon at the second of Christ's second comings. Many teach that this battle will be fought on horseback with primitive, wooden weapons. This premillennial element is based loosely upon misrepresentations of Matthew 24, Revelation 2, and Ezekiel 38 and 39. The theory materializes when symbolism is literalized.

(5) Christ, upon his final return, is supposed to set up an earthly kingdom, headquartered in Jerusalem, and there reign for a literal one thousand years. The scripture cannot be found promising that Christ will so much as set his foot on this earth again, much less follow the premillennial theory. According to Colossians 1:13, the kingdom has already been established. And from I Peter 3:22 we learn that Christ is even now reigning at the right hand of the Father.

May we base our faith upon fact, not fiction. — P.O. Box 126, Aurora, Missouri 65605.

Old ideas, like old medicine, can be dangerous to have around after they've done their job.

Don't forget the fact that ignorance of the law is what keeps our higher courts functioning.

What's The Matter With Parents?

Continued from page 2

would make a statement that destroys their example that should be the motivating force in bringing their children to the Lord.

What's the matter with parents? Do they just not care? Are they too busy to sit down with their children and do what the Bible COMMANDS them to do? "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" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). Why is it that a child, when small, is excited to go to services and sit in a class and learn about Jesus and God and the love that they have for us, but the same child in his teens will not even bring his own Bible to the services or do his lesson? Why does this happen? Because parents don't bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord. Sure, it isn't popular to be a Christian. Especially when you are young and peer pressure is at its highest. I know that young people want to be accepted by others and that to be called a chicken, yellow, or a religious fanatic isn't the most complimentary talk that youth give to each other. But, what do parents want? Do they want a religion that lets their children do what the rest of the world does?

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Do they want a religion that is popular? "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:12-16).

Do they want a religion that caters to the whims and ideals of youth? "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5).

Parents the time is long due to *show* your children the path of righteousness. Yes, they could possibly

find the way themselves, but how many do? Look at all the other paths that are open to them and look much more exciting at the present time. Your experiences and trials have developed within you a talent to tell your children about what is good and bad within this world. Possibly you can tell them about some firsthand experiences of your own in which poor judgment led to much sorrow and heartache. Young people pay attention to that. But they hate open hypocrisy and sloppy religion. They want something concrete and stable, and if they don't think the church will give it to them they will find something else to replace it.

Wake up and do something with your youth while you have them. Encourage your congregation to work with the youth and to develop programs that cater to the needs of them. If you have a Youth Minister encourage him in his work and stand behind him and the activities that are planned. This will draw the youth closer and bind them as a single unit for the work of the church. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:8). — 1 Beverly Road Charleston, S.C. 29407.

Undesirable Elements Of The First Century Church

Those of us committed to restoring New Testament Christianity are trying to do all things as they were done in Bible times. We need to be reminded, however, that many things crept into those early churches that were wrong and harmful. Such items were wrong then and will do harm to us today. The apostle John exhorts us to "imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good" (III John 11).



JOHN WADDEY

We don't need the *lukewarmness* of the Laodiceans. They were neither cold nor hot toward God and his work. They left Christ nauseous (Revelation 3:15-16). True Christianity is a religion of a fervent spirit, i.e., with fire in the soul (Romans 12:11). Christ redeemed us that we might be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Lukewarmness will kill a church and destroy one's soul.

We don't want the *carnality* of the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 3:1-3). The word *carnal* suggests one that is governed by fleshly appetites and desires. He is a worldly minded, secular person rather than a mature spiritual man who puts God's kingdom first in his life (Matthew 6:33). Even though the church at Corinth had a definite case of carnality, we must avoid such at all cost. Remember that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God and brings death (Romans 8:6-7).

We don't need the *hardness of hearing* of the Hebrew brethren. The author warns the Hebrew Christians to beware the dangers of such a condition. A hard heart kept their ancient fathers from receiving the promised blessings; so will it rob us today (Hebrews 4:2, 7). Some disciples find it hard to take time to hear what God says. Making an effort to understand what God says is hard for some. Others have problems in being willing to accept what he says and obey it. Jesus taught us plainly that only the man

who heareth his words and doeth them will see his house stand in the trials of life (Matthew 7:24-27).

Surely we don't want the *deceit* of Ananias and Sapphira in our congregation. You will recall that they sought to deceive their brethren by pretending to make a generous gift to God while holding back a portion of it (Acts 5:1-11). Jesus scorned those religious Pharisees who outwardly appeared beautiful as whited sepulchers but inwardly were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness (Matthew 23:23-28). Paul charged Timothy to hold a faith that was unfeigned. Such will eliminate all hypocrisy (I Timothy 1:5). Christianity demands an "open book" kind of life.

We don't need the *compromising* of sister Jezebel of the church in Thyatira. She taught God's people that they could engage in idolatrous rites and immorality and yet be pleasing to God (Revelation 2:20). Compromise has never been acceptable in religion. Elijah challenged the Hebrews of his day to quit limping between two opinions (I Kings 18:21). Jesus said we are either for or against him (Matthew 12:30). Preachers must preach God's word whether folks appreciate it or not (II Timothy 4:1-5). While compromise may be the stock and trade of society, it is not so in Christ.

The *dictatorship* of Diatrophes is unneeded. This ambitious brother even considered the great apostle John an enemy to his position (III John 9-11). There have always been those who wanted to have power over others, but such has ever been wrong. Jesus told his apostles that even though the rulers of the Gentiles exercised authority over them, it must not be so among them. The greatest would be the servant (Matthew 20:25-28). We still stand in need of servants rather than lords in the church!

We don't need the *legalism* of the Judaizing brethren. A thorn in the flesh of the early church was those Jewish converts who sought to bind the rules and traditions of Judaism on the Gentile disciples. They especially plagued Paul and his converts. They were ruthless toward Paul and his work. They taught the brethren at Antioch, "except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). They sought to bind upon others things not commanded by God's authorized apostles (Acts

15:24). They forbade things God had approved (II Timothy 4:1-4). Here in America every generation has been troubled by a legalistic element. We usually style them *antis*. Wherever they have succeeded in gaining a foothold, the church has suffered from inertia and division. We don't need that, even though it was present in the first century churches.

May we continually rededicate ourselves to that noble goal of restoring the pure Christianity of our Lord. But let us always be careful rightly to discern between those commendable aspects of first century churches and those unholy aspects such as we have studied.

(I am indebted to Brother Bill Burchett for the heart of this lesson.) — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, Tn. 37921.

It's all right to be ignorant, but it's stupid to make a career out of it.

Ignorance is not the real problem. It's not knowing we're ignorant that causes the difficulty.

An idea is more than information; it is information with legs, and — it is headed somewhere.

An idea is the only lever which really moves the world.

There's one thing to be said about ignorance — it gives rise to almost 90 percent of the world's conversations.

Ignorance is no excuse. Almost invariably it's the real thing.

There is nothing in the world more powerful than an idea. No weapon can destroy it; no power can conquer it, except the power of another idea.

Every time one man expresses an idea, he finds ten men who thought of it before — but they only thought.



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 1982

NUMBER 4

Troublesome Times

This is what Paul refers to as he writes II Timothy 3:1-17. He calls them perilous or grievous. That would be a period when it would be hard to avoid the dangers that lurked on every side. We would do well to look at this chapter and in it see that there is the:

(1) **CERTAINTY OF TROUBLESOME TIMES** (v. 1). "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Timothy 3:1). Thus, of this fact Timothy and all others could be sure. Since Paul wrote by inspiration this prediction would be assured. So they need not be surprised when such days arrive. Also, this would enable them to prepare for such when they did come.

(2) **CAUSE OF TROUBLESOME TIMES** (v. 2). Timothy would not be left to wonder what the cause would be for the trouble. Paul introduces verse two with the word "for." That means to introduce the reason. Thus, the cause of troublesome times is about to be seen. Since every effect has a cause this one will be no exception.

Just what would the cause be? Would it be the environment? Such receives a great deal of the blame today when trouble arises. Would it be hereditary? This is surely given as a cause for many of the perils we face. Would it be sickness? You know such is given as a substitute for the real cause today. Let Paul tell us what the cause would be. Notice, "For men shall be . . ." (II Timothy 3:2). So, men are going to be responsible for the troublesome times. That lays the blame where it ought to be laid. It doesn't let men escape their responsibility.

(3) **CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE MEN IN TROUBLESOME TIMES** (v. 3-5). Since men are going to be behind the cause of the dangers, we need to know what sort of people they are. What will they be like? What are their characteristics?

(A) **Selfish In Character**. This can be seen in the list that Paul gives. They love self and everything is made to move around self. Self becomes the controlling factor. Such a person easily becomes a lover of money



WINFRED CLARK

and that would surely be for himself. Such would surely make him arrogant and he would have no respect for God or man.

(B) **Shameful In Conduct**. Take the selfish man and put him in the home environment and see what he does. He is disobedient to parents and has no thanks at all for what they have done for him. He is unholy in his conduct toward them and others. He is without the affection he ought to have for the family.

(C) **Savage With Companions**. Move the self-centered man who will not respect parents out into the business world and what sort of a fellow do you deal with? You can hardly deal with him for he is unbending. It is his way or no way. He will not hesitate to slander those with whom he disagrees. He has no self control because self is out of control.

(D) **Sensually Controlled**. This man is a pleasure lover. The whole trend of his life is toward that which satisfies the flesh.

These are the kind of teachers and men that make for troublesome times. This would be true both then and now.

(4) **CARRYING AWAY IN TROUBLESOME TIMES** (v. 6-7). The women described here are no match for these teachers who "worm" their way into the homes in a sly fashion. The women are morally wrong. They are weighed down with sin. There was also a mental weakness. Such people are a ready prey for such as are named in this chapter. These face the

consequences of perilous times. They are carried away by error.

(5) **CORRUPTION SEEN IN TROUBLESOME TIMES** (v. 8-9). Two men are named Jannes and Jambres. These, supposedly, were those who were of the magicians that withstood Moses. They were corrupt counterfeiters just as those of whom Paul spoke. But such is foolish for it has no basis upon which to stand.

(6) **CURE FOR TROUBLESOME TIMES** (v. 10-17). Paul didn't just paint a dark picture and leave it. Though he set forth things as they were, he showed Timothy and us how to avoid such. He exhorted Timothy to have the:

(A) **Right Example** (v. 10-13). Timothy had been a diligent follower of Paul as an example. Such now would enable him to avoid the dangers through which he is passing. A reading of verses 10-13 will show it had not been easy for Paul to live right but he had. That is the example Timothy needed.

(B) **Right Convictions** (v. 14). Timothy had learned some things and these are to be his convictions. Without convictions one is apt to be led astray.

(C) **Right Guide** (v. 16-17). The scriptures had been his guide from his youth and they are able to make him wise unto salvation. With the scriptures he is completely adequate for the troublesome times that come. He can maintain good works in the midst of perilous times. — P.O. Box 1025 Athens, Ala. 35611.

Turn The Page On '81


AVIS CORLEY PORTER

GOD HAS GIVEN A NEW PAGE, ALL FRESH AND NEW,
AND WHATEVER YOU DO WITH IT IS UP TO YOU.

MANY THINGS WE DID THAT WE SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE,
BUT EVEN SO, BATTLES WITH SATAN WERE MIGHTLY WON.

WE FAILED IN MANY WAYS, BUT NOW WITH A NEW PAGE,
WE CAN DO MUCH GOOD, NO MATTER WHAT OUR AGE.

LET'S MAKE IT A GOOD YEAR — 1982,
AND RESOLVE ALWAYS TO GOD BE TRUE!



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



FROM

THE EDITOR

Vashti



BOB DUNCAN

Vashti is mentioned only in the Book of Esther, and in the second chapter of that book she disappears from view, never to be mentioned again in all the Bible. She was a Persian queen, the wife of Ahasuerus, and she was very beautiful. Her husband, the king, made a great feast. We are told in Esther 1:10-12: "On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded . . . the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him."

As a result of this refusal to obey the commandment of the king, Vashti's royal estate was given to another, and she was never permitted to come before the king again. This set the stage for Esther to become the queen, and the rest of the story is familiar to all Bible students.

While emphasis in the Book of Esther is upon Esther the queen, let us not overlook the sterling example of Vashti the queen. Several things are worthy of notice.

In the first place, she was one who had a great deal more respect for what was decent and proper than she had for the commandment of a king. "Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?" (Ecclesiastes 8:4). But in this case there was not enough power in the word of the most powerful king in the world to cause Vashti to forsake that which she considered proper and decent.

In the second place, her course of action was not influenced by what she must have known would be the consequences of her action. She knew how powerful the king was; and she knew he was not in the habit of being disobeyed. She must have known also what an insult it would be to the king for her to disobey him publicly, and in the presence of his royal princes whom he wanted to impress. She must have been aware of at least the possibility that even death itself could have been the king's sentence upon her for such rebellion and insubordination. But to have obeyed the order of the king would have placed her in disobedience to a higher and more noble monarch — her own conscience. Noble indeed is that person who can, without hesitation, choose right over wrong simply because it is right, and without giving any consideration at all to the consequences of his choice.

In the third place, Vashti must have been totally free of the sin of vanity. She must have been the most beautiful woman in all the kingdom, and here is an opportunity for her to parade her beauty before a gathering of the most powerful men in the world. The sighs of adoration which she would no doubt hear could be remembered and cherished for a lifetime. But she preferred the approval of her own conscience to the praise and adoration of the king and all his noble princes.

What a fool Vashti was in the eyes of the world! She

lost everything simply because of her strong feelings concerning modesty! Did she really? No, not everything. The ability to hold her head up, to look her fellow human beings in the eye, to live life with a clear conscience and with the knowledge she had chosen the right course in the face of strong temptation — these she did not lose. And these were more valuable to her than the throne of Persia.

The name of God is not recorded in the Book of Esther, but his providence is clearly seen throughout. There is at least a chance that Vashti's sense of values had been influenced by a knowledge of God, gained through the Jews which were scattered among the people of the Persian provinces. We would like to believe she was one of those few Gentiles who, through the priesthood of the Jewish nation, came to know God and to serve him. Her beautiful strength of character would seem to indicate as much. At any rate, her name stands out as representative of those who choose to do right regardless. In the judgment, how will you compare to Vashti?

(I am indebted to my wife for most of the points in this article. The ladies' Bible class which she teaches had a lesson on Vashti, and she shared the fruit of her study with me.)

The Blight Of Beverage Alcohol

Anyone who is remotely familiar with the teaching of the Bible knows that drunkenness is sinful. And the New Testament makes it very clear that the drunkard cannot expect to be in heaven (I Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21). But exactly what is drunkenness? That is where the controversy lies. Must one be "passed out" to be drunk? staggering? unable to walk a white line? legally intoxicated with .10 alcohol blood level (the California



WAYNE JACKSON

criterion)? Just where is the line to be drawn? The educated, sincere child of God knows exactly where to draw the line. He draws it *before the first drink!* He totally abstains from beverage alcohol.

There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that there is no safe level of drinking alcoholic beverages. First, there is the health factor. Albert Q. Maisel wrote: "Until quite recently, almost all researchers believed that such occasional imbibers suffered no permanent ill effects from their drinking. Physiologists were convinced that even when such moderate drinkers did get 'high,' their slurred speech and slowed up reaction evidenced only a transitory effect upon their brains and nervous systems. Now, however, strong evidence indicates that there is *no guarantee of a 'safe' level of drinking, no absolute threshold below which alcohol fails to damage or destroy groups of cells in the brain and other vital organs*" (Reader's Digest, June 1970 — (Emp. WJ)). The author further observes that with the very first drink, alcohol is absorbed through your tongue and gums and is on the way to your brain.

Some years back, *Listen Magazine* published a diagram of the human brain showing the various areas of the brain as they are affected by different

Continued on page 4

Harpers To Help Spread The Gospel In New Zealand

There comes a time in the life of any preacher when he stops to evaluate his ministry. What have we done? Where do we go from here? How can I be of the greatest service? These are some of the questions we ask as we evaluate our work.

After seven years of work in the southeast, mostly in Alabama, we have decided that we can be of the greatest service in foreign mission work. This decision was not made because we have become discouraged with "local work." Actually, we have enjoyed our work very much. The decision was made because there are so many places in this world where there are no Christians.

It is a sobering thing to sit in front of a world map and see how small the United States is in comparison to the rest of the world, and to realize that there are more Christians in five southeastern states than all the world combined, that is, outside of the United States. This is why we feel that at this stage in our lives we must go to a foreign mission field.

In September of this year we will get on an airplane,



RON HARPER

Continued on page 4

The Kingdom In Preparation And Fulfillment

Before the establishment of a government, or organization there must be the work of teaching and arousing in the people an interest in the principle of the institution to be established. When this is done people talk about it and look for it to happen.

Some people think it is not important to know when the church was established. In this they are mistaken, for if one is incorrect as to the beginning of the church, he is likely to be wrong as to the conditions of salvation. All of God's truth is very important to those who love the Bible.

Many religious sects are not agreed as to when the church began. Some say it began with Adam; others, that it began with Abel, and some say it began with Abraham. Some Baptists teach the church began when Christ ordained the Apostles.

The coming of Christ and establishing of his kingdom on earth were spoken of frequently by the prophets (Isa. 2:2,3; 9:6,7; Dan. 2:44). The preaching of John the immerser, Jesus, and his apostles should cause us to see the then future establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

Let us notice how their teaching on this subject was of that then in the future. John preached: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). The twelve apostles were sent to preach: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7). The seventy were sent to preach: "The kingdom is come nigh unto you" (Lk. 10:9). The quotation from Luke shows that "at hand" means "is come nigh." The Greek Word for "at hand" is *engus*, and is defined by Thayer "near." At the sending of the twelve, and the seventy, the kingdom was still in the future or in preparation. Adding all the faithful preachers together we have eighty-four that preached the kingdom of God was then soon to come.

While most of the twelve lived, Jesus said, "upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18,19). The keys of the kingdom were given to the apostles while on earth and the kingdom was established before their death. Notice further proof: "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste death, till they see the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:27). The kingdom has come or else some of the disciples are still living. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Lk. 12:32). This proves conclusively the kingdom was to be established while the followers of Christ were a "little flock." Because of this teaching the disciples naturally expected the kingdom. "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear" (Lk. 19:11). This expectancy that the kingdom of God would come while Christ was with the disciples was not confined to the twelve, but was shared by the entire body of disciples (Mk. 11:8-10).

The kingdom of God came just as it was spoken of by Christ. "That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mk. 9:1). The power mentioned here is the power conferred on the apostles by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had



CHARLES N. CRUMP

promised the apostles this power on different occasions (John 15:26; 16:13). After Christ's resurrection and at the giving of the Great Commission, Jesus said to his apostles: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:46-49). Just before his ascension he said: "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven

tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). They now had the promise that would enable them to reveal the law of the kingdom and to confirm this revelation with miracles; this came on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. The kingdom was to come with power. The power that came on this day is clear to anyone who will read the second chapter of Acts. This day is, therefore, the birthday of the church of Christ or kingdom. — 48 Murray St. Augusta, Maine 04330.

What Am I In The Church?

Am I merely interested in enjoying salvation myself without due concern for helping others learn how to become saved from their sins? Is Christianity so narrow and so selfish that one need only think of trying to save himself from sin? Am I willing to think only of myself while most souls continue in a lost condition? Am I not saved from sin to help other souls to be saved from sin? Am I in a saved condition as I continue indifferent to the plight of lost souls?

Am I by my action recognized as one genuinely seeking to help save lost souls? Am I by practice manifesting the kind of attitude so that people can see and know that I truly want to see the lost soul saved? Am I studying the Bible so that I can become more efficient in soul winning? Have I made a sincere effort to help win lost souls? Am I constantly praying for wisdom (Jas. 1:5; Prov. 11:30), so that I can learn how to win the lost soul to Christ? Have I made a list of souls whom I plan to try leading to Christ?

Am I faithful in my attendance in Bible study and worship services? Am I showing interest in soul winning by making known my zeal for souls? Am I daily following things of personal interest in preference to becoming truly involved in helping souls to be saved? Am I merely pretending to be a soul winner while permitting a constant stream of lost souls to go on and on without being introduced to Christ and his teaching?

Am I really interested in helping save lost souls while giving preference to advocating strange ideas or theories instead of promoting the pure gospel of Jesus Christ? Am I wasting people's time trying to get them to accept ideas instead of giving time exclusively to presenting Jesus Christ and his church?

Am I truly concerned about lost souls while giving most of my time to personal interests? How can I show my interest in the lost while showing little or no interest in the church for which Jesus gave his blood? How would you show interest in saving lost souls without showing interest in the growth of the church for which Jesus died? Is nursing unforgiveness in our hearts (Matt. 6:13-14) a means of helping to show real interest in saving lost souls? Is speaking unkind words a means of showing interest in soul saving? (Matt. 12:36-37). Really, Am I a soul saver? By refusing to learn the Bible myself, or by objecting to others' learning the Bible and qualifying themselves to teach the Bible?



HOYT BAILEY

Am I bearing the fruit of righteousness? "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). Am I wise in my activities? "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Jesus said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (Jno. 4:35). "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

Paul said to the elders of the church of Ephesus, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house . . . 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 all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:20,26,27). Hear Paul again: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22). God would have all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:3,4). "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). — 204 S Main, Sylacauga, Ala. 35150.

Many a good idea has been smothered to death by words.

Education is going forward from cocksure ignorance to thoughtful uncertainty.

The best way to put an idea across is to wrap it up in a person.

A new idea is delicate. It can be killed by a sneer or a yawn; it can be terribly distorted by a quip; or it can be crushed by a frown.

It may be true that to err is human, but to remain in error is stupid.

A rose by any other name would mean that you're ignorant about flowers.

Have you ever noticed that the smaller the idea, the bigger the words used to express it?

If you can't think up a new idea, try finding a way to make better use of an old one.

The Blight Of Beverage Alcohol

Continued from page 2

levels of alcohol. That chart revealed that the brain's frontal lobe, which is the "reasoning" and "self-control" center, begins to be affected by as little as .01 alcohol blood level. An officer of the California Highway Patrol informed this writer that .01 percent is approximately one half of a shot of whiskey for an average size man.

A pamphlet published by the American Automobile Association entitled *Sportsmanlike Driving* (5th edition), states that: "The effects of alcohol begin with the first drink." It further says that: "The first effects are impairment of judgment and reason and weakening of self-control and normal

inhibitions." Journalist Coleman McCarthy, writing in the *Washington Post* a few years back, declared: "Many social drinkers, particularly those with a sophisticated self-image, laugh off the effects of alcohol. Yet even one *mild drink* hampers both intelligence and efficiency."

Further, there is the matter of how beverage alcohol brings havoc to society in general. Drunkenness is a factor in thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of injuries each year. Automobile wrecks, murders, fights, rapes, dissolution of the home, loss of work, higher taxes (to take care of many of the foregoing problems), and a

variety of ills follow in the wake of this great evil.

The Bible has much to say about the effects that are attendant to the drinking problem. Drunkenness is connected with poverty (Prov. 23:21), physical ailment (Isa. 19:14), faulty judgment (Isa. 28:7), deception (Prov. 20:1), lawlessness (Prov. 31:5), addiction (Prov. 23:35b), etc.

Yes, the imbibing of alcoholic beverages is a great evil and the Christian will "abstain" (that does not mean "use in moderation") from "every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:22). — 3906 E. Main St., Stockton, CA 95205.

Harpers To Help Spread The Gospel In New Zealand

Continued from page 2

having said goodbye to our families and friends, and fly to New Zealand. It is our plan to spend four years in the city of New Plymouth. New Zealand is one of the most beautiful lands in all of the world. It is an island country in the South Pacific. There are two main islands that make up the country, the north island and the south island. Seventy percent of the country's population lives on the north island. New Plymouth is located on the west coast of the north island. At the present time there are four Christians in this city of forty-five thousand people. Brother and sister Larry Ramey are two of these. The Rameys have been in New Plymouth for several months now.

They are missionaries from Greenfield, Tennessee. The other two members at New Plymouth are native New Zealanders who have moved to New Plymouth to help establish the church there. It is with great optimism that we look forward to our work there.

Mission work cannot be done without support. We will be spending the next few months talking with congregations about helping us meet our needs. Many elders who read the *Words of Truth* will be contacted about helping our work in a financial way. Since God wants mission work done and it requires money to do mission work we are not embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help from faithful brethren. This is

the Lord's work.

I would like to thank the elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ for agreeing to sponsor our work. Thanks also to brother Duncan for allowing me to make this report in *Words of Truth*. Thanks to you for taking the time to read this article. The great commission shows us that Jesus wants the whole world to hear the gospel (Matthew 28:19,28; Mark 16:15,16). We agree with brother Jimmy Lovell who says "every person has more right to hear the gospel once than any person has to hear it twice." — 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Ala. 35501.

The Plant Of Renown Of Ezekiel 34:29

JOHN G. SHAVER

To Christ gave all the prophets witness. They did this in various forms. By express references to his person and glory, and by figurative allusions to his character and works. The language of metaphor was often employed as being the most striking and interesting method of communication. Hence, Isaiah refers to the Messiah as a rock, a foundation, a precious stone. Zechariah refers to him as a fountain opened; and Malachi alludes to him as the Sun of righteousness, which would arise with healing in his wings. The prophet Ezekiel refers to him as a plant that should be raised up, even a plant of renown.

By the plant, Christ is evidently intended. The same figure is employed by Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa. 1:1; Jer. 23:5). Two ideas are conveyed to us by this metaphor. First, his lowly appearance. Not represented by a lofty cedar; but as a lowly, tender plant. Isaiah describes Christ in like manner (Isa. 53:2). Behold his parentage, his birthplace, his external appearance, his occupation; servant of servants; no pomp, no splendid retinue, a companion of fishermen. Second, his hidden character. The chief part of a plant is concealed, hidden from the eye of observation, under ground. In Christ's body of humility dwelt deity. God was manifest in the flesh (Jno. 1:14). The divine Word tabernacled among us, says John, and we beheld his glory, though he assumed a servant's name and appearance, yet he thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6).

The renown this plant should obtain is pictured. The term signifies fame, celebrity and distinction. Keeping in view the metaphor of the prophet, we may observe, that this plant is justly renowned, in the first place, for its abundant fruitfulness. Some beautiful plants yield no fruit; others, fruit only of an inferior nature or description. This plant yields fruit of a most precious kind abundantly. All his offices are full of precious fruit for man — all his acts, all the events of his birth, life, baptism, temptation, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension. He is the tree of life, spoken of by John in the Revelation letter. He is full of grace and truth. In the second place, this plant is renowned for its unrivaled virtues. Many plants are medicinal; this is so in the highest degree; its leaves are expressly for the healing of the nations. It is the

only hope of mankind. It yields a balm for every ill and woe connected with the sinful family of man. There are no diseases too powerful or malignant for its virtues to remove. In the third place, it is renowned for its cooling shade. This is of the greatest importance in the sultry regions of the east; and this idea is often associated with the descriptions given of the Messiah. "He shall be," says the prophet, "as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2). He also represents him as, "a refuge from the storm," and "a shadow from the heat" (Isa. 4:6; 25:4). Under the cooling shade of this plant, the believing soul sits with great delight. In the fourth place, it is renowned for its vast extent. Its branches are only bounded by the circumference of the earth itself. It is the world's plant, for the benefit of all the nations that dwell on the earth. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (I Jno. 2:2), and his gospel is to be preached to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16). In the fifth place, it is renowned for its perpetual verdure. It is evergreen; its leaves and virtues never fade. To this plant believing souls have had recourse in every age to the present hour; and its fruit shall form the provision of the heavenly banquet forever and ever. This wonderful plant gives unto all men the hope of the eternal home in heaven if they obey the Father's will (Heb. 5:8-9).

The plant's exaltation is predicted. The ancient types and sacrifices all pointed to Christ, and shadowed forth the office he would sustain, and the sufferings he would endure. The same refers to the prophecies of which Christ was the sum and substance. But the exaltation may refer more properly to seven important points. First, it may refer to Christ's incarnation. Zacharias rejoiced and sang, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath raised up an horn of salvation" (Lk. 1:67). Simeon also exclaimed, "Lord, how lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Lk. 2:29). He was exalted and raised up. Second, it may refer to his baptism. Now, he was called from obscurity, and publicly anointed for his great work, by the Holy Spirit descending and the Father attesting to his divine character saying, "This is my beloved Son . . ." (Matt. 3:17). Divinity expressing divinity. Third,

it may refer to his being raised up on the cross. Peter remarks that God had predetermined that Jesus should thus be put to death (I Pet. 1:20-21). Jesus referred to the manner of his death (Jno. 3:14-15; 12:42). He was raised up on the cross that he might be cut down, and he was cut down publicly, against the execrations of the infuriated and bloodthirsty mob. Fourth, it may refer to his resurrection from the dead. He was indeed slain and buried; but it was not possible that death should overcome him. He was raised up from the dead with power and glory. Fifth, it may refer to his ascension and exaltation to his Father's throne and glory. He is now exalted to his Father's right hand and majesty. Above all principality and power; enjoying universal power and authority. Sixth, it may refer to the preaching of the cross. It is the grand end of the gospel minister to exhibit this plant; to specify its properties, and to persuade men of its saving virtues. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of gospel preaching. Seventh, it may refer to the acclamations of the redeemed. On him shall every eye gaze; and his glory shall every tongue confess; and the whole company of the redeemed shall sing one song. Worthy is the Lamb (Rev. 5:12).

How stands the plant of renown in our estimation? Do we admire it? Have we received its healing virtues? Do we feed upon its delightful fruits? Let the church examine and exalt the plant. In all things may he have the pre-eminence. Children of God, be joyful in your king. Let his fame be spread abroad; that the guilty sons of men may come to him, and obtain life and salvation through obedience to his will. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL. 33566.

A person going nowhere can be sure of reaching his destination.

The bee that makes the honey doesn't hang around the hive.

The Bible promises no loaves to the loafer.

It's what you do when you have nothing to do that reveals what you are.



Words Of Truth

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 1982

NUMBER 5

When Disappointments And Discouragements Come

One of the everyday problems of life is the problem of disappointment and discouragement. God does not lift his children into a realm where trials are non-existent. In no place in his word has God guaranteed that we shall not have to travel over the rough places of life. Sooner or later all men have their burdens. As Longfellow said, "Into each life some rain must fall. Some days must be dark and dreary." Job concurred with this thought when he said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). Adversity and trouble are as universal as humanity.



WAYNE COBB

Since discouragements and disappointments are a very real part of life, all of us need to learn to cope with these problems when the ugly face of trouble suddenly intrudes itself into life. Different people respond to it in different ways. Our success in living the Christian life hinges to a great extent upon how well we weather the storms of life.

There are some who utterly collapse in the face of adversity. During the Great Depression of the late 1920's and early 30's, there were many who simply could not face the sudden evaporation of their fortunes, so they jumped out of windows to their deaths all over America. Every year millions of people around the world develop a feeling of hopelessness, decide life is no longer worth living, and act accordingly. This is one of the classic responses to the onset of adversity in life — to be overcome by it and utterly defeated. But this is not the solution to the problems of life.

No one likes to undergo adversity, but it is a fact of life that each of us must grapple with. What should be our reactions? What should we do in the hour of trial? God wants us to be victorious over the disappointments and discouragements of daily living, not crushed by them.

Remember that some of the greatest people of

history have suffered much. Moses was often disappointed in Israel and discouraged, but he was victorious and established himself as one of the greatest men this world has ever known. The apostle Paul must often have been discouraged. He was disappointed in people (II Tim. 4:10,14) and suffered many things (II Cor. 11:22 - 12:10), but Paul was faithful unto the very end. John the Baptist became discouraged (Lk. 7:19-23), but the Lord's estimate of him was that "among those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (Lk. 7:28).

It is interesting to know that Abraham Lincoln failed in everything he set out to accomplish until he was past forty years of age. He was a failure in business and for many years struggled under heavy indebtedness. In 1856 he was defeated as a candidate for the vice-presidential nomination. In 1858, as a candidate for the United States Senate, he was defeated by Stephen Douglas. But despite these failures and many other obstacles, Lincoln became one of the most honored and revered Presidents this nation has ever known.

Realize that the difficulties of life can be stepping stones in the development of greater character. The storms of life can actually be a means of strengthening us for some great responsibility and opportunity further up the road. Trials produce patience, patience leads to experience, and experience leads to hope (Rom. 5:3,4). All these are necessary in the development of greater character. As Alfred Montepert wrote in his book, *The Supreme*

Philosophy of Man, "Adversity does not break men; it makes them."

When discouragements come, don't give up. The pathway of life is strewn with the bones of those who made an excellent start but fell away. Jack Dempsey, former heavy weight boxing champion of the world, once said, "A champion is the one who gets up when he can't." We must be persistent in doing that which is good, despite the many discouragements and disappointments along the way. This is what Paul had reference to when he wrote, "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

During times of adversity keep faith in God and cast your burdens upon him. We must learn, as Job did, to show our faith and trust in God no matter what we face. The Psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not we fear . . ." (Psa. 46:1,2). God knows our every problem and every situation in life. We are exhorted to cast our burdens upon him (Psa. 55:22; I Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:6,7). He will not fail us (Heb. 13:5).

We need to be like the man who was undergoing severe trials. However, despite his difficulties he was able to sleep each night. When asked how he could sleep under such stress, he replied, "I've handed the matter over to the Lord who never slumbers or sleeps. There is no use for both of us staying awake all night." Faith in God helps to bear us over the rough spots of life. — P.O. Box 2161, Florence, Ala. 35630.

Is Man Wholly Mortal?

By JIM E. WALDRON

Is man a rational spirit being or is he wholly mortal? Atheists, evolutionists, and communists declare man is the product of this earth, having had his beginning with the dead matter in a primeval ocean; thus, the end product is wholly mortal and when man dies the whole person returns to the ground as so much fertilizer.

Some breed of evolutionists (theistic) of course are hybrids in their concepts of man, and claim there is a creator, but he was so incapable at his task he had to

strain man through the sieve of the beast of the field over millions of years before he could bring him to his present state. This would make God deceitful as he claimed to have created all creatures on this earth in six days (Genesis chapter one) when in reality (according to them) it took eons.

Yet, there are those around who are militantly religious in spreading their propaganda from house to house, mass media, etc., but they too teach man is

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

There Is No Escape

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM GOD. It is foolish to expect to escape from the presence of God. Everyone should keep himself conscious of the continuous presence of God (Psa. 139:1-12). "Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah" (Jer. 23:23,24). "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith Jehovah, and they shall fish them up; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity concealed from mine eyes" (Jer. 16:16,17). "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM CHRIST. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God," (Jno. 1:1-3). "For by Him [the Son] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth . . . and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16,17). We find Christ wherever we find God, and we find God wherever we find Christ. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . ." (Jno. 17:20-21). Through Christ, the invisible God becomes visible to man, according to our Lord's words. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him" (Jno. 1:18). It would be strange if Christ did not see every person all the time — since: he came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). His love is for the whole world (Jno. 3:16); his death was for every person (Heb. 2:9); Christ's propitiation



HOYT BAILEY

Continued On Page 3



FROM

THE EDITOR

The New Face Of Anti-IsM

There is a danger that an article dealing with matters such as we plan to discuss in this article might be misunderstood — not because what we say will be couched in obscure or ambiguous terms, but because some may choose to read into this article some things that are not there. To offset this danger we wish to be understood in the very outset as being firm in our conviction that the faithful child of God must stand for that which is right and against that which is wrong. We do not now nor have we ever believed that error should be ignored or that sin should be encouraged. We believe those who "cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine" of Christ should be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17).

Furthermore, we are keenly aware of the liberal philosophies and worldly practices pervading the kingdom of God. It is disturbing to see our own brethren aping the practices of those in the denominational world; some of our own preachers even preach like denominational preachers. The threat of Crossroadsism is certainly real, as is demonstrated by divided churches and isolated brethren all across the length and breadth of this land. Some among us seem ready to countenance the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, the teaching of Pentecostalism, Premillennialism, and Calvinism, as well as the idea of the direct leadership of the Spirit of God separate and apart from the written word. Against all of these deviations from the faith we have and will continue to take our stand.

On the other hand, the Bible and history have taught us that there is an opposite extreme which can immeasurably damage the church of Christ and which must also be avoided. We refer to what has been called, for lack of a better name, Anti-ism. During the first half of this century opposition to Bible classes, to individual communion cups, to the use of uninspired literature in studying the Bible, to located preachers, to women teachers of children, etc., resulted in the fragmentation of the body of Christ and the loss, no doubt, of many souls. In the 1950's and the 1960's Anti-ism took its toll again, this time with reference to church contributions to orphan homes and church cooperation in evangelism. Those who opposed church contributions to orphan homes and one church's contributing to another church for the purpose of preaching the gospel could not conscientiously have fellowship with those of us who differed with them. To them we were digressive, liberal brethren who would have to be excluded. The church divided, and those of us who were around to see that division can testify it was not a pretty sight.

By the time that movement had crystalized it became obvious that the real fight for survival — the fight against Liberalism — stood on our threshold. This was brought about largely by two things: (1) a general trend in the religious world away from belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and (2) an over reaction on the part of some to the Anti-ism which plagued the church. That war is not and never will be

over. We dare not relax our efforts, for the foe is powerful.

But in the midst of this mighty battle Anti-ism threatens to rear its ugly head again, but with a new face. And there is a sense in which the present Anti-ism may be worse than the Anti-ism of the past. In the past, antis have had their unwritten creeds, their man-made laws, which none could violate and be in their fellowship. One might differ with them on a number of points without incurring the loss of their fellowship, but if he refused to be governed by their man-made laws with reference to one or more of a few specific matters, he was considered digressive.

This new Anti-ism, however, seems less tolerant than the old. We can safely say the old Anti-ism was characterized largely by a certain attitude, but the new is an attitude. It is an attitude which causes one to consider as unsound and unfaithful any and all who may differ with him on practically any small matter. It is a pharisaical attitude which causes one to say concerning faithful brethren with whom he may have a difference of opinion, "I thank thee that I am not as other men are." It is an attitude which isolates one from so many from whom he could profit and with whom he could share in the great work of saving the lost. It is a negative attitude which likely will keep him from ever accomplishing much to the glory of God, and which may keep him out of Heaven.

There is room in the kingdom of God for some differences. Whether or not one agrees with me concerning which translation of the Bible is best should not determine the question of fellowship, so long as he is committed to what the Bible teaches. Whether or not he agrees with me on the question of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit should not determine the matter of fellowship, so long as he does not teach some guidance of the Spirit separate and apart from the Bible. The question of whether those absent on Sunday morning should be served the Lord's supper on Sunday night in a classroom separate from the rest of the assembly should not be allowed to disrupt fellowship. Differences over the propriety of a Bible class for small children during the time when the church is assembled on Sunday night should never cause brethren to consider one another as having departed from the faith. An otherwise faithful brother should not be withdrawn from or branded as a false teacher simply because he may have used poor judgment in connection with some work he is doing.

But brethren are being branded as false teachers in each of these areas by some who differ with them. In fact, it is the opinion of this writer that there are some preachers among us who could not name a dozen men whom they consider to be sound and faithful preachers of the gospel. The problem is that they themselves have become the standard, and a man's soundness is determined by the extent to which he is in agreement with them on every small matter.

Differences, even in connection with matters of judgment, might become so sharp that we could not work closely with those with whom we differ. But this does not mean we have withdrawn fellowship from them. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp difference of opinion. It was so sharp, in fact, that they decided to go their separate ways, instead of going to the work together as they had planned (Acts 15:36-41). But there is no indication either one of them sinned in connection with the matter, or that they considered themselves as having withdrawn fellowship from

Continued on page 3

There Is No Escape

Continued from page 2

is for the sins of the whole world (I Jno. 2:1,2).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Godhead includes, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one" (I Jno. 5:7). We observe in the Old Testament both an identification of God and the Spirit of God, and also a clear distinction between them. The identification is seen in Psa. 139:7 where the omnipresence of the Spirit is declared: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" And Isa. 63:10 says, "But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit . . ." In a great number of passages, however, God, and the Spirit of God are not spoken of as identical, as, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). (Also Psa. 51:11; 104:30). The Holy Spirit was present when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). The Holy Spirit is present as we "live, move, and have our being in God" (Acts 17:27-29).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ONESELF. "So God created man in his own image; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). Man consists of both body and spirit. ". . . therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Cor. 6:20). Adam and Eve could not escape from God (Gen. 3:1-13). God reminded Cain that his "brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Lot's wife did not escape from herself (Gen. 19:26). Nadab and Abihu did not escape from God nor from themselves (Lev. 10:1,2). Achan could not escape from himself (Joshua 7). One is still with himself in the other world. Moses, Elijah, the rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham were all with themselves in the other world (Matt. 17:1-5; Lk. 16:19-31).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM LIFE (LIVING). Enoch continued to live: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5). "Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Elijah went to heaven alive. Elijah and Elisha walked together, "and it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Ki. 2:11).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM PHYSICAL DEATH. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecc. 12:7).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE RESURRECTION. The Bible does not teach two bodily resurrections. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have

done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jno. 5:28,29). "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE JUDGMENT. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecc. 12:14). Those involved include Angels, Devils, and men, and the what includes deeds, words, thoughts, and secrets.

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM OUR OWN WORKS. Jesus said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Ecc. 12:14).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE FINAL SEPARATION. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). Sinners are separate from Christ: "That ye were at that time separate from Christ" (Eph. 2:12). Areas of separation are between righteousness and iniquity;

between light and darkness; between Christ and Belial; between the believer and the unbeliever, and between the temple of God and idols. In the other world, there is a separation between the evil and the good.

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE FINAL VERDICT. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Every one will receive in his body the things done, whether good or bad. On the one side we read that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction." On the other, "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, to be admired in all them that believe." On the one hand we can see why the second coming of our Lord is "the blessed hope," while on the other it is "the great and terrible day."

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ETERNITY. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place . . ." (Isa. 57:15). There is no escape from God while in the flesh, nor in eternity. Scripture clearly informs us that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). The eternal nature of man continues alive in God, because it is in God that "we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). The Psalmist reminds us that there is no escape from God (Psa. 139:1-23). — 204 S Main Ave., Sylacauga, AL 35150.

The Power Of The Tongue

(Part 1)

The story is told of a man in ancient times who sent a servant to the market place to buy the best piece of meat for a meal. The servant returned with a tongue of a beast. For some unknown reason, the man again sent his servant later to buy the worst piece of meat. This time the servant returned with a tongue of a beast. The principle we want to emphasize from this story is the fact that the tongue is tremendously powerful for good and evil. Though the tongue is a very small member of the human body, it can cause a great deal of misery. The wise man wrote in Proverbs 18:21 that "death and life are in the power of the tongue." History is replete with orators who swayed millions of people to do good or evil. Demosthenes overcame a handicap to become a great Greek orator; Patrick Henry stirred a great feeling of patriotism with his exclamation, "Give me liberty or give me death"; Winston Churchill led his people through the dark days during World War I; Hitler and Mussolini swayed the peoples of Germany and Italy in accepting their ungodly ideas; Martin Luther, John Calvin, Alexander Campbell and other religious leaders have influenced multitudes with their orations in times past. Today, men and women in politics endeavor to convince the citizens of this nation to accept their particular views on different matters.

Morally speaking, a person speaks as he thinks. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19). At least three of the above sins mentioned by the Lord which defiles a man are committed by the misuse of the



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

tongue. No wonder the wise man gave the exhortation: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). A man is what he thinks; and as he thinks so will he speak. The sins that deal with the disposition of the heart are listed among the base and dark sins of immorality. Such sins are mentioned as being the works of the flesh. They are "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings". The tongue is involved in committing these sins. Paul said that they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Paul, in writing about the depraved conditions of the Gentiles in his day, mentioned that "whisperers" and "backbiters" were among these ungodly people. The apostle John wrote: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). Many religious people fail to see that one can lose his soul in eternity by misusing the tongue as well as committing the sins of immorality.

The Word of God condemns the misuse of the tongue. The following verses teach that such abuse can wound or injure the hearts of others. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." "All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt" (Proverbs 18:8; Psalms 41:7). How little do people realize that words spoken as gossip can bruise the hearts of others! Sometimes it would be easier for one to receive a physical blow to the body than to learn what others are saying about him. Unkind words can strike deeper than a sword. The fact is that most people do not live by the "Golden Rule" given by our Lord as recorded in Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." One should ask the question, "Would I want others to speak of me in this

Continued on page 4

The New Face Of Anti-Isms

Continued from page 2

each other.

Brethren, we absolutely must reach and maintain a degree of balance in our preaching and writing. We must be "set for the defense of the gospel" against every departure therefrom. But we must recognize the freedom of brethren to differ within areas such as we have mentioned. Care must be taken that we not include in our fellowship those whom God has excluded; but care must also be taken that we not exclude from our fellowship those whom God has included. We must not allow this neo-Anti-ism to fragment the body of Christ.

The Power Of The Tongue

Continued from page 3

manner?" Of course, the unregenerated person could care less about the principles of right and wrong, of fairness and mercy. Even among professed followers of Christ, the tongue is constantly misused to destroy the reputation of others.

The apostle Paul wrote that Christians are "to speak evil of no man" (Titus 3:2). But rather, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31). The true story is told about a widow who called a preacher to come to her home and explain some Bible passages to her. He did visit her

and the Bible study lasted for approximately three hours. After the visit, the preacher made a call to the home of a Christian family and related that he had a very interesting Bible study in the home of the non-Christian lady. All rejoiced because of her interest in spiritual matters. However, some members of the church where this man preached saw him make the visit to the home of the widow, and, assuming the wrong intent, began gossiping about this matter. It wasn't long until the preacher and his family had to move from that particular city. Thus much harm was done by people who used their tongues in the wrong

manner. Such evil speaking should never be a part of the Christian character. There are times when the truth should not be related if there is the wrong intent involved.

The Lord God will hold each one of us responsible for the words that we have spoken in this life. "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36,37). — 809 Perry Store Road Opp., Alabama 36467.

Is Man Wholly Mortal?

Continued from page 1

wholly mortal; these are the soul-sleeping sects. Though they oppose the doctrine of the evolution of man and affirm man was created by God, they still line up with the unbelievers in declaring man as a person is wholly mortal.

The scriptures declare, "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Thus according to the scriptures, God said, "let us" (Father, Son and Holy Spirit, see Matthew 28:19), make man after our image. That is, God who is Spirit

(John 4:24) created man a similar being and clothed him with flesh made from the dust. Again the scriptures say, "Jehovah. . .formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1), and "we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). Since man is the offspring of God, who is absolute spirit, men ought not to think themselves or declare mankind is wholly mortal.

After Solomon had expressed the vanity of all life under the sun (see Ecclesiastes 9), he then said, "the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit

returneth unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). There is no such place as purgatory; it is a figment of a business-like mind from the dark ages and obscures the Biblical teaching about the final place of punishment (hell), resurrection and judgment.

We urge you to realize you are a rational spirit having been made in God's image and prepare to meet your maker, for there is no second chance after this life. — 833 Seymour Road, 7/F, Hong Kong.

How To Have A Happy New Year

DAN FLOURNOY

At the beginning of the New Year there is always heard the expression "Happy New Year." For some it is just a formality. For others it is a genuine heartfelt expression of their sincere desire for God's blessing upon their friends.

The Bible tells us how we can be sure of a year filled with 365 days of gladness and blessing. Hear Peter as he quotes Psalms 34:12: "He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no quile: And let him turn away from evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and pursue it" (I Peter 3:10, 11).

Here is a formula that works! (1) Refrain from speaking evil. This includes slander, gossip, deceit,

dirty jokes, etc. (2) Turn away from evil. The Christian must "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Titus 2:11). (3) Do good. It is not enough just to turn away from the bad, one must do good. Christianity is a positive religion and calls for good works (Titus 2:14). (4) Seek peace and pursue it. Jesus said: "Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

There are some very good reasons for following this formula: "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 3:12). The Lord looks favorably upon those following his will. He hears and answers their prayers. On the

other hand the Lord is against them that do evil. "But unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil. . ." (Romans 2:8, 9).

If one will truly follow the Lord, the New Year will be the happiest ever! An anonymous poet put it this way:

I know the year I now begin

A happy year will be,
If Thou dost guide, and I but do

The thing that pleaseth Thee. — P. O. Box 29163, Denver, Co 80229.

Our Message

Just prior to his ascension into heaven, Christ commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and "preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15, 16). From this account, together with the other accounts of the same commission, we learn that "the gospel" included faith, repentance, baptism and remission of sins (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47). Peter and the other apostles carried out this commission for the first time on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts' second chapter. On this occasion Peter's message was the gospel of Christ; and yet he preached repentance, baptism and the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). On that Pentecost day long ago, some 3,000 souls were obedient to the gospel message, were thus



DALTON KEY

saved from sin, and were added by the Lord to his church (Acts 2:41, 47).

This same message, the gospel message, is still "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). This message, being God's word, is still "quick and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12). It still works as spiritual seed, begetting children into the family of God (Luke 8:11; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23).

Because God has commanded we preach the gospel, and because God's power to save is in the gospel, we have neither right nor reason to proclaim anything save "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). To project our own opinions is not to preach Christ. To harp on our own pet hobbies and programs is not to preach Christ. God's power to save is not in our will, our wit, or our wisdom; his power to save is still where it has always been — in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Woe be unto us should we ever lose sight of this fact.

We must agree with the inspired Peter who wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). Again, we recall the awesome charge of Paul to young Timothy to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Notice Paul didn't suggest

Timothy share a few thoughts "about the word." Neither did he urge his young helper to talk his way "around the word." Paul solemnly charged Timothy to "preach the word" — just that and nothing more.

May this message, the simple message of Christ, ever be the theme of our preaching. As T. B. Larimore said long ago, "I would be afraid to be ashamed, and ashamed to be afraid, to preach on anything that is part of the divine message that Jesus has commissioned his apostles to preach to every creature in all the world." — P. O. Box 126, Aurora, Missouri 65605.

The search for happiness is one of the chief sources of unhappiness.

A restaurant owner in a southern state grumbled about poor business, "If I could drop dead right now I'd be the happiest man alive."

Pursuing happiness would be a lot easier if everybody slowed down a little.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1982

NUMBER 6

The Power Of The Tongue

(Part 2)

The misuse of the tongue by engaging in gossip and hearsay can cause separation among brethren, friends, and family members. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." "And a whisperer separateth chief friends." "A talebearer revealeth secrets, therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips" (Proverbs 27:9; 16:28; 20:19). We should



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

understand that among the seven things that God hates are "a lying tongue" and a "false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

There are individuals who are not content with matters being as they are but will intentionally make efforts to destroy a good name and stir up strife and discord among people. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips there is a burning fire" (Proverbs 16:27). The New Testament writer informs us that the fuel for such a fire is derived from "hell" (James 3:6). "Where no wood is there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth" (Proverbs 26:20). "So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small fire" (James 3:5)! The following is a poem entitled, "Gossip Town" and well illustrates the preceding Biblical passages:
Have you ever heard of Gossip Town
On the shores of "Falsehood Bay"
Where "old Dame Rumor" in a rustling gown,
Is going the live long day?

It isn't far to Gossip Town,
For those who want to go,
And Idleness is the train that will take you down,
In just an hour or so.

The "Thoughtless Road" is the popular route,
And most folk start that way,

But it is steep down grade, and if you don't watch out
You will land in "Falsehood Bay."

The principal street is called "they say,"
And "I've Heard" is the Public Well,
And the breeze that blows from "Falsehood Bay"
Is laden with "Now don't you tell."

Just back of the Park is "Slander Row"
T'was there a good name died,
Pierced by a shaft from "Jealousy's Bow,"
In the hand of "Envious Pride."

The people that live in Gossip Town,
All reap the seed they sow,
And you will find as they found,
If ever you chance to go.

(Author Unknown.)

The Bible teaches that one should learn to control his tongue; otherwise, our religion is of no value. "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

The inspired writer instructs the Christian to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Usually, the reverse is practiced. One is more apt to be swift to speak and slow to hear. No doubt much grief has been the result of such neglect of good advice. Those who truly enjoy life must practice self control in the proper use of the tongue. "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" (1 Peter 3:10).

The tongue should be used for good. The Christian must train his tongue to speak soft words in times of anger. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). "Pleasant words are as an honey comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

The Christian should use his tongue to tell the story of Jesus and his love. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life" (Proverbs 10:11). "If you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus and say he died for all . . ." (From the song, "Balm of Gilead").


Our tongues should be used to encourage others in life. We need to speak words of encouragement to the young, the middle age person and the very elderly person. We need to say kind words to those who are sick and those in bereavement over the death of a loved one.

"Don't wait to give your flowers,
Till some lonely soul has gone;
Give them while he's living,
Time passes swiftly on.

Kind words that are timely spoken,
Flowers that are given today
May heal some heart that's breaking
Or brighten someone's way.

So don't wait to give your flowers,
Tomorrow may be too late,
The soul you meant to comfort,
May have passed beyond the gate."
(Mrs. C. R. Ballou)

The greatest confession that one can make in this life is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Paul mentioned to Timothy the "good profession" (confession) which he (Timothy) had made "before many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12). That confession was what Timothy believed in his heart. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9,10). Philip, the evangelist, taught the man from Ethiopia of Jesus Christ. The eunuch became a believer in the Son of God. He then desired to be baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins and inquired of Philip why he could not be baptized that moment. "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then Philip baptized the penitent believer as commanded by the Lord (Acts 8:35-39; Mark 16:15,16). Have you made the good confession today? — 809 Perry Store Road Opp., Alabama 36467.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 750)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates. Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Abuses Of The Lord's Supper

Facing unwanted facts has always been a problem of man. Many in fear of a terminal disease put off going to a doctor until it is too late. In religion multitudes will not hear teaching from God's word that conflicts with traditions of family, friends, etc. We must consciously embrace the fact "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Also, we must accept the only source of spiritual truth. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in thy truth, thy word is truth" (John 17:17).



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

The Lord's supper has not escaped from the hands of false teachers. John wrote the following warning: "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" (II John 9).

There are those who say doctrine does not matter. This statement shows a lack of understanding of the meaning of the word doctrine. It is a synonym for teaching. Surely everyone agrees that teaching matters. If it does not matter the murderer would be just as good as the one who respects life, and the rapist would be just as good as the one who respects women and God's placing sex in marriage. Yes, doctrine or teaching does matter. Our doctrine must be the doctrine taught in the word of God.

The first error we shall discuss is THE DOCTRINE OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE CLERGY. The false teaching involves the untrue idea of the priesthood. Certain religious groups call their preachers priests. Only the priests can administer the rites of the church. The Lord's Supper, or as they call it, the mass, is one of them. The Bible teaches all Christians

Continued On Page 3



FROM
THE EDITOR

What Constitutes An Offense?

Words do not always mean the same things in all their occurrences. The modern dictionary definition of a word might not be the meaning attached to the same word in some Bible passage. For example, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, to baptize means, among other things, "to sprinkle water on." Careful Bible students know that the word never has that meaning in the Bible nor in any writings of the Bible period.

According to this same dictionary, an *offense* is "The act of offending or causing anger, resentment, displeasure, or the like." Unfortunately, this is the meaning so many attach to the word when they see it in the New Testament, and the results can be quite troublesome. While it is true that this is the most common usage of the word at present, in the New Testament the word never has precisely that meaning. When Paul said, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:21), he was not saying that one should



BOB DUNCAN

never do anything to cause his brother to be angry or displeased. He was saying rather that one should not do anything to cause his brother to commit sin. That is the very idea inherent in the word translated "offended" in this passage. The noun form of the same Greek word occurs in verse thirteen of this chapter, and is there rendered "occasion to fall."

The same Greek word is used twice in I Corinthians 8:13, where Paul wrote: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." The apostle here shows his genuine concern for the welfare of a brother who might be weak, and who might easily be caused to sin. The context shows that under consideration is a brother who, for lack of instruction, believes it sinful to eat certain meats. But in his spiritually weak condition he might eat those meats even in violation of his conscience if he should see a mature Christian like Paul eating them. Such eating, Paul says, while not sinful within itself, could cause the weak brother to sin by eating and violating his conscience.

A failure to understand the significance of the word *offend* in the New Testament has led some to misuse these two passages, as well as some others. Applying the commonly understood meaning of the word has caused some to argue that certain good works should be abandoned merely because there are some who are displeased by our engaging in them. This is a shameful perversion of the teaching of the New Testament.

The Fatal Night Of Daniel 5:30

Belshazzar was the descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, who flourished between five hundred and six hundred years before Christ. During his reign, the city of Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldean empire, was in its greatest glory. It is said that this city was fifteen miles in length and width; that it was surrounded by a wall of bitumin, eighty seven feet thick, and three hundred fifty feet high. It had a hundred gates; that is, twenty five to each of the four sides of the city; these gates with their posts, were all of brass; there was a street, corresponding with each gate, fifteen miles long, and one hundred fifty feet wide; and it had six hundred seventy six squares, of two miles and a quarter in circumference. In addition to this, the city possessed splendid hanging gardens and terraces, two magnificent palaces, and the renowned temple of Belus. The city, in addition to its impregnable wall, was defended by the deep bed of the river Euphrates. Such was this famous city at the time to which our text refers. At this period, the Jews were within it, in a state of captivity. The overthrow of Babylonian power had been clearly predicted by Isaiah some two hundred years be-



JOHN G. SHAVER

fore; and now this is literally accomplished, the last grain of sand is falling in the hourglass of Belshazzar, his cup of iniquity is full, his career of impiety ended, the sword is suspended, the fatal arrow is aimed, and is about to be directed by the finger of God. Observe the circumstances connected with this momentous night.

It was a night of dissipation and sinful pleasure. The wicked monarch convenes the company of his princes, nobles and concubines; the evening is devoted to banqueting and intemperance; the intoxicating goblet is passed around freely, and nothing is heard but the sounds of revelling, and the din of maddening mirth. How many has the love and practice of sensual pleasure destroyed; our country has lost some of its most able and talented people by the destructive influence of sinful pleasure; hundreds and thousands of parents have gone down to a premature grave through the revellings of their dissipated children; homes have been desolated, wife's hearts broken, children worse than orphans through fathers being addicted to sinful pleasures; eternity alone will disclose the unnumbered multitudes that the tavern, the race-course, and other sinful practices have destroyed forever.

It was a night of impious profanity. Revelling leads to profanity; purity of speech is soon lost in the carousing bowl; here, on this occasion, nothing will serve the infatuated monarch, but that the vessels of the Lord's house must be introduced, to bear the intoxicating draught around to the thoughtless assembly. No

Continued on page 3

The Fatal Night Of Daniel 5:30

Continued from page 2

doubt this was an affront to the captive Jews, and in contempt of the God they worshipped. Surely, Belshazzar must have known the events of his grandfather's reign, how the God to whom these vessels had been consecrated, had driven him to herd with the beasts of the field; but revelling and dissipation had prepared him for everything wicked and daring. Allow me to say, that infidelity and contempt for everything sacred, is generally produced under similar circumstances; skepticism is seldom the result of deliberate reflection, but of the love of sinful pleasure. A certain amount of infidelity is necessary to render the goblet sparkling, and the draught delicious.

It was a night of recklessness and apathy. They were aware that the enemy, a powerful army, was at their gates, yet relying on the security of the city, they gave themselves no concern. Now was time for reflection, but reason is dethroned; now they should have been watchful and vigilant, but they were sunk in intoxicating stupor. What a scene! A city engulfed in dissipation, and a powerful army undermining her walls. Yet recklessness is the natural consequence of dissipation and pleasure; these scenes blind the eyes of the mind, they

deaden the moral feeling, they brutalize the passions, and sear the conscience as with a hot iron. How rarely are men drawn from the whirlpool of pleasure; friends admonish, but they hear not; ministers preach, but they hear not; health is undermined, and often, even when the last enemy is known to be at the door, they persist in their course of sin and death.

It was a night of supernatural warning. See the banqueting hall; behold the sinful guests; the king elevated, the goblets passing around; but behold, the countenance of the wicked monarch changes, his eyes indicate terror, his knees smite together, his whole frame trembles, the mirth is interrupted, fear comes upon the impious assembly as a whirlwind. What has produced this astonishing change? Behold, upon the wall there is the appearance of the hand of a man; he leaves an inscription, which outglares the dazzling light of the banquet hall; a few words are written, and the ominous hand retires. The wise men and soothsayers are called in to interpret, but all in vain. At length, the queen mother is called in, and she recommends Daniel. Daniel, the servant of God is introduced; he refers Belshazzar to the history of Nebuchadnezzar; then he refers to his wicked-

ness (Dan. 5:22-23), and at last, he gives the fearful interpretation. *Mene*, which signifies numbered or finished; thy days are numbered, this is the last of them. *Tekel*, 'weighed'; the balance is against thee. *Upharsin*, 'divided'; thy kingdom is divided, the Medes and Persians are now entering the city, and thy reign is ended.

It was a night of fearful realization. The enemy had changed the course of the river; the keepers of the gates, in their revellings, had left them open; the army passed in to the city. The palace is besieged, and the banquet of wine is exchanged for the flowing of blood, and that night Belshazzar was slain. Such is truly typical of the end of the sinner; he may revel, and laugh, and scoff, but the end will come, the results will be appalling; the sequel is inevitable death.

When will mankind ever learn? When will we ever come to the realization that there is no security against God's displeasure? May we take warning from this illustration from Holy Writ and apply God's infallible word to our lives.—4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, Fl. 33566.

Abuses Of The Lord's Supper

Continued from page 2

are priests (I Pet. 2:9). Christ is the only high priest in Christianity (Heb. 7:12; 8:1-4).

Others who have a special clergy class do not hold the title of priests but behave as if they think they are priests. They too have a class system called the clergy and laity. The New Testament teaches no such distinction among members of the church of the Lord.

THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION is another innovation of error. Those who believe in this doctrine quote John 6:55, which states, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." They say concerning Jesus' statement, "all must believe that literally and really they were to eat his flesh and drink his blood" (Holy Communion by John Bernard Dalgirns, pg. 4). The whole chapter shows that the flesh and blood is just as figurative as Matt. 26:28. In this instance Jesus held the fruit of the vine in his hand and said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed. . . for the remission of sins." Jesus' blood was running in his veins. The bread and fruit of the vine represent the body and blood of Christ. The Bible does not teach the priest has power to change the bread and fruit of the vine into the actual flesh and body of Christ by his blessing. It is only an effort to enslave the minds of the people.

FOOTWASHING IS NOT A PART OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. Several smaller religious bodies practice foot washing as a part of the Lord's supper. It is true that Jesus washed the disciples' feet on the same occasion when the Lord's supper was instituted (John 13). But when Paul corrected the church at Corinth, he did not mention washing feet (I Cor. 11). The only other time foot washing is mentioned in the New Testament is in I Timothy 5:10. Washing feet in this passage was listed in a number of home duties as qualifications of "the widow indeed." When Jesus washed the disciples feet, it was done as an act of humility, and to effect ceremonial purification. He said, "If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Washing feet is a service of the home, not an act of worship.

ONCE A MONTH. SEMI-ANNUALLY OR

ANNUALLY IS NOT THE SCRIPTURAL TIME TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER. The only time mentioned to observe the Lord's supper is on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Every week has a first day. In Acts 2:42 we read, "And they continued STEADFASTLY in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and IN BREAKING OF BREAD, and in prayers." The church was commanded to assemble on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2). "The disciples came together to break bread" on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The Lord's supper was the

center of their worship. Therefore, when a church comes together on the first day of the week and does not observe the Lord's supper, it does not do what it came together to do.

There are other errors. It is hoped this discussion will cause you to go to your Bible to study the Lord's supper. Let us observe it at the proper time and as the Lord would have us do it.

Yes, the teaching or doctrine of Christ does matter! — Rt. 4, Box 3A, Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

Do You Want To Be Happy?

W. A. HOLLEY

Of course you do. Everyone dreams of finding happiness. But, we should remember that happiness is not a destination, but rather a journey. One cannot expect to be happy when he gets to Los Angeles or when he earns a million dollars. One must learn to be happy as he lives life step by step, year after year, through good days and bad days.

How can such a laudable goal be achieved? Well, keep your heart free from hate, your mind free from worry, and fill your life with good deeds. Live simply, expect to give more than you receive, sing often and pray always.

Moreover, if you wish to be happy, fill your heart with love, scatter sunshine along the way, forget self and think of others. Lift up your eyes and enlarge your field of vision. You can brighten the lives of so many people who desperately need your services. Who could these people be? Hundreds are in the hospitals and nursing homes; others are living alone in their own homes. Some, even the young, are weak in the faith and discouraged; they need a word of encouragement from you. Perhaps you could share a flower or some cake and ice cream with someone so lonely he feels that no one cares. Some are lost on the road of life and need you to point them in the right direction — perhaps a lost boy or a wayward girl.

You can never really be happy if you continue to squander your time and talent and money. These are gifts which God gave you so that you can touch the

lives of others. The most unhappy people are those who love themselves, alone. Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Again, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Try it and you will see how wonderfully satisfying a shared life can be!

If you would be happy, turn on your charm, be warm and friendly and outgoing. He who would have a friend must be friendly (Proverbs 18:24). Be easily approached; for if you are cold, distant, withdrawn and resentful, ever ready to express your indignant displeasure toward other people, you should expect to receive the same from them. Does not the Bible teach that one must reap as he sows? (Galatians 6:7-9).

But the true goal of true happiness can never be realized unless one becomes a Christian. True happiness, true peace and contentment are found in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

How does one become a Christian? It is not a great mystery which we cannot understand. If you will believe what Jesus teaches, and if you will repent of your sins, and if you will be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, doing all these acts of obedience from the heart, you will become a Christian (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). And then, in order to go on to heaven, you must live a faithful life unto death (Revelation 2:10; II Peter 1:5-11). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Elected Unto Salvation

Many profound doctrines are revealed to us in God's Word. These are described as strong meat (Heb. 5:14) and things hard to be understood (II Pet. 3:16). One of these, difficult but beautiful and encouraging, is the doctrine of *election*. Paul wrote that God "chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him . . . having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ . . ." (Eph. 1:4-5).



JOHN WADDEY

The word *elect* means to be chosen or selected. Election is the divine selection of human objects so as to bring them into a special or saving relationship with God.

We read in Scripture of the election of individuals to perform some particular service for God which has no necessary connection with their salvation. Cyrus, king of Persia, was chosen to restore captive Israel to her homeland (Is. 45:1-4). Jesus chose the apostles to carry his message to all the world (John 15:16), yet he said, "Did not I choose you the twelve and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). Paul was separated from his mother's womb to be an apostle to the Gentiles, yet many years were first spent fighting against God (Gal. 1:15-16).

God calls communities or bodies of people to special privileges in order to bless yet other people. God chose Israel to be his covenant people, that he might bless all mankind. Through Amos he said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (3:2). With them alone he shared his covenant. Moses taught Israel, "Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples of the earth . . . not . . . because ye were more in number . . . but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore unto your fathers . . ." (Deut. 7:6-8). If we look to the original giving of that oath, God chose Abraham's seed that in them all nations of the earth would be blest (Gen. 12:1-3). This election did not secure personal salvation to any one of them automatically. Each had to obey God in faith himself to be saved (Rom. 9:6-8).

The church of Christ is an elect race, "that [we] may show forth the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). This election of the church does not guarantee the salvation of every individual member of it. Only those who are faithful will be blest eternally (Rev. 2:10).

Election is *Christ-centered*. Isaiah described the coming Messiah as God's "chosen" (Is. 42:1-4). Christ is the *source* or the *foundation* of our election (Eph. 1:4). Also, he is the *instrument* or *cause* of our election. It was done "through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5). He gave "his life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45).

Election is *realized within the Lord's church* or family of obedient children. He chose *us* (Eph. 1:4); that is, Christians as a body. Election unto salvation is in the kingdom and the individual enjoys the blessing only as he is identified and associated with the elect body of Christ. The church was a vital part of the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:8-11). The Colossian brethren were elect (3:12) in the Son's kingdom (1:12-13). Unbelievers can be grafted into the body of the elect when in faith they obey Christ (Rom. 11:5,20,24).

God has definite purposes in electing us: (1) "That

we should be holy and without blemish before him in love . . ." (Eph. 1:4). (2) We are saved "unto good works" which we should do in his name (Eph. 2:10). (3) That we should live righteously, teach others God's will, obey Jesus, and praise God's name (Col. 3:12-17). (4) That we "may show forth [his] excellencies" (I Pet. 2:9).

Election is *available to all men*. God does not wish "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). God "would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 2:3-4). Such passages could be multiplied. Here Calvinism obviously contradicts God by arguing that only a portion are given opportunity to be saved.

Election is *conditional*. God has ordained that a certain class or kind of people can be saved, i.e., those who believe on and obey his Son. Paul writes that "God chose you . . . unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*" (II Thess. 2:13). Peter tells us that we are elect "unto *obedience* and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus . . ." (I Pet. 1:1-2). In Christ God did all that needs to be done, and that could be done to reconcile men, except what men themselves must do. That is, "Be ye reconciled unto God" (II Cor. 5:20). This occurs when we believe and are baptized (Mark 16:16). We are saved by God's grace, but grace must be accepted or received (John 1:12; Rom. 5:17-18). An elected saint must give all

diligence to make his calling and election sure or he will surely fall (II Pet. 1:10-11).

Election is *never based upon our personal merit*. Paul eloquently showed the Jewish brethren, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). Moses taught ancient Israel the same lesson which they subsequently forgot (Deut. 7:6-8).

Election was *done in eternity*. "He chose us in [Jesus] before the foundation of the world . . ." (Eph. 1:4). Paul wrote Timothy that God "*called us . . . before times eternal*" (II Tim. 1:9). Remember this calling was not for particular individuals but of a certain type or kind, i.e., those who would submit to Christ as Lord.

From Romans 8:28-30 we notice just a few of these rich blessings of God's elect: (1) All things work together for their good (vs. 28); (2) Justification (to be treated just as though you had never sinned) because of Christ (vs. 30); (3) Glorification in heaven one day (vs. 30); (4) God's divine help and assistance (vs. 31); (5) All spiritual blessings (vs. 32); (6) Christ's intercession (vs. 34); (7) Ultimate victory (vs. 37-40).

With Paul we sing, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9:15). Brethren, let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10). — Route 22, Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

"A Thousand Years As One Day"

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8).

This passage has been misused and misunderstood in many ways. Several years ago I heard a preacher use this passage in an attempt to explain Genesis 2:17 where God said, "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The preacher pointed out that Adam and Eve did not die the same day that they ate the forbidden fruit. He explained the difficulty by saying, "In God's sight they died the very same day because 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'"

The key to understanding Genesis 2:17 seems to be that the Lord is talking about spiritual death and not physical since Adam and Eve lived many years after they ate the fruit. They died spiritually the very day they ate; they died physically years later.

The key to II Peter 3:8 is to understand that the Lord has promised to come again and he will not forget his promise just because many years come and go. The Lord's promise is just as fresh on his mind as if it had been made yesterday when in fact it has been hundreds of years since the promise was made.

To illustrate, I recently was studying this passage with our teenage Bible class. I told them if they would remind me one year from now (December 16, 1982) that I would buy all of them a Coke. However, I quickly pointed out that I had no fear about having to buy about twenty Cokes because in the passing of one year either I would forget the promise or they would. They seemed determined to re-

member my promise. We shall see.

II Peter 3:8 is not a coded timetable to unlock difficult passages in the Bible. Peter's point is this: Man makes promises but with the passing of time, he often forgets. Not so with God, for he remembers and keeps his promises regardless of how much time passes.

This fact should serve as a warning to the sinner and give hope and assurance to the faithful.—7189 Westbranch, Olive Branch, MS 38654



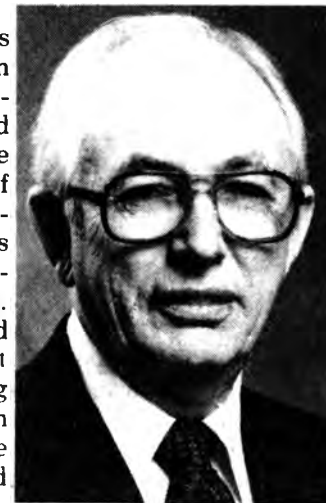
TOM CHILDERS

Announcement Of Interest

The Board of Directors of the Alabama Christian School of Religion announces that Winfred Clark, Minister of the Hobbs Street Church of Christ in Athens, Alabama, began working as Director of Public Relations on January 1, 1982.

The Board is indebted to the Hobbs Street Church for allowing Brother Clark to work in this capacity as his time will permit. The Board also expresses its gratitude to the churches at Munford, Alabama, Talladega, Alabama, and Childersburg, Alabama, for underwriting the travel and other incidental expenses which necessarily accompany such work.

Gary Bradley, Chairman of the Board said, "We are grateful to have a man of Brother Clark's ability and spiritual caliber to work with us."



WINFRED CLARK



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1982

NUMBER 7

Music In Worship

There are two types of music. They are vocal and instrumental. **GOD HAS CHOSEN VOCAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.** Paul wrote, "And be not drunk with wine. . . but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19). When the church assembles to worship, each Christian is to teach and admonish the other by singing (Col. 3:16). God is not interested in the melodious sound. He is interested in pure strains from the heart.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Adam Clarke, preacher and author of the Methodist church wrote the following in his comments on Amos 6:5: "If there was wo to them who invented instruments of music, as did David under the law, is there no wo, no curse to them who invent them, and introduce them into the worship of God in the Christian church? I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity. The late venerable and most eminent divine, The Rev. John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists said, in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.' I say the same thing, though I think the expense of purchases had better be spared" (*Clarke's Commentary*, by Adam Clarke,

Vol. 4, Pg. 684). This quotation is not given to prove instrumental music is unscriptural, but rather to show instrumental music was not approved by these religious leaders even in the nineteenth century. Instrumental music has never been used in the Greek church. They know it is the heart that is to be plucked and not the strings of the mechanical instrument.

The silence of the scriptures is enough to prove the unscripturalness of the use of the mechanical music in worship. John observed, "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" (II John 9). The doctrine or teaching of Christ is silent, in the scripture, concerning the use of the mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the Lord's church. Those who use it in worship do not have the approval of God. The influential Baptist preacher of London, England, Charles H. Spurgeon, quoted I Cor. 14:15 and said, "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."

CHRISTIANITY IS A SINGING RELIGION. Nations have patriotic songs which stir allegiance. Armies have their songs to instill the desire to fight. Organizations have songs to build enthusiasm for their cause. The greatest cause on earth, the cause of

Christ, has its songs to build faith, hope, courage, fortitude, etc.

THE CHRISTIAN CAN SING DURING GOOD AND BAD TIMES. James wrote, "Is any cheerful let him sing praises" (Jas. 5:3). We can praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Paul and Silas, after being beaten and placed in stocks in the inner prison, sang praises at midnight (Acts 16:25). They evidently thanked God that they could suffer for the name of Christ. A Christian is filled with joy and gratitude. Joy is a fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22). Paul taught, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

Singing sets mood in worship. It prepares the mind of the worshipper. When we sing such songs as "Night With Ebon Pinion," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," our minds are on the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. Songs like "Have Thine Own Way Lord" develop the proper attitude of prayer.

Singing overcomes prejudice. Singing is a universal language. It penetrates the hard heart with the message of salvation.

May we be spiritual in our attitudes and seek to please God and not to please ourselves. In worship we must remember God is the audience. — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

Sign Of Jonah

ANCIL JENKINS

Of all the Old Testament prophets, none seems more unlike Jesus than Jonah. Yet Jesus' comparison of himself to Jonah places the stamp of authenticity on this prophet and his work (Matthew 16:4).


The Jews of Jesus' day were looking for a sign. It seems they were not looking for evidence for belief but for grounds of criticism and condemnation. Jesus replied to their request by telling them to look to Jonah for their sign. Just as Jonah was in the heart of the deep for three days, so would Jesus be in the heart of the earth.

The greatness of the sign is not that Jonah went into the deep but that he came up on dry land. This, of course, is the great lesson about Jesus. The good news of the gospel is not that he died. Millions have

died before and after him. The good news is of the resurrection.

We live in a skeptical world. What do we have to convince them of Jesus and his work? We have the sign that Jesus gave the unbelieving Jews, the sign of Jonah.

If one assumes that Jesus lived (and most people do), he is forced to face an empty tomb. Jesus lived, Jesus died, and Jesus left an empty tomb. What explains it? Some of man's attempts to rationalize the empty tomb become outlandish. It is much more rational to believe in the resurrection than ANY of man's explanations. — 1701 Gold Ave. E. S., Albuquerque, N. M. 87106.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Sowing Wild Oats

How many times have you heard the excuse that, "He was just sowing his wild oats." With this excuse many actions are passed by and never thought of as actual sin and transgression of the law of God. Men have always looked for excuses for their sinful actions and this is a very popular one today.

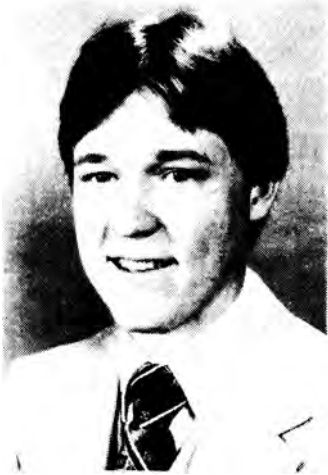
How do you answer such a statement? You could point to Luke 12:16-21, and point out that the rich fool made

basically the same statement. He was planning for his life without thinking of the consequences of his actions. He paid for it with his soul.

Or you could answer that sowing wild oats will cost you money. With cigarettes up to 65 cents a pack, with 15 billion a year in lost time, property, and medical expenses because of alcohol, with drugs that cost so much that many times the users have to violate the laws of the land to afford such, one can see the price is extremely high. Could we say too high? We have not even mentioned the loss of life because of such.

Sowing wild oats will cost you your health. In a study done at Yale University it was shown that over two-thirds of 500,000 alcoholics began to drink at the age of high school or sooner. Knowing that this drug alone can cause birth defects, dull the hearing, contribute to inefficiency and accidents, lead to social embarrassment and slow down the decision process, one can be led to the conclusion that it is not worth it. Of course alcohol is not the only thing with which people sow wild oats, but the same material can be found on any drug that is misused.

Wild oats will cost a person his freedom. What are people trying to escape when they sow their wild oats? Are they trying to be free of their parents? "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Eph. 6:1). Are they trying to be free from the



BARRY FIKE

Continued on Page 3



FROM THE EDITOR

"Samuel Told Him Every Whit, And Hid Nothing"

The statement which serves as the title of this article was made in connection with the revelation which God made to Samuel concerning the house of Eli. According to Josephus, Samuel was fully twelve years old when this revelation was made, and to this agrees the *Pulpit Commentary*. The statement of what Samuel did in telling Eli about the revelation is a remarkable statement: "Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him" (I Samuel 3:18). In telling Eli everything that God had said, and withholding nothing from him, Samuel established himself as a faithful prophet.

What Samuel did not do in connection with this matter is implied in the statement of what he did, and it is from this standpoint we will consider his action.

Samuel did not withhold a part of God's revelation because it would be unpleasant for Eli to hear. Certainly it was unpleasant for Eli to hear. It involved a rebuke to Eli for a failure to restrain his sons. It involved a pronouncement of punishment which would come upon the house of Eli because of sin. For Eli to hear such pronouncements was bound to be unpleasant, and it must have been unpleasant for Samuel to reveal these pronouncements to Eli. But Samuel performed his task faithfully, and told Eli everything.

Samuel did not withhold the message of God from Eli out of respect for Eli's age or physical condition. Eli was getting on up in years (I Samuel 2:22), and his eyesight was not good (3:2). There is every indication that Samuel had respect for Eli. But his job as the messenger of the Lord demanded that he tell the whole truth, and hide nothing. This he did despite his respect for Eli's age and his physical infirmities.

No doubt, Samuel loved Eli. Eli had been his constant companion and guardian from the time Samuel was weaned (I Samuel 1:24). But Samuel did not have the perverted concept of love that some have today, i.e., that love for one demands we withhold from him that part of the revelation of God which reproves and rebukes his sin or which warns of future punishment. Samuel "told him every whit, and hid nothing" despite the love he must have had for him.

Samuel did not allow Eli's station in life to keep him from telling him all that God had said. Eli was the high priest. This was by divine arrangement the highest position one could occupy in the nation of the Jews. No doubt, some would have denounced the wickedness of the poor and of the obscure. But Samuel faithfully delivered the message of the Almighty to the most influential man in the country.

Samuel did not try to soften the language so as to make God's pronouncements against Eli and his sons sound less severe. He obviously did not feel the com-



BOB DUNCAN

pulsion which some seem to feel to make the word of God more palatable or sin less offensive.

Samuel did not couch God's message in language which Eli could not understand. There seems to be a calculated effort on the part of some to denounce sin without ever letting those who hear know the sin of which they are guilty has been denounced. Samuel was not of this number. Eli knew exactly what Samuel had said.

Is there something in the example of Samuel that preachers of our own time need to follow? Indeed, there is! Neither the unpleasantness of the truth, the age, physical condition, or station in life of the hearer, our love for those to whom we preach, nor anything else should be allowed to influence us to do anything less than to tell every whit, and to hide nothing.

The History Of Evolutionary Thought

From the dust-laden heaps of antique Greek philosophy, to the Chicago convention of evolutionary confusion (October, 1980), the history of evolutionary thought has been characterized by an "evolutionary" process all its own. And no one is really prepared to understand fully the theory of evolution, hence, to deal effectively with its many errors, who does not understand something of its checkered past.

In a new book, appropriately titled, *The History of Evolutionary Thought*, Bert Thompson, Professor of Science and Bible at the Alabama Christian School of Religion, has traced the story of the evolutionary movement from its days in ancient Greece to the present day. This volume of 192 pages is an indispensable encyclopedia of information on the development of this atheistic philosophy. *There is nothing in print like this book!*

The History of Evolutionary Thought is a well-indexed reference tool that those who are on the firing line in defending the faith will use again and again. I can unhesitatingly recommend this superb contribution to the field of biblical apologetics. The book is inexpensive — only \$3.00, and it may be ordered from: Apologetics Press, Inc., 5251 Millwood Rd., Montgomery, AL 36109 (add 25 cents for postage). — 3906 E. Main, Stockton, CA 95205.



WAYNE JACKSON

Sowing Wild Oats

Continued from Page 2

authority that is over them? Is a person just trying to do as he pleases and not let anyone tell him what to do? "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Prov. 20:24). Many people forget that any freedom has its restrictions. To forget this will lead to jail or reform school, to having a job refused, to denial of an application for admission to a school, and many times to a loss of good friends.

Wild oats will cost a person his maturity. A mature person is self controlled. Wild oats will never produce this. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:22). A mature person respects the property of others. A person who is sowing his wild oats does not. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). A mature person has the habits of study, thrift, and usefulness; not so the person who is sowing wild oats. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). A mature person can distinguish between right and wrong. Not so with the wild oats sower. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship

one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Probably the most important point that one would want to bring out to a wild oats sower is that doing such will cost that person his soul. Some of the philosophies of such sowers are, "If it feels good do it"; "Everyone else is doing it"; "I'll only do it this once"; "It's my body and I'll do what I want to with it." Such philosophies take spiritual truth and civil law and regard them as so burdensome that they are cast aside and made fun of. The light of the gospel is obliterated behind a wall of bad habits and bad associations. Solomon said in Eccl. 12:1: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . ." Not to teach such to our youth will lead to sorrowful consequences that are already plaguing our nation.

So what can one do to avoid sowing wild oats? First, such a person needs to learn to respect authority. The attitude a person has of authority is a measure of his maturity, both mentally and spiritually. If a person resents his boss, parents, teacher, or the law, he goes against the word of God. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your-

selves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account . . ." (Hebrews 13:17). This is not to say that the spirit of exploration is bad. Indeed it is not if channeled in the proper way. But the spirit of resentment is impractical and unscriptural and leads a person deeper into the sack of wild oats he is sowing.

Such a person needs to learn what is real fun. It might seem ambiguous to say, "All fun is not fun," but it is true. Real fun is found in activities that are ultimately profitable, not injurious. Activities that help others instead of hurting, and those that form desirable and not undesirable habits are worth kindling. Wild oats only waste time, destroy property, and form poor habits.

Let us seek to become like David, who was a man after God's own heart. Let us try to be like Daniel, who refused to partake of the fleshly pleasures of the world. Or we could try to be like Joseph, who stood for right and morality, and Esther, who was willing to risk her life for that which was good. It is possible to sow wild oats, but it is so much easier not to, and the harvest is much better. — 1 Beverly Road Charleston, S.C. 29407.

"Why Do I Have To Attend Every Service?"

DOUG MILLIGAN

Every Gospel preacher has suffered through this question at some time or another. The implications of such an inquiry are disheartening at the least and devastating at the most. Yet, if it is an honest question, it deserves an honest answer.

Beloved, why *does* one "have" to attend every service? The Bible says "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). This simple phrase constitutes an inspired command to attend the assemblies of the saints. Failure to obey a command of God is to risk one's eternal life. It is to sin. Let it then first be suggested that a reason to attend worship might be to avoid disobeying God. In other words, we worship because God has enjoined it upon us.

This, however, does not fully answer the question of *why* one should attend, for it fails to answer why God commanded the practice. John informs us in I John 5:3 that "his commandments are not grievous." Paul contends that the sacrifice that God demands of us is our "reasonable service" (Romans 21:1). God's commands are not unreasonable, they are not grievous. On the contrary, God's commands are a blessing to us. His commands are given to us through his infinite mercy and grace. The Hebrew writer likened the relationship between God and man to the bonds between father and child in Hebrews 12. Thus, just as an earthly father has reasons for his commands to his children, God also has reasons for his commands to his children. What, then, was God's reason for the command to assemble?

Perhaps it was to stimulate the study of his word. Certainly, none among us would deny the importance of Bible study. It is vital to the child of God to partake of the sincere milk of the Word in order to continue to grow spiritually (I Peter 2:2). It can be argued, however, that we can and should study the Bible at home. The Bereans were commended for their daily search of the inspired pages. The Psalmist uttered: "In [God's] Law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2). For the child of God, Bible study is a daily practice. It is not and should never be relegated to a few short hours on Sunday. Certainly, when we

come together we should strive to learn more of God's will for us; yet this is not the primary reason given in the scriptures for the regular attendance of worship services.

When we come together, we are to "worship and serve the Creator, who is blessed forever." This worship is to be carried out "decently and in order." God is to be worshipped in "Spirit and in truth." We are to give praise to our God and our Father in heaven. In this we hit upon a point that begins to unfold God's plans and his desires as respects the reasons for church attendance.

It is obvious that our Father both desires and deserves our praise and our homage to him. The wise man said, "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). To praise and serve God is the reason for our existence. Furthermore, it is at least a part of the reason for attending each worship service.

The question now arises, why just "a part" of the reason, why not the entire reason? The answer lies in a careful reconsideration of Hebrews 10:24,25 as well as related passages. Verse 24 says we are to "provoke one another unto love and good works." The context of the passage, in light of what verse 25 says, implies that this takes place in the assembly. Verse 25 admonishes us, rather than being absent from the assembly, to be present that we might "exhort one another." Thus another part of the reason for the command to worship, is that we might exhort one another, and strengthen each other in the faith. This fact can further be seen in Colossians 3:16 where the writer commands, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." In this passage we are exhorted to allow the very songs that we sing to serve to edify and uplift one another.

The culmination of the matter comes in an understanding of what the worship assembly is all about. This is probably best described in I John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all

sin." Worship is a three-fold communion. It is the fellowship that we have one with another and with God. It is designed for our mutual edification as well as the worship and praise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Father and Creator of all things.

Why does one "have" to go to church? The answer is, he doesn't "have" to go to church. But one cannot imagine the love, and the joy and the fellowship that he is forsaking when he fails to attend. Neither can he imagine the hurt that he causes his brethren, who need his consolation and admonition and loving care. Nor can one imagine the heart-rending pain that is inflicted upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us, even while we were yet at enmity with him. Why must one attend? Because each individual's presence is needed for the strengthening of the body, for the praise and glory of Christ, and for his own spiritual growth and benefit. This, beloved brethren, is why attendance to the assemblies of the saints is commanded. — Route 1, Box 159, Mayfield, Ala. 35555.

Two things contribute to happiness: what we can do without and what we can do with.

America was better off when folks opened meals with a prayer instead of a can opener.

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.

A Christian must get on his knees before he can get on his feet.

To be happy, do not add to your possessions but subtract from your desires.

A small boy said to his best friend, "It may be unconstitutional, but I always pray before an exam."

Should We Please God Or Men?

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

Should we please God or men? That question has been asked and answered by many in the history of man. Joshua challenged in the long ago: "choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Peter and John said to the Jewish council, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19). The Bible is full of passages that reflect this teaching (Acts 5:29; I Thessalon-



JOHN M. GRUBB

ians 2:4,15,16; II Timothy 4:2-4; Ezekiel 2:6-8; 3:4-11, 17-21).

How do these passages apply in the lives of elders, deacons, preachers, and members?

The work of an elder is a difficult job. It is a job filled with responsibility (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28-32; I Peter 5:1-3; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; I Timothy 5:17-20). There are times in the work of an elder that decisions must be made that will please God, but displease some members. Even though it is difficult sometimes, the elders have no choice but to do that which pleases God. Some circumstances where decisions of this nature would occur are in the areas of church discipline, hiring and firing preachers, spending the money, dealing with false teaching, etc. When an elder pleases God, he will please the spiritual members in the congregation (I Thessalonians 5:12,13).

The deacon's job is also filled with responsibility. He is to be a "proven" man, faithful in all things (I Timothy 3:10,11). A deacon who is more interested in pleasing men than God, will not do the work he has to do.

A preacher who is interested in pleasing men rather than God, will do irreparable harm to the

cause of Christ. The Bible is full of passages that instruct the preacher to please God and not men. One of the main problems in the Lord's church today is the "ear scratching" being done by preachers. Some brethren complain when their toes are stepped on. If a gospel preacher steps on your toes he has missed the mark, because he was aiming for your heart. Charles Hodge wrote, "A preacher works for Christ, not the congregation; he preaches to not for brethren. He works for God with brethren . . . He 'scratches where brethren don't itch.'" I Corinthians 4:2 is comforting — preachers are not asked to be successful — only faithful!" (*Your Preacher*, pp. 27,28).

All Christians must decide to please God or men in every area of the Christian life (Matthew 6:24). As Christians grow they will find the strength to make the right choice (I Peter 2:2; Philippians 1:9). We realize Christians who choose to please men have been around since the first century (I Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14).

Should we please God or men? Let each of us answer with Joshua: "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14,15). — 332 Karen St., St. Charles, Missouri 63301.

The Way International

Brethren need to be on guard against the rapidly rising religious cults sweeping America. One such cult is The Way International founded by Victor Paul Wierwille in 1942. Wierwille, a minister in the Evangelical and Reformed Church, resigned the ministry in 1958 to devote full time to The Way.

The Way claims to be a biblical research and teaching ministry rather than a church. Their membership is estimated at between 20,000 and 100,000 in the United States and 62 foreign countries. Headquarters for the sect are on a 147-acre farm outside New Knoxville, Ohio.

In 1976 The Way bought the former College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas from the United Presbyterian Church and renamed it The Way College of Emporia. The 41-acre campus has a capacity for 500 students and is the main center for training workers. Students usually spend two years in training before working one year in the field. Following a year in evangelistic effort (putting into practice what they have learned in the classroom), students return for the final year of class work before earning a degree in theology. Although the school is not accredited, students stress their academic achievements. They constantly refer to their having "researched" various subjects as though this should settle the question.

Other enterprises operated by The Way include The Way College of Biblical Research in Rome City, Indiana and The Way International Fine Arts and Historical Center in Sidney, Ohio. The group owns a 105-acre camp near Gunnison, Colorado which is also used to train workers called WOW ambassadors. (WOW stands for Word Over the World).

Indoctrination in The Way begins with a course called Power for Abundant Living. A \$200 "donation" is required for the course which is supposed to teach followers the basic principles of Bible



DAN FLOURNOY

study. The text for the course is a multivolume work entitled *The Bible Tells Me So* written by Wierwille.

The doctrines of The Way International include the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, faith healing and a denial of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus. They also teach that man's spirit is merely the breath of life and hence, they deny eternal punishment of the wicked.

When the early Christian stood face-to-face with death for the name of his lord, it wasn't long until no doubt was left as to his allegiance. If he confessed his Lord, he was thrown to the lions. If he denied his faith, he lived — with only his conscience as his tormentor and the words of Christ as his ever present conscience. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). They all knew instantly, with the temptation, whether they were ashamed or proud of their Lord.

Today it is somewhat different. We are often confronted with decisions that will determine whether we stand with Christ or are ashamed of him. In every confrontation lurks the possibility of the subtle shame, the opportunity to be ashamed of Christ and the Christian calling without openly showing shame of Christ. There is a growing tendency to extenuate our circumstances and justify our failure to be positive and definite with our responsibility of allegiance. With the attitude of the world today concerning religion, it is becoming increasingly easy to find an area of gray in every temptation where we can station ourselves without appearing to deny Christ.

What we are apparently becoming more ignorant of each day is that God is not like man and though we may deceive ourselves, "God is not mocked . . ."

The Way recruiters (WOW ambassadors), working on college campuses, have been charged with cultish practices such as isolation, intense indoctrination and mind control.

A brief study of The Way International and its doctrines compared with the New Testament is enough to convince the Bible believer that it is not *The Way* of the Scriptures. — P.O. Box 29163 Denver, CO. 80229.

Subtle Shame

DEAN FUGETT

The God with whom we have to do is not affected by our extenuations. All things stand open and naked before him. The subtle shame becomes open denial and soul condemning. Beware of the subtle shame! More and more are falling prey to it. — P.O. Box 2062 Batesville, Arkansas 72501.

In life we eventually learn that there is a speed limit in the pursuit of happiness.

The trouble with being an atheist is you have nobody to talk to when you're alone.

Happiness is home-brewed.

The Bible is a book of prayers. Out of 667 recorded prayers, there are 454 recorded answers.

People whose main concern is their own happiness seldom find it.

Let us pray, not for lighter burdens, but for stronger backs.

Real happiness is getting a reminder about a bill you've already paid so you can sit down and write the store a nasty letter.



Words Of

Truth

(USPS 691)

"I am amazed at you, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1982

NUMBER 8

Salvation Is By Grace Through Faith

Mankind, seemingly by nature, is proud of his accomplishments. And, admittedly, these have been great and numerous. This sense of pride and self-sufficiency often carries over into the realm of the religious. We humans are prone to think we can "make it on our own." We forget that we are saved "by grace through faith." Yet this is the plain declaration of the Scriptures. "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" (Eph. 2:8,9). The reason for this is that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Consequently, "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Modern man can no more go to heaven on his own merits than the ancients could build a tower whose top would reach unto heaven! We need to remember that salvation is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy" (Tit. 3:5). God's unmerited love and favor toward us (and that's what grace is!) is the only basis upon which salvation is possible.



HUGH FULFORD

loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jno. 3:16). The question is, "What does it mean to believe in Jesus?" What is saving faith? When is the sinner saved by faith?

The most commonly accepted view says that all one has to do to believe on Jesus is just accept him in one's heart as Lord and Christ. Thus, in religious services people are urged to "come forward," "sign a commitment card," "kneel at the altar," "pray through," or even "just accept Christ in your heart wherever you are." This is said by a vast number of people to be what it means to believe in Jesus and be saved. But is this what the Bible teaches concerning this matter?

Our Lord said, "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" (Matt. 7:21). Of Christ it is said, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). If we are willing to accept the testimony of these scriptures we see that salvation is not a matter of just "accepting Christ as Lord in one's heart," but a matter of obeying Christ.

Christ has commanded man to repent of his sins (Lk. 13:3). Is one a genuine believer who has not

repented? Christ has commanded that one confess him to be the Son of God (Matt. 10:32,33). Is one a genuine believer if he has not confessed Christ? Christ has commanded that man be baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Is one a genuine believer in Christ if he has not been baptized for the remission of his sins? This no more makes baptism our savior than it makes repentance or confession our savior. All of these are simply the conditions upon which Christ himself has promised that God will save us by his grace. Without such obedience one demonstrates his lack of faith and shows he really does not know what it means to believe in Jesus!

I believe very strongly in salvation by grace through faith! I believe and preach the verses that teach we are saved by grace through faith! But I also believe and preach the verses that show we are not saved by faith only! I believe and preach the verse that says, "Ye see then how that by works [works of obedience to God, HF] a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). I don't stop short of telling people to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). I ask you, "Do you really have saving faith in Jesus Christ?" — 101 Dow Drive, Shelbyville, TN 37160.

The Children Built A Snow Man

EARLENE ROSE

For the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater — Isaiah 55:10

The children built a snow man;
I smiled at their delight
As they hugged that ball of snow
Dressed in his suit of white.

He wore Dad's hat upon his head;
His pipe stuck in his teeth,
And Mother's scarf tied 'round his neck


Looked like a big red wreath.

But soon the snow had turned to slush
Beneath a warming sun,
And the snow man got much smaller
And ceased to be such fun.

The snow man left that place of glee
That made the children thrill,
But in that spot, today I found
A lovely daffodil. — 1701 20th Ave. Northport, Ala. 35476.

But salvation by the grace of God does not nullify responsibility on the part of man. It is salvation by *grace through faith!* Grace is God's part — his acting in our behalf through providing Christ as an atonement for our sins. Faith is man's part — his responding to that grace, accepting it, and appropriating it to his life. Without believing (or having faith) man will still be lost in spite of God's love and grace toward him. Christ said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (Jno. 8:24). This makes man's response to God's grace absolutely essential. God's grace is available to all, but only those who receive it by faith will be saved. God does not force either his love or his gift of salvation upon any one! Man must accept it!

The golden text of the Bible declares, "For God so



**Words Of
Truth**
(USPS 691 760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Attend The Body Of Your Choice?

Frequently, we hear radio evangelists encouraging people to "Join the church of your choice" and to "Attend the church of your choice." Protestant preachers often make the statement that "One church is as good as another." Certainly, as free moral agents, we have the right and freedom to affiliate ourselves with the religious organization of our choice. But, does God's word encourage man in this matter, that is, to "join the church of your choice"?



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

In the book of Ephesians 4:4, Paul teaches that "There is one body . . ." That declaration is so clear that one should have no problem in understanding it. Regardless of what the body is, the fact is evident that "There is one body . . ." To substantiate further this great truth, please observe the writing of Paul in I Corinthians 12:12,20: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." "But now they are many members, but one body." Christ is the head of the body, explains Paul in Colossians 1:18. There is but one head over the body. Any more would make for a freakish situation. There is not one head in heaven and another one on earth.

The question arises, what is the one body? Please permit Paul to answer that question by inspiration: "And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church . . ." (Colossians 1:18). Again, "And he [God] put all things in subjection under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22,23). These two passages clearly teach that the body of Christ is his

Continued On Page 3



When Thou Wast Little

One of the saddest records of the deterioration of human character in sacred or profane history involves Saul, the first king of Israel. It is not only in physical stature that he stands head and shoulders above his fellows when we are introduced to him as a young man seeking his fathers asses, or when we see him proclaimed king by the nation and by God. His attitude is one of beautiful humility



BOB DUNCAN

and submissiveness to the will of God. He held his peace, even when some of his subjects despised him, brought him no presents, and called into question his ability to be their king (I Samuel 10:27). Later, when he had proved his ability and when some suggested that those who had despised him be put to death, he refused to allow a vengeful spirit to govern his actions (I Samuel 11:12,13). To him, the welfare of the nation and of its people was a far greater thing than to avenge a personal insult.

Some time later, after Saul had become rebellious and disobedient, Samuel referred to the time when Saul first became king as a time "when thou wast little in thine own sight" (I Samuel 15:17). How unfortunate that Saul's estimation of himself became greater and greater, while in reality he became smaller and smaller in his usefulness as Israel's king.

While we certainly must have confidence in our own ability and recognize our own worth, it is a tragic mistake for one to be deluded by visions of his own greatness. Observe Paul's sobering admonition in Romans 12:3: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." James 4:6 says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Verse 10 of the same chapter says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

Jesus teaches us that true greatness belongs to those who serve. "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:11,12). In Matthew 18 the Lord used a little child to teach a lesson on greatness: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 4).

There was a time when Saul was little in his own sight, but all that changed, and he allowed his successes to give him a magnified view of himself. But this same thing has happened to others, and could happen to any of us. The Holy Spirit knew of this danger, and so in listing the qualifications for elders, he said: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:6). Elders must be on guard against the sin of pride.

Preachers also are special targets of the devil in this respect. Paul said, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the

flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (II Corinthians 12:7). We must remember that, as it was with Saul so it is with us; whatever successes we enjoy in our work have come because God has blessed us, and not because of any personal greatness.

Let us pray that we might not be guilty of becoming great in our own sight. And let us remember that there is a danger that one might even be tempted to become proud of his humility.

Things Beautiful

W. A. HOLLEY

The words beauties, beautiful, beautify, and beauty, are used approximately seventy-six times in our Bible. The word beautiful is used "to describe that which is seasonable, produced at the right time, as of the prime of life, or the time when anything is at its loveliest and best . . ."

One of Jerusalem's gates was said to have been "beautiful" (Acts 3:2,10). Those who preach the gospel of peace are said to have "beautiful feet" (Romans 10:15). It is because the glorious gospel is so precious and wonderful, so needful for the salvation of lost souls, that it is said, "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" Concerning the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus declared, "For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27).

What we are contending for is not hypocritical appearances, but the true religion of Sacred Scripture which is sincere, wholehearted, heartfelt, and unfeigned, in its application in those who have espoused it!! God who is true and righteous and holy can tolerate nothing less!

(1) Would you like to be a beautiful person? Even though you may not win a beauty prize, you can be beautiful in disposition, in temperament, in character. One can be cheerful and sweet-tempered. In one's temperament there is involved one's physical, nervous, and mental organization. It is one's temperament which enables one to be cheerful and happy. Character involves those moral and spiritual qualities needed to make one both silk and steel in all one's relationships with God and man. Be it understood that true beauty is far more than expensive clothing and costly gold jewelry! These shall rust and finally fade away, but inward beauty endures forever (II Corinthians 4:16-18; I Peter 3:3-4).

(2) Would you like to have a beautiful family? The family has always been important in the mind of Almighty God; it is the basic unit of moral society. If the family is destroyed, the nation will eventually fall (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9).

The beautiful family must be based upon the dual commitment to God and to his will and way. God has ordained certain requirements for the proper family. Men and women should never enter into the marriage relationship with any reservation, i.e., "if it does not work out, we can always obtain a divorce,

Continued on page 3

Attend The Body Of Your Choice?

Continued from page 2

church. Now, turn again to Ephesians 4:4 and read the statement, "There is one body" There are as many churches of Christ as there are bodies of Christ. If a two-headed body might seem freakish, what would a head with over three hundred bodies appear to be? Since the Bible informs us that the church is the body of Christ, how would it sound to say, "Join the body of your choice," "Attend the body of your choice," or, "One body is as good as another"? That makes a difference, doesn't it.

Does one have to be a member of the church to be saved? Well let us ask it this way, "Does one have to be a member of Christ's body to be saved?" Paul taught in Ephesians 5:23 that Christ is "the Saviour of the body." So, if we want to be saved, we will need to be in the body of which Christ is the Saviour. Let us keep in mind that the church is the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:13, we learn, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" In Acts 2:36-38, we learn that

believers were instructed by the apostle Peter to "Repent ye, and be baptized . . . unto the remission of your sins" In Acts 2:47, it is stated that "those that were saved" were "added to the church." Thus, the church (body) is made up of the saved. The body (church) has for its Saviour Jesus Christ. When these truths are learned and accepted, it will be understood that one must be in the church (body) of Jesus Christ to be saved. — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp., Ala. 36467.

Things Beautiful

Continued from page 2

and find another partner." But such is an adulterous relationship which is strongly condemned by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32; 19:3-9). Such a shaky foundation cannot support a strong and stable marriage.

A godless home is no place to bring up a family. Both husband and wife should be Christians. Bible reading and prayer should characterize every home. Boys and girls need more than fine furniture and fine clothing; guidance, more than splendid houses and fast automobiles; direction, more than loose living and contempt for God's marriage vows. If you wish to have a beautiful family do not teach your children to curse and swear, to drink and to smoke, to divorce and remarry at the slightest pretext. "How could I do such things?" you may ask. Well, just do these things yourself, and your children will learn from your example!!

(3) Do you want the church of our Lord to be beautiful? To be beautiful it must have the confidence of the community in which it is located. The elders must set the example of what Christianity ought to be that others may follow (Acts 20:28; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17). The deacons must also serve the church with all honesty and sobriety. The preacher should make certain that he is "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy

4:12). Each member of the church should live so close to the Lord Jesus Christ as to reflect "the glory of the Lord" in his/her face (II Corinthians 3:17-18).

The church which backbites and devours one another cannot be beautiful. "If you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14). "Speak not evil one of another, brethren" (James 4:11). "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Ephesians 4:31-32). Any church characterized in all the unholy blackness of the works of the flesh brings shame and disgrace upon itself (Galatians 5:19-21; Cf. 1:1-2). Paul warns an incestuous man who was a member of the church at Corinth of the seriousness of his sin, and urges the faithful brethren there "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 5:1-8). "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." Religious division among the children of God is a shame and a disgrace to the cause for which Christ died (I Corinthians 1:10-13; Proverbs 6:16-19).

(4) Would you like to have a beautiful nation? From

a physical point of view we do have a beautiful country, indeed! Beautiful rivers and mountains, beautiful plains and forests, beautiful shorelines and fields of golden grain.

But there are some things with reference to our nation which are not so beautiful. For example, each day, 68,493 teen-agers will come down with venereal disease; each day, 63,288 automobile accidents occur in which 129 people will die; most of these accidents are alcohol-related; each day, 90 million cans of beer are consumed; and, according to the latest statistics, someone is raped every eight minutes, murdered every 27 minutes, and robbed every 78 seconds. A burglar strikes every 10 seconds and a car is stolen every 33 seconds.

Obviously, something is radically wrong! Lawlessness runs rampant in the streets, menacing the existence of our beloved country.

The way for our nation to be beautiful is for righteousness and truth to reign supreme! "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein" (Hosea 14:9). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

"Receive Ye The Holy Ghost"

In John 20:22,23 the Bible says that Jesus "breathed on" his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." What does this action and statement of our Lord signify? What did his disciples receive as a result of the Lord's remark?

This is not a literal blowing of one's breath upon others, but rather is a figurative term used in the Scriptures to show life, authority, strength, and the delegation thereof (Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 37:9; Acts 17:25; Psa. 33:4 and Isa. 30:33). Obviously, the "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" (Acts 9:1) and the "breathing out of cruelty" (Psa. 27:12) are to be understood as figurative expressions. In our text, the Lord himself is pictured in this same symbolic action, well-known to those who knew their Hebrew history, as delegating authority to his apostles.



WAYNE PRICE

But when were they to receive such authority? At that very moment, or sometime later? The English translation seems to suggest that it happened immediately: ". . . receive ye the Holy Spirit." The translation is a good one; the problem is that it may convey to the reader the wrong idea. The old adage that says "it loses something in translation" well describes the point being made.

Were these apostles immediately empowered to "forgive and retain" sins, i.e., proclaim the terms of pardon to the entire world? NO! Luke 24:46-49 says that this was to begin in the city of Jerusalem, after the apostles had been clothed with power from on high (Acts 1:1-8). The first gospel sermon was preached on that day of Pentecost, and some three thousand souls knew from first-hand experience what this "forgiveness of sins" promise was all about.

Mood, in grammatical studies, is defined as the affirmation of the relation of action to reality. IS THE ACTION REALLY TAKING PLACE, OR IS IT ONLY POTENTIAL? In New Testament Greek there are four moods: one expresses real action (indicative mood), and the other three express potential action (subjunctive, optative, and imperative moods). Remember this fact; it is quite important!

A Greek verb expresses time *only* in the indicative

mood, i.e., only in the indicative does it show an action to be past, present, or future. The "time" of action is lost in the imperative mood, hence the terms "present" and "aorist" (which normally indicate present tense and past tense in the indicative mood) pertain only to the "kind" of action (continuous or point) in the imperative mood.

The aorist imperative (our word "receive" in v. 22) has to do with action which has *not yet started* (Summers, *Essentials of N.T. Greek*, p. 112) which explains the remark ". . . receive ye the Holy Ghost" in John 20:22. Note also that the phrase "the Holy Spirit" is without the article which indicates an operation, or manifestation, or a gift from the Spirit, and not the personal Spirit himself. This passage is not talking about an indwelling of the Spirit at all, and here is the reason why: (1) Because an "operation" of the Spirit is referred to by the absence of the article before the word "spirit", and (2) because the imperative mood (2nd aorist imperative active 2nd person plural of *lambano* 'receive ye') refers to an action "not yet started."

John 20:22-23 is simply John's account of the Lord's Great Commission. It is yet another "pointer toward Pentecost" and to their being baptized

Continued on page 4

Is The Preacher Different From Anyone else

Is the preacher different from anyone else? Some feel he should dress differently or act in a different way from what others do. Can such action be justified in God's word?

There is no reason to think that a preacher's relationship with God is different from others. Jesus said, "Call no man your Father on earth . . ." (Matthew 23:9a). He is not forbidding the use of the term for our male parent. He is telling us that in God's sight, all men have the



ANCIL JENKINS

same spiritual relationship with him and each other. We all stand in his sight as his children and brothers of each other.

Let us not think that preachers have a special communication arrangement with God. They pray to God as all men do. They do not stand as a mediator between men and God. All Christians are priests with the same access to God. The preacher can intercede with God for man, but so can every other Christian.

The preacher should not be on a pedestal. He is an example and thus must watch his actions and words. But does that differ from any of us? His position neither demands special treatment nor excuses his mistakes.

The preacher is different just as all people are different, because God has blessed him with gifts differing from other men. Through diligent study he possesses insights and knowledge others may not

have acquired. He has been presented with the opportunity to give his whole life to serve God and man. He is a servant. He serves God and man. But so should we all. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, N.M. 87106.

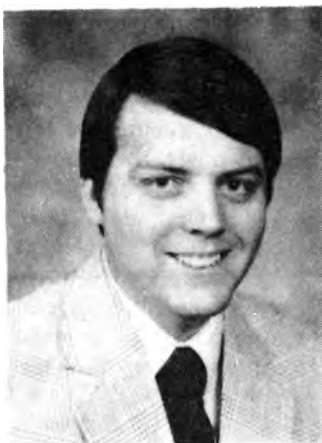
“Receive Ye The Holy Ghost”

Continued from page 1

in the Holy Spirit upon that day. Since this is yet another promise of the apostles' being "clothed in power" on Pentecost, it is reckless indeed to wrest the verse from its context (especially v. 23) and to construe it to be a promise of the Spirit's indwelling for Christians today. — 211 N. 5th Marlow, Okla. 73055.

Telling the Whole Truth

"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth . . .?" These words, so commonplace in our "post-Perry Mason" parlance, often are not fully appreciated. There are preachers who would profit by incorporating the principles of this judicial oath. Scripture teaches that: (1) We are to tell the truth. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you (Deut.



PHILLIP GRAY

4:2). If we presume to speak where God has remained silent, we have not spoken the truth. Hence, both adding to and subtracting from the truth of God are equally sinful. We are to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth. We understand this. Most brethren demand this of their preacher.

However some brethren, no doubt with good intentions, are advocating that there are subjects we simply must not talk about as we attempt to present the gospel to aliens for the first time. In the name of "positive preaching," congregations have been known to tighten the thumbscrews on their preacher and his lessons in order to prevent his presenting "negative" points which might embarrass the church and offend the erring. It is true that whenever we approach someone whose views are hostile to the truth, "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" and "a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Prov. 25:11; 15:23b). But tact in dealing with error is not the same as tolerance; caution should not be compromise. A man of God must tell the whole truth. Since he had never feared offending prospective converts by plain preaching, Paul could in all good conscience utter the following: "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 all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26,27). Neither the passing of centuries nor

the changing of Divine covenant have altered the sacred obligation incumbent upon all spiritual successors to the prophet who first heard these solemn words: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, "Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Eze. 3:17,18). Were not many offended at Ezekiel's preaching? Yes. God told the prophet, "But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted" (Eze. 3:7). Then why preach to them? "And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them" (Eze. 2:5). God has always been jealous for the purity of his truth. Whether the listeners are offended by it or obey it they must be given an opportunity to hear its own defense. It is a matter of principle. Therefore, to tell the whole truth is as much a matter of showing reverence for God as it is an effort to win souls to Christ. We must not shun to declare it! — Rt. 1, Box 55-D, Grove Hill, Ala. 36451.

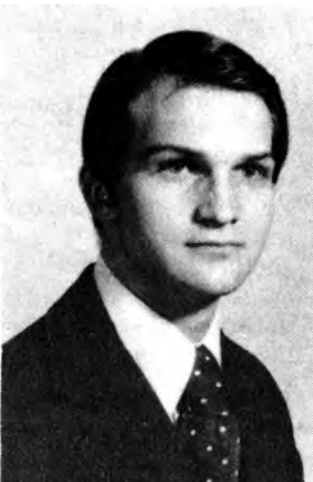
4:2). "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15). Since God's Word is truth (cf. John 17:17), we must not subtract from it. (2) We are to tell nothing but the truth. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you. . ." (Deut.

“Died Of Grudgitis”

(Editor's note: Readers will note a changed address for Dalton Key. Brother Key edits a fine monthly journal, Old Paths, and correspondence concerning that journal should also be sent to the new address listed at the close of this article.)

In an old, unkept cemetery the epitaph over a forgotten tombstone reads, "Died of Grudgitis."

If truth were known, many death certificates could correctly list "grudgitis" as the cause of death.



DALTON KEY

We have often heard folks threaten, through clenched teeth, "I'll get even with him if it's the last thing I do!" And it often is.

A well known New York physician says about seventy percent of his patients reveal resentment in their case histories. He says further: "Ill will and grudges help to make people sick. Forgiveness will do more toward getting them well than any pills." Yes, the epitaph of many a man could read, "Died of Grudgitis."

Our Lord both practiced and taught the principle of forgiveness. We recall Peter's coming to Christ asking, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" Listen again to the answer of Jesus: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21,22).

Likewise, the apostle Paul admonished, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven

you" (Ephesians 4:32). And again, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13).

I become a slave to the man I hate. Holding a grudge against a man causes me to think and talk about nothing but "getting even." I go to sleep thinking about him; I wake up with him on my mind. As long as I hate a man, he dominates my life. And of course I am neither happy nor healthy in such a fitful state. The result of such just might be an epitaph reading, "Died of Grudgitis." Food for thought? — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Happiness is the result of being too busy to be miserable.

The surest path to happiness is in losing yourself in a cause greater than yourself.



Words Of Truth

"I am not a philosopher, but speak forth
the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

John The Baptist

W. A. HOLLEY

John the Baptist was a subject of prophecy (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 4:5). John was born of godly parents, and was of full priestly descent, both his father Zacharias and his mother Elisabeth being descendants of Aaron.

Zacharias and Elisabeth probably lived in or near Hebron, a town in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 15:48,54). Before John's birth, his parents were childless. One day, as Zacharias was performing his priestly duties in the Temple, the angel Gabriel appeared, and informed him that he would become the father of a son, who should be named John. This child was to accomplish wonderful things for God and the people. The angel said, "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall neither drink wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:13-17).

Many scholars think that John was born in the year 5 B.C. From all indications, he spent his early life in seclusion in the wilderness, west of the Dead Sea. It was in the year A.D. 26 that he appeared as a preacher. His message was "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:3). He was a man sent from God (John 1:6). His work was to prepare the people for the Lord (Luke 3:3-6). His work was accomplished through preaching, not through some miraculous intervention. He pointed out Jesus the Christ, as the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29,32,33,36,51). He preached that the kingdom of God was at hand, and that there was one who would come after him, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire (Matthew 3:1-2, 7-12). He declared that Jesus must increase, but that he (John) must decrease (John 1:29-30).

John the Baptist was not Elijah incarnate. In fact,

he denied that he was Elijah in person (John 1:21). The truth is that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17; Matthew 11:10-15; 17:1-13). From the Scriptures we learn that there were some resemblances between the two men; they were clothed in rather cheap and coarse clothing, and in their speech, they were blunt (II Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4; 11:8; Mark 1:6). John the Baptist lost his life because he was bold enough to condemn Herod the tetrarch for living in sin with his brother Philip's wife (Matthew 14:3-12).

Jesus paid John the Baptist a high compliment, indeed! "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 11:10-11). How could this be? The answer is: John the Baptist was never in the kingdom of heaven a day in his life! John the Baptist lived and died before the kingdom or church was ever established (Cf. Matthew 14:3-12 with 16:13-20).

John the Baptist established no church or kingdom. John preached that the kingdom was "at hand," or had "come nigh" (Luke 10:9-11; Cf. II Timothy 4:6). All reputable Bible scholars recognize that the kingdom of God or church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38,47; 11:15).


We shall notice a few distinctive facts regarding the place of John the Baptist in the chronology of his time on earth: He lived and died under the law of Moses; he died before the New Testament went into force; he died before the precious blood of Jesus was shed; he died before the Great Commission of Jesus Christ was given; he was never baptized; he was to decrease — not increase (Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 9:15-17; Matthew 3:13; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 25:46-47; John 3:29-30). Hence, John fulfilled his ministry and passed from the scene; we do not look to John the Baptist, but to Christ Jesus, our Lord!

The New Testament reveals no church named after John the Baptist! John was "the" baptist, not "a" baptist. When one reads Luke 1:13,60,63, one will see that his name was JOHN! He was called "John the Baptist" because he was a baptizer (Mark 6:14,24,ASV). "The Baptist" as applied to John was

a term of identification. In those days there were many Johns, but there was but one John the Baptist! To illustrate this fact, note the following examples: "Matthew the publican" (Matthew 10:3); "Jeremiah the prophet" (Jeremiah 36:26); "Elijah the prophet" (Malachi 4:5); "Elymas the sorcerer" (Acts 13:8); "Luke, the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14); and "Philip the evangelist" (Acts 21:8).

"The law and the prophets were until John," means until the cross (Luke 16:16). "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached," means after the cross (Acts 10:37). Hence, those who were baptized with John's baptism after the cross were required to be baptized again "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-7). The law of Moses and the prophets, plus the preaching of John ended at the cross (Ephesians 2:12-16; Colossians 2:14-17; II Corinthians 3:6-16).

John was not the bridegroom; he was but the friend of the bridegroom (John 3:28-29). We are not married to John the Baptist, the friend of the bridegroom; but we are married to Christ, the bridegroom (Romans 7:4). Since the church is the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-9; 22:17; II Corinthians 11:2), the church must wear the name of the bridegroom, but not the name of the best man, the friend of the bridegroom (John 3:29-30). Never do we read of a Baptist church in the Sacred Oracles! It is an affront to Christ to name his church after the best man, the friend of the bridegroom!! Upon the Sacred Pages we read of the church of God, the churches of God, and the churches of Christ, but where is the passage which mentions the Baptist church?? According to Scripture, one must wear the name of him who was crucified for him, and in whose name he was baptized (John 16:24; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; I Corinthians 1:13). Since John the Baptist was crucified for no one, and since no one should be baptized in his name, it follows that no one should be called a Baptist!! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



FROM
THE EDITOR

The Inevitable — Another Price Increase

It is disturbing to us to have to announce another price increase to readers of *Words of Truth*, but it is a matter over which we simply have no control. Beginning with the March 19 issue the paper will cost fifteen cents per copy. We believe it is still a bargain.



BOB DUNCAN

Our last increase in price was a little more than a year ago. Since that time there have been two substantial increases in the cost of postage for this type of material. These postage rate increases are the main culprits forcing our publisher to increase subscription prices.

Words of Truth is owned by the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. The evangelist for that church serves as editor of the paper, and is responsible for the things published. But typesetting, printing, mailing, billing, etc., are all contracted to the publisher, who has always published the paper at a minimum cost. After all, he realizes the need to keep the paper affordable, and he is aware of competition in his own business. But he cannot stay in business without charging enough for his services to compensate for inflationary costs of publication, etc.

It might be interesting to some to know that the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ will be affected by the price increase in exactly the same way as every other

congregation which sends the paper to all its families. We will now pay fifteen cents per copy to the publisher for every copy sent, including the copy mailed to the residence of the editor of the paper.

With this kind of arrangement it is not necessary for us to sell advertising space. We do print announcements of certain lectureships and matters of general interest to our readers, such as the announcement of the Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship which appears in this issue, but at no cost to the school.

Our policy is to publish articles which have not been submitted for publication in other brotherhood papers, though we do occasionally make an exception. This assures our readers they are not just getting another copy of something they may have read elsewhere.

When one considers the hours which must go into the writing of all the articles which appear in a single issue of *Words of Truth*, and all the study, training, and experience of those who write, he will recognize the value of receiving such a paper every week in the year.

Each time we have had to increase our subscription rates we have feared that many would choose to discontinue receiving the paper. Such has not been the case in the past, however, and we hope such will not be the case now.

We appreciate all those who read this paper, and we are sure you are aware of rising costs in every area.

We solicit the prayers of all Christians as we seek to carry on what we believe to be a great work.

The Coal Oil Can

Some of you have visited our home and have noticed in the den, next to the fire place, a coal oil can. This can has no top and has on it the accumulated grime and dirt of many years. A few of you know the story of this can and why I keep it in a prominent place.



ANCIL JENKINS

This can was used to start the fires at the Old West Huntsville church back where I grew up. (How it came into my possession is another story.) My brother,

among others, used this can to start the fire on Sunday morning when he had this task. (To those who have never heated with coal, you need something to get the kindling burning hot enough to ignite the coal. Kerosene, or "coal oil" was usually used.)

I keep this can as a remembrance of former times. It reminds me of when *times* and *the church* were different.

I remember going to church in a small, wooden building. The temperature in this building was different from ours. It was cold in the winter and hot in the summer. One coal stove was in the middle of the auditorium. As I remember, the class rooms had little or no heat.

I remember these as difficult times. The Great Depression was about to turn into World War II. Few people had cars. Most of these who did not, had little money to spare to ride the bus. We walked to church, but we were not alone; so did many others. We were not hindered by rain or cold. We came on anyway.

We had little preaching. Let me correct that. We had few preachers; when we did have one we got a lot of preaching. Usually the sermon lasted an hour and often longer.

The Bible school program was meager. There were only a few classes. I remember the class for those who had started to school. We got a card each Sunday with a picture on one side, and the lesson on the other. When we outgrew this class, we went to the adult

Continued on page 3

We Should Know What God Has Spoken



S. G. GRAY

The confusion and division in Christendom would be resolved if everyone were willing to accept only what they know God has spoken and reject all else. Some argued with the blind man, whom Jesus had healed, saying, "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow [Jesus], we know not from whence he is" (Jn. 9:29). Without realizing what they were saying, these men were actually rejecting Moses, because Moses spake of Jesus as a "Prophet" that God would raise up (Deut. 18:18). In fact, the Old Testament scriptures, from Genesis through Malachi, speak of Jesus (Jn. 5:39-40).

It has aptly been stated, "The religious world is not

divided over what the Bible says but over what it does not say." If the Bible teaches us anything it teaches us not to tamper, change, add or subtract from what is revealed therein (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; I Pet. 4:11; I Jn. 4:1; II Jn. 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19). The Bible also teaches us that the scriptures furnish us completely (II Tim. 3:16-17); contain all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3); was written so that we might believe and be saved (Jn. 20:30-31); that all that is revealed is truth (Jn. 16:13); the revealed is confirmed by miracles (Heb. 2:3-4); and it was delivered once for all (Jude 3).

Simply from reading and studying the Bible one can know that God has spoken and can know what God has spoken. How anyone can know what God has said, on any subject, and ignore it, change it, add to or take from it, is a mystery this scribe finds hard to comprehend. By so doing one is saying, in effect, "I am smarter than God; I know a better way than God has revealed; God made some mistakes in teaching and doctrine, and I will assist him by correcting his

Continued on page 3

The Coal Oil Can

Continued from page 2

class.

Yet, we had something that so often is missing today. There was a dedication to Christ and his body that we, as a whole do not equal, in my opinion. The church took priority in our lives.

We lacked most of what people today feel is necessary to have a vital, dynamic congregation. Yet today, that congregation has become one of the great ones of our brotherhood. From it has come a number of preachers. The influence of this congregation is felt

world-wide. From the little class with the Sunday school cards I was in, have come three or four who preach. Others have become elders, deacons, and Bible school teachers.

We tend now to excuse our commitment and misplaced values by saying, "Well, times are different." This is true. However, let us not forget that people change times and not the reverse. We cannot excuse a worldly attitude by blaming it on a change of circumstances.

Times may have changed, but the needs of people have not. Men still need their sins forgiven. We still need the means of spiritual maturity. People do not live apart from others; they need fellowship. These needs are still met by the church.

We as members of the church are planting the seed that will mature in the church in the future. If the seed is different from that planted in our past — what will be the church of the future? — 1701 Gold Avenue, S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

We Should Know What God Has Spoken

Continued from page 2

mistakes."

If this writer were ever to entertain the thought of changing what is revealed, the reading of the story of Uzza, who impulsively, no doubt, touched the ark of God, which kindled God's anger, and there he died by the ark of God (II Sam. 6:6), would cause him to fear having such thoughts. Another Old Testament story worth remembering is the account in Leviticus 10:1-2,

telling of the priests, Nadab and Abihu, substituting strange fire for the fire God had commanded. They, too, were struck dead.

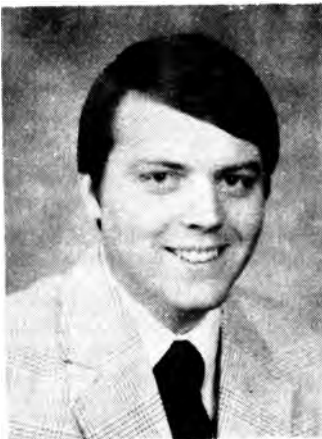
God is, today, the object of Christian worship and his word is our guide (Jn. 4:23-24). However, only a few, seemingly, ask, "What does God say about this or that?" Instead, the majority, obviously, seek to please only themselves and to do whatever they

desire, ignoring almost completely what God says (cf. Gal. 1:10). This applies to doctrine, worship and Christian principles.

Friends and brethren, let us first study to know what God says, and secondly, let us do everything he says, exactly the way he says to do it! — P.O. Box 856 Washington, Ga. 30673.

Is I Timothy 2:11-15 A Mere Outdated Opinion

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Not withstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (I Tim. 2:11-15).



PHILLIP GRAY

"Who would object if your church hired a woman pastor?" the professor asked challengingly. A lone hand appeared above the heads of the silent students. "Oh! I thought there would be an objection to that!" said the professor in a delighted tone. "And why object?" he probed.

"Because Paul forbids a woman to teach or to usurp authority over the man in a public, religious assembly," replied the dissident student.

Swelling with the enthusiasm of one about to incite a lively and heated discussion, the doctor then just had to know the other students' response to this answer. Thus, he asked, "Who of you thinks Paul was wrong?" Immediately, several admitted that they did (some vehemently).

So went a rather typical morning of class in a rather typical denominational college; a school typical of the many church-related institutions that have become rife with liberalism, neoorthodoxy, and every manner of imagination which exalteth itself against a knowledge of God. It is not at all uncommon to hear it confessed frankly that, "I don't believe Paul was right in forbidding women to teach in a public capacity over men." This is being said by an alarmingly great many, "devoutly religious" people. The critical question is, however, are they right?

Usually, it is not argued that Paul, in the passage in question, did not really forbid a woman's teaching

over a mixed assembly of believers. That he did is most often mutually agreed at the outset. However, increasing numbers of religionists refuse to accept Paul's revelation as being of binding authority for themselves or "their church." They contend that Paul was simply a product of his own time; that he cannot speak for all men in every age. Since, "the times, they are 'a changing,'" they continue, we must seek to revise Paul's writings to make them relevant for today.

May we pity those of this persuasion who rebel against God's counsel as preached by Paul and the other apostles. Paul himself declared, in I Cor. 14:37 that, "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." Again, in I Thess. 2:13, he wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Question: How would wresting (or twisting) Paul's writings bring destruction on someone? Peter said that it would. He said that unlearned and unstable men had so treated Paul's writings, "as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16). It should be remembered that, in the Bible, this term "scriptures" assumes a more technical and restrictive meaning than its normal, general signification of "writings" in the secular literature of Peter's day. In the sacred literature, it came to mean just "sacred writings" (A. F. Walls, "Scriptures," *The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 1152). Thus, since Paul has said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16), and since this, in principle, includes any sacred writing (i.e., "scriptures"), then Paul's writings were given by inspiration of God (cf. John 14:26; 16:13; I Pet. 1:10-12). This, of course, includes his writings on the role of women in the church.

Suppose it were now possible for us to ask Paul personally where he got the ideas expressed in I Tim. 2:11-15. Could we not safely expect his response to be, "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" (Gal. 1:11,12)? I believe we could. Therefore, whoever denies the injunction against women presiding as teachers over men in a public assembly, necessarily denies the very words of Almighty God (cf. I Cor. 2:9-13). — Rt. 1, Box 55-D, Grove Hill, Ala. 36451.

Someone Is Trusting You

EARLENE ROSE

These are the things that ye shall do; speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates. Zechariah 8:16

A father held his young son close,
And said "Now listen, son,
Tomorrow we'll go to the zoo
And have the greatest fun."

But the morrow was a busy day,
And Dad forgot his word
Until his son tugged at his hand,
And these true words he heard.

"You gave your word to me, Dad,
You gave it carelessly,
And I expected you to keep
That promise made to me.

For I had confidence in you,
And I believed you would
Honor all the words you spoke
And make each promise good."

When confidence is shattered;
A boy is shattered too;
So be careful what you promise —
Someone is trusting you. — 1701 20th Avenue
Northport, Alabama 35476



BECKY TILOTTA
HOLBROOK



CURTIS A. CATES



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, JR.



MAX R. MILLER

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP MARCH 21-25, 1982

Memphis School of Preaching

4400 Knight Arnold Road

Memphis, TN 38118

GENERAL THEME: "Renewed Emphasis On Fundamentals of the Faith"

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

Sunday, March 21, 1982

6:00 p.m. John W. Barcus "False Doctrine on Trial"

Monday, March 22, 1982

8:30 a.m. John W. Barcus "A Call to Work and Purity"

9:30 A. M. Becky Tilotta Holbrook "Every Step of the Way"
(Ladies Only)

9:30 a.m. Ira Y. Rice, Jr. ... "Pentecostalism: How It Infiltrated
the Church"

10:30 a.m. Fred G. House "That Which Changes Not"

12:20 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH

1:00 p.m. Robert R. Taylor Jr. ... "Forsaking the Fundamentals"

2:00 p.m. Ken Burleson "The Prophets and Fundamentals
of Godly Living"

3:00 p.m. OPEN FORUM:

Panel: Winfred Clark, Max R. Miller,
Robert R. Taylor, Jr., and Curtis A. Cates

4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER

7:10 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:30 p.m. Max R. Miller "Great Is The Mystery
of Godliness"

TUESDAY, MARCH 23

8:30 a.m. Roy V. Wright "Who Has The
Responsibility of Worship?"

9:30 a.m. Becky Tilotta Holbrook "Every Step of the Way"
(Ladies Only)

9:30 a.m. Fred G. House "Repent Or Else"

10:30 a.m. Max R. Miller "Fighting the Fight of Faith"

11:20 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH

1:00 p.m. Glenn M. Lee "Fundamentals of the Faith In
Dealing with False Doctrines in the Book of Acts"

2:00 p.m. Leon Jones "God Has Drawn the Line"

3:00 p.m. OPEN FORUM:

Panel: Max R. Miller, Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Curtis A. Cates, and Winfred Clark

4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER

(Alumni Meeting at Harding Cafeteria)

7:10 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:30 p.m. Curtis A. Cates "Secular Humanism"

Wednesday, March 24

8:30 a.m. James Pilgrim "Authority of the Scriptures"

9:30 a.m. Becky Tilotta Holbrook "Every Step of the Way"
(Ladies Only)

9:30 a.m. Ira Y. Rice Jr. ... "Liberalism: How It Has Undermined
the Great Restoration Movement"

10:30 a.m. Bobby Duncan "Inspiration"

11:20 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH

1:00 p.m. Curtis A. Cates "Power of God's Word"

2:00 p.m. Kerry Knight ... "Church Growth Without Gimmicks"

3:00 p.m. OPEN FORUM:

Panel: Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Winfred Clark,
Glenn M. Lee and Max R. Miller

4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER

7:10 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:30 p.m. Winfred Clark "An Epistle of Growth:
A Study of Second Peter"

Thursday, March 25

8:30 a.m. James Pilgrim "Is Doctrine Important?"

9:30 a.m. Becky Tilotta Holbrook "Every Step of the Way"
(Ladies Only)

9:30 a.m. Bobby Duncan "Inspiration, Part 2."

10:30 a.m. Winfred Clark "The Theophilus Concept
of the Church"

11:20 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH

1:00 p.m. Elliott H. Glasgow "The Christian and Attitudes"

2:00 p.m. Kerry Knight "A Critical Look
at Campus Ministeries"

3:00 p.m. OPEN FORUM:

Panel: Glenn M. Lee, Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Max R. Miller and Winfred Clark

4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER

7:10 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:30 p.m. Robert R. Taylor, Jr. "Who Is Jesus Christ?"



IRA Y. RICE, JR.



KEN BURLESON



ROY V. WRIGHT



GLANN M. LEE



LEON C. JONES



JAMES PILGRIM



KERRY KNIGHT



JOHN W. BARCUS



FRED G. HOUSE



ELLIOTT H. GLASGOW



WINFRED CLARK



BOBBY DUNCAN



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-

"I am not like Festus; but speak forth
the words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 1982

NUMBER 10

Stedfastness In The Christian Profession



JOHN G. SHAVER

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). The writer had been referring to the sacrificial work of Jesus, in opening a way by which we might have boldness of access into the holiest of all, consecrated for us by his precious blood. He then directs how we are to draw near to God by this way, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, with hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and bodies washed with pure water. Then he urges the necessity of stedfastness in the Christian profession: "Let us hold fast"

Let us consider the profession referred to. He calls it, "the profession of our faith." It is the obvious exhibition of our faith in the gospel, and our attachment and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. This profession is, in the first place, put on when we become members of the body of Christ, the church of Christ, in sweet submission to God's will (Acts 2:38, 41-42, 47). The possession of religion is clearly supposed. But more than this is required. We must let our lights shine; as salt, the savor of our piety must be spread abroad (Matt. 5:13-16). We must be a united people; be called by his name, rally around his cross, and be devoted to his glory. We must carry his word to a lost and dying world (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16). The members of the Lord's church in Jerusalem heard, believed, were baptized, and then continued stedfastly in the ordinances of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

Secondly, this profession is one part of religion itself. It is directly enjoined by the head of the church, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). We are called to follow him who publicly honored his heavenly Father. He has said that they who are ashamed of him, and fail to confess him before men, of them will he also be ashamed (Matt. 10:32-

33). "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me" (Lk. 14:27).

Thirdly, this profession will expose one to difficulties and sufferings. There will be the assaults of Satan. This profession is a declaration of war with him. He will come as a flood to overwhelm us, direct his fiery darts, and sift us as he did Peter. There will be the opposition of the world. The world is at enmity with God and all his people (I Jno. 2:15-17). The world hated Christ, and will hate all his sincere followers. There will also be the indisposition of our own hearts — weakness, indolence, self-love, unbelief and unwatchfulness.

Let us now consider the duty enjoined by this profession. This profession must be held fast. This implies first of all, that there must be a decision of character. We must not be halting between two opinions. We cannot be half-hearted. All our powers must be surrendered to God — the entire surrender of the whole man. The heart must fully be on the Lord's side. Secondly, there must be constancy of spirit — the heart established, the mind fixed, the soul stayed upon God. Constant in duties; especially prayer, praise, and study of the divine word. We must always be setting the Lord before us, not considering him as needed only in time of trouble. We are not to be as the morning cloud and early dew. Thirdly, there must be perseverance of practice. We can only retain our hold by pressing onward. We must be found walking in the Lord's ways, running the appointed race, warring the spiritual warfare, striving, being diligent, and abounding more and more in the work of the Lord — not weary, but faithful unto death. And fourthly, we must hold fast our profession by the exercise of vigorous faith — by the constraining influence of Christ's love, by the cheering attractions of a lively hope, by the staying effects of holy patience, and by the continual use of all the appointed means of grace.

Let us also consider some motives by which this duty may be enforced. Love to Jesus is a powerful motive — gratitude for past mercies, our present happiness, and our prospect of eternal faithfulness. But there is one which our text supplies: "For he is faithful that promised." Christ's faithfulness is here laid down as the great motive. He first of all has promised to give us grace to hold fast

our profession; and "he is faithful" — to cheer, to direct, to keep, to uphold, and to save. He will never leave us. He will supply our every need. Secondly, he has promised to acknowledge our profession. He has said that he will confess us, and acknowledge all that we do in suffering for his sake. Thirdly, he has promised to reward our profession. He has promised that we shall reap according to how we have sown — that we shall receive a hundredfold, and life everlasting; an unchanging inheritance, an unfading crown, an everlasting kingdom, and fullness of joy for evermore. Our labors shall be rewarded with rest, our warfare with celestial triumph, and our sufferings with an eternal weight of glory. Nothing can change his mind; nothing can frustrate his counsels; nothing can cause him to violate his word. His throne and his glory rest upon his faithfulness. If this failed, heaven and earth would be involved in ruin.


May we learn (1) that religion requires both the devotion of the heart, and the profession of the life, (2) that the way to heaven is associated with conflicts, (3) that stedfastness is essential to our salvation, (4) that God has provided abundant resources for our comfort and safety, and (5) that the end will amply recompense for the trials of the way. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, Fla. 33566.

Shall We Re-Write Matthew 19?

DAN BLANCHARD

Perhaps the most critical issue facing God's people at present is that which concerns divorce and remarriage. It is vital that each Bible student analyze accurately what the Holy Spirit says regarding this potentially soul-threatening matter. It is also important that we realize what the word of God does NOT say. One prominent position championed in a work entitled *Not Under Bondage* demands that Matthew 19 read in a way other than it does. This writer sug-

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RON HARPER Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

"Hold Up Their Hands"

Shortly after the children of Israel left the land of Egypt, they were engaged in a battle with Amalek in Rephidim. During this battle a very unusual military tactic was used by Moses. "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek; And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy, and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Ex. 17:8-13).

A LESSON LEARNED

This story from the Old Testament reveals a great lesson that we need to act upon. As Moses was a leader of God's people, we also have spiritual leaders among us. As Moses had a great responsibility bearing upon him, we also understand the same is true of elders in the Lord's church. As Moses needed help to hold up his hands that the people of God might be successful so the elders need help in holding up their hands that the church might be successful in our day.

Happiness comes when we stop wailing about the troubles we have, and offer thanks for all the troubles we don't have.



Roger W. Davis, Jr.

Thomas Gray, the English poet, wrote: "Where ignorance is bliss, / 'Tis folly to be wise" (*Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*). Some think they represent the idea expressed by the poet when they say that ignorance is bliss, or when they talk about "blissful ignorance." But the poet did not make a sweeping statement to the effect that ignorance is bliss; he rather alluded to the fact that there may be circumstances in which ignorance makes for happiness, and in those circumstances knowledge would be of no benefit.

Is ignorance bliss? It is not. Notice some things the Bible teaches about ignorance.

Ignorance is one of the sins responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Peter said to those who had killed the Prince of Life: "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17).

Ignorance alienates from God. Paul wrote: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17,18).

Ignorance hinders obedience to God. Peter described those to whom he wrote as "obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance" (I Peter 1:14).

Ignorance will lead one to forsake the truth and go into error. To the Romans Paul wrote of some who were "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).

Ignorance leads people to engage in false worship. To the Athenians on Mars' Hill Paul said: "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN

Is Ignorance Bliss?



BOB DUNCAN

FROM
THE EDITOR

GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23).

Ignorance will cause saints to abandon their faith and be lost. Paul prefaced his warnings to the Corinthians concerning the danger of apostasy with the words: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant . . ." (I Corinthians 10:1).

Ignorance causes problems in the church. There were problems in the church at Corinth over the matter of spiritual gifts. When Paul set about to solve those problems, he began by saying, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (I Corinthians 12:1).

Ignorance causes one to be wise in his own conceits. To the Romans Paul wrote: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits . . ." (Romans 11:25).

Ignorance will give Satan an advantage over one. In admonishing the Corinthians to do their duty, Paul wrote: "Lest Satan should get advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Corinthians 2:11).

Ignorance needs to be silenced. Peter wrote: "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 2:15). This passage also shows that ignorance is foolish.

Ignorance will cause one to measure God by man's standards. Some in Peter's day were accusing God of not being true to his promise because so much time had elapsed, and still the promise had not come to pass. The inspired writer wrote as follows: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8).

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that *ignorance of God's will is no excuse for one's failure to obey God.* Paul declared: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31).

No, ignorance is not bliss!

Real Strength

JOHNNY RAMSEY

About twenty years ago a football coach in the Southwest Conference inherited a large but incompetent squad of undisciplined players. In a very gruelling pre-season conditioning program all of the prima donnas left the team and went home to "Mama." The coach was left with the smallest squad in the nation as the season began but it was in tremendous condition and precision drilled for the pigskin season. That coach emphasized real strength and character instead of numbers and flamboyancy. Yes, his team won the Conference championship and presented several glittering players into the ranks of professional football. From that squad have come several fine coaches and wonderful leaders in other fields of endeavor. These men had learned the virtue of sacrifice, discipline and self-denial. They had character.

I once lived where one of the all-time great basketball teams of Texas played. With 30 victories and only 2 defeats one would think the squad must be large and the depth very rich. Actually, they had the smallest squad I have ever seen. Just 3 or 4 reserves! Usually only one substitute played and there were many games where the starting five was on the court the entire contest. But the coach believed in discipline and conditioning and loyalty as a team. It gets the job done. In view of these pertinent illustrations why do members of the church seem to equate numbers with strength in the greatest calling of all — the work of the Lord? Certainly we wish everyone were a diligent, faithful Christian. But, such never has been nor shall it be! We ought to learn the benefit and

Continued on page 3

What Others Think Really Does Matter

On occasion I have talked with people whose attitude was this: "I don't care what anyone thinks about my actions, just as long as I know I'm doing right. After all, if God approves that's all that matters."

I agree, and I disagree. I agree with the part about God's approval's being more important than anything else. If God's word says something is right, then doing it with a proper motive is the finest thing in the world. Acts 5:29 clearly establishes the priority of obeying God regardless of what men think. "We must obey God rather than men."

On the other hand, I disagree with the viewpoint which says we can totally disregard what others think. To be sure, we cannot please all the people all the time, and some people we can never please. But as Christians we have a special obligation to avoid leading others to conclude falsely that we are doing wrong. To put it in positive terms, I need to have concern for what others think of my actions.



EDDIE J. MILLER

According to II Corinthians 8:21, Paul had this exact concern: "for we take thought for things honorable, not only in sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men." The Charles B. Williams translation of this verse reads: "For I am taking the precaution to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the eyes of men."

From the context we can be certain that Paul is completely innocent of any wrong doing, but is still anxious to guarantee that no one even thinks that he is being dishonest with the money collected. Since the sum of money involved was so large, Paul perhaps envisions one of his critics charging him with dishonesty or extortion.

As Tasker comments, "Paul tries to foresee and remove in advance any possibility of being misinterpreted." To this end, he sent Titus, another well known brother, and messengers from the churches to verify that the funds were handled as promised.

There are at least two applications that can be made of this principle. First, there are so many practicing religious charlatans and questionable "fund raising" groups around, we need to be especially conscientious in our financial affairs. This clearly relates to churches, religious publishing houses, child care institutions and Christian schools. Even though there will always be critics, we need to do

everything "above board" and with scrutinizing honesty to avoid giving the critics "occasions of offense." The financial activities of all groups dealing in donated funds must be honorable in the sight of both God and men. To achieve this, public and open financial dealings are necessary, plus professional-like accounting procedures with both internal and external auditing on a regular basis.

A second application concerns our personal behavior. Elders are to have a good reputation among those outside the church in order to be effective (I Tim. 3:7). Young people have a unique responsibility to be good examples (I Tim. 4:12). Mature members of the church need to have a special sensitivity towards the consciences of the weak (I Cor. 8; Rom. 14). In short, to be a disciple of Christ, one needs to ask, "Will my actions be influential for good or ill in the lives of others?" Or, "Can I change my speech, dress, habits or routine activities to remove the possibility of leading others astray?"

If God approves, and we have made serious effort to prevent others from being led astray, we are then in a position to proceed living *with* confidence and *without* guilt. Or, as Paul says, "God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline." (II Tim. 1:7). — 800 Gunter Avenue, Guntersville, Ala. 35976.

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

(No. 5)

(Editor's Note: In December we published the first in this fine series of articles by brother Taylor. The fourth one was published in the January 15 issue, and we were thinking this ended the series. We had overlooked the last two articles in the series. We apologize to our readers and to brother Taylor.)



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Thus far in our investigation of this challenging topic, one eminently applicable to all of us, we have emphasized that temptation is common and universal to all, it varies from person to person and it is not a synonym for sin but that sin is committed when we surrender to or yield ourselves to the temptation. Temptation can be overcome. The Bible teaches that God will make a way for us, as his children, to escape. But we have a responsibility also in this momentous matter. We have to be willing to take that provided way of escape. Then we viewed the matter negatively and showed how we could not overcome temptation if we do as certain ones in Bible times did. Now we are in position to view the matter positively.

We can overcome temptation if, like Noah and Enoch, we will walk with God. These two men had to live in a world that was filled with crime and corruption, with sin and error. Yet both of these powerful personalities walked with God during the period of the patriarchy. The Bible says in Genesis 5:21-24, "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years; And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." This great and godly man is portrayed prominently

within Inspiration's Hall of Fame and Faith — Hebrews 11. The Bible at that beautiful point declares, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:4). Relative to Noah, the great-grandson of Enoch, the Bible says in Genesis 6:9, "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect [entire, complete] in his generations, and Noah walked with God." These men walked with God when their contemporaries were unwilling to do so. They walked with God because they enjoyed his divine fellowship. They walked with him because they were going the same direction that God was going. Two cannot walk together unless they are traveling in the same direction. They walked with God because they were in agreement with their Heavenly Companion. Amos was to say many centuries later, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). While walking with God they were able to confront successfully the daily temptations that were theirs and to overcome them. It is easier to say NO to sin if we feel we are walking in the presence of Deity. And truly, we are ever within his eyesight. He sees all we do, knows all we think and is aware of all places we go. We can overcome temptation if we will walk with God like Enoch and Noah did.

We can overcome temptation if we, like Joseph, will flee temptation. This young Hebrew captive in the land of Egypt found himself in the scenes of seduction in Potiphar's house, and the seducer was none other than his own master's wife. The Bible says, "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto

her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me; and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out" (Gen. 39:7-12). Joseph did not do as his older brother Reuben did in Genesis 35:22 who committed fornication with Bilhah. Joseph did not do as his older brother Judah did in Genesis 38 who committed fornication or adultery with Tamar, his own daughter-in-law. He did not do as did David several centuries later who committed adultery with Bathsheba. Joseph fled fornication. He did not stay around to flirt with the idea of being seduced by a designing woman who was out for the fleshly pleasure of the moment. He did some eighteen centuries before what Paul would tell the Corinthians to do in I Corinthians 6:18, viz., "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." In I Timothy 6:11,12 Paul told Timothy, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience,

Continued on page 4

Real Strength

Continued from page 2

blessing of spiritual conditioning and church discipline (Hebrews 12:1-11). I had rather be a member of a strong spiritual congregation than lost in the numbers of a church that had forgotten God's directives for real strength. In Jeremiah 9:3 we learn that Judah was "strong in the land but not for Truth." Conversely, let us remember Gideon! — Box 235, Rowlett, Texas 75088.

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

(No. 5)

Continued from page 3

mekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Again the concerned Paul wrote his beloved son in the gospel and said, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Tim. 2:22). Flee the wrong and follow the right constitute prudent practices. Together they form God's two pronged attack upon the successful confronting and overcoming of daily temptations. But one in our day is not fleeing fornication when he buys and relishes the deeply sensual and deplorable pornographic books available throughout the country. One is not fleeing fornication when he takes in every R-rated and X-rated movie that comes to his area. One is not fleeing fornication by allowing R-rated and deeply suggestive movies in his home by way of TV Home Box Office or HBO. Such whets the fleshly appetite for the actual commission of such sins, and partners for such can be found with relative ease if strongly appears. One is not fleeing fornication when he engages in the modern dance, spends much time at the mixed swimming beaches looking upon those of the opposite sex with practically nothing covering their bodies, or engages with every date in heavy petting. Such situations are fill-

ed with the very triggering elements that call for overt fornication. Distance — not proximity — toward such situations is the only sane and sensible course to pursue if one really wishes to flee fornication. But too many in our day do not wish to flee it; they pursue such situations with relish and with absolute determination to make the most of every fleshly opportunity that is theirs to seize.

Closely akin to the foregoing is another great directive piece of counsel which would aid us much in overcoming daily temptation. We can overcome daily temptations that are based upon fleshly appetites if we, like Job of old, will make a covenant with our eyes. The deeply tried and tested patriarch in the land of Uz once told his three friends, or so-called friends, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1). Job did not say nor did he mean that he never saw one of the opposite sex with his eyesight. It would scarcely be possible for such living in a world with both men and women as we do and as Job did in the ancient past. But he meant that he had made a covenant or an agreement with his eyes not to look upon a maid, a virgin, with the eye of lust. He meant that he had made an agreement with his heart not to think about the committing of fornication or adultery with one of the opposite sex. He was not doing the very thing in

this day that Jesus warned his disciples against doing in Matthew 5:27,28, that is, lusting after one of the opposite sex. Jesus said it in crystal clear fashion: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Had David in II Samuel 11 had this agreement or covenant with his eyes and been faithful to such a prior agreement of moral attitude and action, he could have avoided the blackest sin and the darkest night of his otherwise illustrious and exemplary life. Would we overcome this type of daily temptation, or whenever it might face us? Then let us be modern day Jobs and make covenants with our eyes in regard to those of the opposite sex. Those who are single need to save these desires for a future mate and then only in marriage. Each of us who is married must restrict such desires toward spouse and toward spouse only. This is the only way we can combat this enormously strong temptation. And with the people of the world going semi-nude in public, the problem becomes even more acute for those who want to live the Christian life and please God by a life of personal purity. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

Shall We Re-Write Matthew 19?

Continued from page 1

gests that a new translation will be needed to accommodate this view:

3. "And the Pharisees, *being in a covenant relationship with God, despite trying to malign, tempt and entrap his Son*, came unto him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them *covenant people* at the beginning, made them *brothers and sisters in the covenant*?

5. And said, For this cause shall a *believing* man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his *believing* wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.

6. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. *Believers whom* God hath joined together, should not put one another asunder.

7. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce-ment, and to put her away?

8. He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your *believing* hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9. And I say unto you *believers*, *The brother who* shall put away his *believing* wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another *woman*, commiteth adultery: and *the brother who* shall marry *the sister* which is put away doth commit adultery.

10. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the *brother* be so with his *believing* wife, it is not good to marry."

Since the Bible does NOT teach the above in this passage, it would be heretical to suggest that it

does. Is it not obvious that the preceding re-rendering of Matthew 19:3-10 has been set down, not in a reputable translation in print, but on the minds of those currently advocating that Jesus' law is exclusively for believers? In dealing with this sobering issue which faces us, let us not "read into" the scriptures.

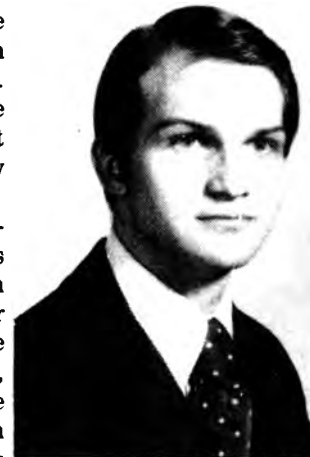
May we carefully remember that the scope of Jesus' teaching is the scope of Jesus' lordship and judgment (John 3:31; 5:22; 12:48; 17:2; Acts 10:36; 17:30-31; Romans 3:6; 9:5 and 10:12). — 713 Greenwood Drive, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

You Can't Draw Water From An Empty Well

The Bible teacher must first be a Bible student. One can't teach what he doesn't know. Shallow Bible lessons are usually the sad result of the teacher's shallow Bible study.

Read again the following words from Hebrews 5. They have never been more relevant. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Too many of us are conversant in politics, knowledgeable of current events, well-versed concerning social issues, yet shamefully deficient in our knowledge of the one book with all the answers. We know the newspaper but we don't know the Bible. Some of us could easily teach a six month course on global events; yet we are not prepared to "fill in" for an absent Bible school teacher. And why is this so? Look again at the title. You can't draw water from an



DALTON KEY

empty well.

The teacher should be the most avid student in class. He should become thoroughly saturated with his subject. Unprepared teachers are often to blame for disinterested students. Confidence, courage, conviction — these qualities are projected only by teachers who are prepared.

Paul charged Timothy to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Yet he first encouraged his son in the faith to study, read, and give himself wholly to the doctrine he would declare (II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13-16). Paul understood what many of us may well have forgotten. He realized you just can't draw water from an empty well. — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

Money may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven and as a universal provider for everything except happiness.

Two heads are better than one — except when both are behind the same steering wheel.

Someone said to a man who led in public prayer, "You should speak louder. I didn't hear a word you said." His reply was, "I wasn't talking to you."



Words Of Truth

estus; but speak forth
ness."

— Acts 26:25

This May Shock Some Of You

Are you confused about the end of time? Do you expect some people some day to disappear suddenly without a trace? Are you anticipating a great world ruler who will provoke war between the nations? Do you believe armies will be destroyed with hundred pound hailstones while fighting with sticks and stones on horseback?

These and many other ideas have alarmed and confused a great number of people. This has been disturbing to many of them. Some fear, "what if I do not make the rapture?" Certain rulers have been pointed out as the anti-Christ and then have passed from the scene of action. This has caused some to be confused.

These views have also polarized the thinking of many people. They have become the bulk of their preaching and teaching. Every event that happens must be studied in relation to their view of the end of time.

Why have these problems come? These are the results of the teaching of dispensational pre-millennialism. This is basically what has been taught: (1) We were told that God has guaranteed to award Palestine to the Israelite, and that not until then will the kingdom of God be fully set up. (2) Some would have us to believe that Jesus intended to set up his kingdom while he was on earth. The Jews, however, did not allow him to do so. The theory says that he returned to the Father and had the church set up here as a substitute. When the Jews get ready then he will return and establish the kingdom originally purposed. (3) This interpretation teaches that the righteous dead will be raised when Christ returns and that the unrighteous dead will be raised at the end of his reign. There is much confusion as to the number of comings and the number of resurrections among many of these teachers. (4) Premillennialists teach



ANCIL JENKINS

that Christ is not on David's throne of Old Testament prophecy, but that he will occupy that throne when he returns, ruling on that throne in Jerusalem over his earthly kingdom. (5) Dispensational premillennialists teach that after his second coming Christ will with his saints reign over all the earth for one thousand years.

This may shock some of you: the Bible teaches none of these things. These views come as a result of a literal interpretation of some figurative language in the Bible and a misunderstanding of the Old Testament prophecies. This does not mean the Bible is to be taken as wholly figurative or poetical. It does mean there are parts of the Bible that must be understood as figurative.

Some have viewed this only as a harmless interpretation. Why would it cause a break in fellowship or a need for discipline in the church? It is true that one's eternal salvation might not be affected by the belief in these views. However, one who believes these doctrines will find them in conflict with other teachings of the Bible. It is therefore dangerous and must be avoided. What of the results of believing in these views?

These teachings make God false to his promise. John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:1-2: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus himself had preached the same thing (Mark 1:14-15): "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." As the result of the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, multitudes believed the kingdom was at hand. The word "at hand" does not mean thousands of years in the future, but means coming in a very short time. Paul anticipated that his death would come shortly, when he said it was "at hand" (II Timothy 4:7).

Suppose a man hired a number of laborers for the day. He tells them if they will work for him eight hours he will pay them \$100.00 each. At the end of the eight hours they come to him to collect their wages. He then tells them that he will give it to them someday but not right then because he has changed his mind. One would be very upset at such an action. However,

this is what some would have us believe. We are told by them God intended to set up his kingdom and then changed his mind and postponed the great reward. If this were true, would it not make us question the integrity of God?


One must be faced with these questions. Did God plan to set up his kingdom and know the people would reject and still send John the Baptist and Jesus to preach it was "at hand"? If he had planned to set it up and knew that people would reject it, we would question the wisdom of God.

On the other hand, did God plan to set up a kingdom and not know the results of what men would do? If this is the case we would question the power of God. To hold to a view that Christ postponed the establishment of his kingdom is not consistent with what the Bible teaches elsewhere on the nature of God.

To accept this doctrine would mean that Jesus would reign on his footstool. Acts 2:32-35 says, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool:" Isaiah 66:1 states, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" This earthly ball of our habitation has always been viewed as inferior to the great eternal home that Jesus has prepared for us. To bring Jesus back to earth to reign on this planet is to rob him of the honor which he is due. In fact, the Bible nowhere teaches that Jesus will ever set foot on earth again.

The implication of this doctrine is that Jesus is a failure. It makes his mission on earth a failure. Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." God sent his Son for the purpose of establishing his kingdom. To view his kingdom as an earthly reign is to miss the great teach-

Continued on page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., eleven cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$5.72 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



FROM
THE EDITOR

Authoritative, But Not Authoritative

According to *Webster's New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary*, the word *authoritative* means "having due authority; official." This is the first definition. But it also means, according to the second definition, "asserting authority; fond of giving orders; dictatorial." By divine injunction, elders in the Lord's church are of necessity authoritative, i.e., they have due authority; but they are not to be authoritative, i.e., they are not to be fond of giving orders.



BOB DUNCAN

In recent years some have tried to strip from the eldership the authority which God has given it to oversee the affairs of the congregation. They have taken the position that an eldership has no authority except the authority of a good example. They have said that elders rule by example only. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage," in I Peter 5:3 has been misconstrued to mean that an eldership has no authority to make any decision affecting the congregation, and to expect the congregation to abide by that decision.

It is true that elders must set proper examples (I Peter 5:3), but this does not prove they have no authority to govern the congregation under Christ. The fact they are not to be "lords over God's heritage" does not mean they can have no authority over the congregation. Jesus taught the apostles that they were not to exercise lordship (Mark 10:42; Luke 22:25). Does that mean the apostles had no authority? Certainly not! Neither are elders without authority just because they are forbidden to exercise "lordship."

But it will have to be admitted that those who have taken this false position with reference to the eldership probably did so in many cases in an over reaction against an authoritative ("fond of giving orders") elder or eldership. God never intended it, but unfortunately some become elders who are not the kind of

men they should be, but who are dictatorial, domineering, and arrogant. Having been lifted up with pride, they have fallen into the condemnation of the devil (I Timothy 3:6). One so imperious and overbearing cannot reasonably expect a congregation of God's people to respect him as a leader. Such a disposition on the part of elders actually invites rebellion.

In I Peter 5:1-4 elders are cast in the role of shepherds, and they are compared to Christ, who is our chief Shepherd. Men who serve as overseers of God's flock would do well to study carefully the example set by Christ.

Shepherds of the flock of God should imitate the compassion of the chief Shepherd. The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15) shows how the shepherd looks over the flock and, seeing that one is missing, arises immediately to go out and search until he has found it. He cannot rest knowing one sheep which is lost might be rescued through his efforts. And he knows when one is missing. The shepherd of John 10:13 "callesh his own sheep by name." Perhaps it is in this very area more than in any other where the elder fails or succeeds — knowing and caring about every sheep in the flock. Those who are cold and callous towards those who stray from the flock can never be the kind of elders God wants.

In John 10 the shepherd is pictured as speaking to the sheep, who hear his voice and follow him. Verse 5 says, "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." The shepherd does not drive his sheep; he walks with them, leading them. Oh, there is another way all right; but elders are not pictured as sheep dogs, but as shepherds. (Some seem to think they are sheep dogs.) As a rule the elder who tries to drive the flock does so because he simply has not the ability to lead them. It is unfortunate when a man is selected to the eldership whose insensitive, unfeeling, hardened disposition makes it virtually impossible for him to lead the average member of the congregation to the water cooler, even if his life depended upon it.

Dedicated Christians should be much in prayer for elderships, and all elders should pray diligently for the wisdom to exercise their God given authority in the best interest of the flock, for whose benefit they have been chosen.

Slack Service

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord slackly" (Jer. 48:10). The foregoing words refer immediately to the terrible work of destruction. We are fearful of a curse; but if the slaughter were believed to be in accordance with God's will, there could be no excuse for neglecting it. This is a most forcible argument against slack service. If such slackness could appear cursed to the Jew, how much more guilty is it in the Christian work of love!



HOYT BAILEY

One indication of slack service is what we might call negative goodness. Great care to avoid all forms of impurity may be found together with a reluctance to make any sacrifice or put forth any exertion. Another indication is conventionalism. A man follows in the rut of his predecessors, evinces no originality, has no device with which to meet an emergency, never inquires into the suitability of his work to its end, never thinks of improving it. A third indication is working at half-power. What service is rendered does not come up to the level of requirement nor to the measure of ability. It is done in a slow, dreamy style. A fourth indication is failure before difficulty. The molehill is magnified into a mountain. The opposition, which is the spur to enthusiasm, puts a complete stop to slack service.

One cause of slack service is worldliness. The clay of selfishness is mingled with the strong metal of devotion. A man would serve God and mammon. He tries to do the work of God with one hand, while he advances his own interest with the other. Such is not acceptable with God. Another cause is unbelief. This paralyzes much of our work — more than we are ready to admit. Under such condition, the God served is a shadowy being, and no wonder the service is faint and feeble. Another cause of slack service is want of devotion. The service of the hands is given without the love of the heart. This mechanical work is a poor, spirit-

Continued on page 4

Mercy In Action

If one reads Luke 10:30-37, he will find mercy displayed by an unknown Samaritan on the Jericho road. He did not spend much time in defining it, but he spent a lot in demonstrating such. Even the lawyer that had tempted the Son of God and had sought to justify himself could attest to that fact (Luke 10:37). So we get a good look at mercy when we read these verses. Such as is so needed in this old world in our own day.



WINFRED CLARK

One May See Mercy Looking. You will see both the priest and Levite looking but they are not the personification of mercy. There was no pity that pierced their hearts. They saw, but they did not see an opportunity to help. They saw something to be shunned, not shouldered. Mercy did not affect what they saw, for it was not in the heart. They did not have sufficient feeling for the fallen. Before we are too critical we need to ask, do we? After all, some around us have been passing the road from one place in life to another and bad health has overtaken them and left them stripped and half dead. These people we have seen but just how have we looked at them? Have we had sufficient feeling to move us to compassion.

The Samaritan saw the same man they did and I don't know that his vision was any better. I do know

Continued on page 3

This May Shock Some Of You

Continued from page 1

ing of the Bible. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "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." In the next verse he shows us that this church is the kingdom that he had planned to establish on earth.

On the contrary, the church is not the failure of Jesus. Paul teaches us that the church was in the mind of God from the very beginning before the foundations of the world. His plan was that both Jew and Gentile would be united in his spiritual kingdom, the church (Ephesians 1:3; 3:10, 21).

Such a belief robs the church of its dignity and power. It becomes an afterthought of God. It is a temporary substitute put in place of the kingdom. Such teaching makes the bride of Christ his second choice.

The Bible teaches of the great importance of the church. The church today is the true "Israel of God." In it are his chosen people (Galatians 6:16; Romans 2:28, 29). The church is the dwelling place of the saved (Ephesians 5:23). The love of Christ for the church is an example for the husband to love his wife (Ephesians 5:25). It is in the church that God receives

his glory (I Corinthians 10:22, Ephesians 3:10). Can one believe the church is only "The vestibule of the kingdom" and "an afterthought of God" and still hold to these great teachings?

Such teaching denies the Lordship of Christ. The great thrilling statement preached by the apostles is that Jesus is Lord (Acts 10:36). To believe that Jesus was unable to set up the church without the cooperation of the Jews is to deny his power. To say that he is not now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords in heaven is to deny that he is Lord of all. There is no way one can preach Jesus is Lord if he is not Lord of all men and of all things.

What does the Bible teach? What are God's plans for the end of time? This is the chronology as presented by Jesus:

Jesus is coming again. We do not know when since there is no sign given. Matthew 24:36, 37 says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

There will be one general resurrection at the time of

his coming. Both righteous and wicked will be raised. John 5:28, 29 says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

There will be a judgment at which all will appear (II Corinthians 5:10): "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

There will be an everlasting reward for the righteous and everlasting punishment for the wicked (Matthew 25:46): "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Believing that the Bible teaches only one resurrection we must be prepared for it. There will be no further opportunity; there will be no second chance. Let us learn to trust God and his word and not the speculations and theories of men. The key word of the New Testament concerning the last day and the last hour is watch. Are you ready?—1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

(No. 6)

This is the sixth and final installment dealing with temptations that beset us all and how properly to deal with the same. Several examples of Biblical characters have been employed to show how they overcame temptation. Emulation of their sterling example will enable us to do the same. If not, why not??

We can overcome daily temptation if we, like the Sweet Singer of Israel, will meditate upon the



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Scriptures and do such daily. The beautiful book of Psalms is prefaced with an eloquent appeal to what we should not be and then with an ardent appeal to what we should be. The Bible says in Psalm 1:1-3, "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. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The man who meditates daily on the Scriptures has the finest weapon ever devised to meet and conquer his daily temptations. A later Psalm contains the beautiful statement, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). It is the man who never meditates or hides Sacred Scripture in his heart that is in real danger of succumbing to the temptations that are his day by day. The man who meditates on God's word daily and carefully hides what he studies in his heart is in position to know the nature of sin. He is in position to know what the guilt of sin means to his soul and to his eternal interests in the sweet by and by. He is constantly under God's power. He can be like the man who was a great admirer of the Bible and paid this unsolicited tribute to the Grand Ole Book: "Every hour I spend with you either kills a vice or lets in a vir-

tue to fight it." Reader friends, that is the very heartbeat of the successful combating of temptation in our daily lives.

We can overcome daily temptation if we, like Daniel, will determine to avoid the things that are designed to defile and wreck us. The Bible says this about the youthful and determined Daniel shortly after he was taken into the land of Babylonian captivity: "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: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might

not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8). Daniel formed this resolution while he was but a young man. We need desperately an entire crop of courageous young men and women who will form the same noble and courageous resolution relative to the imbibing of alcoholic beverages and to the participation in the wicked world of drug addiction. The person who stays completely away from alcoholic beverages will never become an abject slave to alcohol. The person who never goes after that first fix will not be tomorrow's drug addict

Continued on page 4

Mercy In Action

Continued from page 2

that he felt for him when he saw his situation. That makes the difference in the way he looked.

One May See Mercy Laboring. The Samaritan went to the man and bound up his wounds (Lk. 10:34). His was more than a look, for it led to efforts to aid. Mercy would not allow such an one merely to look and pass on. His pity causes him to use what he has to aid the man. He did not sit down and talk of all the things he did not have to work with, but used what he did have.

This Samaritan did not leave the task to others but became personally involved. He assumed personal responsibility. What a difference mercy makes. It does not say, "I will do as much as others," or "I will, if others will." It does, even though it must be alone. It does not wait for the negligent Priest or the calloused Levite to change. It says, "I'll do regardless of others and in spite of others."

One May See Mercy Lifting. After he had poured in oil and wine and bound up the wounds he did not leave the man. Yes, he has done more than others but the man is still down. What is to be done? He places him on his own beast and brings him to an inn.

We sing the song, "Love Lifted Me," and surely it did. This man could well have said, "Mercy lifted me." It was mercy that took him from the side of the road when he had fallen to put him back on his

feet again.

How many orphans or destitute children who were down could say the same? Many have been cared for by churches who contributed on a regular basis to provide for their needs. They are placed in a position to live useful lives of love and labor for the Lord because Christians have cared.

One May See Mercy Lasting. It is interesting that the man stays with the man through the night and then on the morrow assumes more responsibility for his welfare. He says to the innkeeper, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Do you notice that these are the only recorded words of this man. But, oh, what they do tell you of this man's heart! He wasn't ready to rid himself of the responsibility just as soon as he could. He stayed with the job down to the end. He would see it through. He did not have a good start and an incomplete finish. His was a demonstration of mercy lasting.

Now, let us suppose that the Priest and the Levite and Samaritan later met this man. Which one of the three would have more influence over him? Which would he be more apt to listen to? The answer is obvious, isn't it? Don't you think we ought to learn a lesson mercy teaches us? — P.O. Box 1025 Athens, Ala. 35611.

Slack Service

Continued from page 2

less thing. It is love and love only that can inspire a service of unwearying energy. Another cause is cowardice. There is a fear to do difficult and dangerous work. We pity this for its weakness. We should condemn it as wicked. Should not the servant of Christ be willing to suffer all torments and die for his Lord who suffered and died for him? "Be thou faithful unto death." Another is indolence. Some men are habitually tardy and dilatory. They should learn to resist these tendencies as temptations to fatal unfaithfulness.

Slack service is no slight failure to be gently rebuked. The curse of God lies upon it. "Cursed be he" It is very wicked. We are God's servants, and bound by ties of nature and of gratitude. It is likely to be fruitless. Negligence in work may imperil the whole results of it. If the ship is carelessly steered it may be wrecked. It injures the man who works

negligently. Our manner of work reacts upon ourselves. Indifferent service produces a low tone of life, coldness, lethargy, unspirituality.

Our text calls from the curse of slack service. This curse is a solemn warning. The evils that necessitate it should terrify us from incurring it. We are called by the obligations of duty. "We are not our own; we are bought with a price." When we do our best we are unprofitable servants. Solemn voices of time and eternity bid us "work while it is day." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." We are called by the need of the world. Our Christian service is no profitless treadmill drudgery. It is for the good of mankind. The call in the text was to execute wrath; ours is to do deeds of mercy. The world in its darkness, its misery, its sin, cries aloud for the Christian mission of consolation and redemption. Can we sleep while such calls pierce our ears? We are called by the

constraining love of Christ. He died for us; he only asks that we shall live for him. But the least we can do is to live faithfully, earnestly, and devotedly, serving the Savior with all earnest zeal. We are also called from slack service by the heavenly reward (Heb. 12:1,2).

The apostle Peter, wrote, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (II Pet. 1:12-15). — 204 S Main, Sylacauga, Ala. 35150.

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

(No. 6)

Continued from page 3

with a wrecked mind and a warped soul on its way to a devil's hell. Daniel witnessed in the king's wine and in his dainties harmful ingredients to his better interests. In view of such he said a loud and decisive NO to participation therein. The Lord blessed him richly for so doing as the sequel of Daniel fully relates.

We can overcome daily temptations if we, like the Lord Jesus Christ, will faithfully rely upon God's word in the hour of temptation. Just subsequent to his baptism in the waters of the Jordan the Bible says in Matthew 4, in Luke 4 and in Mark 1 that Jesus was tempted by Satan. Matthew and Luke detail these temptations. Matthew 4 opens with the inspired observation: "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:1-4). How did Jesus go about meeting the devil with this power-packed temptation? He did not perform a miracle. He depended upon the word of God. Again "the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:5-7). How did Jesus go about the successful meeting of this power-packed temptation by the determined tempter? Again he relied totally and submissively upon the power that resides in the word of God. Again he performed no miracle. He depended upon something to rout the devil that is open and available for you and me. Matthew continues by saying, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:8-11). How did Jesus go about the meeting of this temptation—the ace that Satan saved till the very last? Again he employed the word of God Almighty.

Again he did not perform a miracle. A popular singer and actor of our country, Pat Boone, has written a book entitled, *A Miracle A Day Keeps The Devil Away*. There is a vast difference between how Jesus chose to meet temptation and to defeat it and how Mr. Boone has chosen to do it. Jesus had power to perform miracles and chose not to do it in the meeting of temptations. The current singer and actor does not have any miraculous powers at his disposal, though he had laid claim to such, and yet contends that this is the very way to meet and defeat temptations to sin. Such shows a naiveness toward miracles and their purpose and toward temptations and how to meet them properly. Jesus successfully met and overcame temptation because he knew God's word, he trusted God's word and he fully depended upon it to see him through. And it did!! In the heat of temptation use the Bible to meet and defeat the devil. God's word is the one thing that will send him reeling in abject defeat every time. Even if you and I had miraculous powers, and we DEFINITELY DO NOT POSSESS SUCH, we would still need to meet temptation by resorting to the word of God and remaining faithful to the same.

We can overcome temptation if we, like Paul, will maintain proper control over our body at all times. He wrote, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." We can overcome daily temptation if we, like Paul, will dedicate our lives wholly to the Lord. The Bible says of Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." To the Philippians Paul penned the sobering and soul-guarding sentiments, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.... But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.... I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 1:21; 3:7-10; 4:13). Such is a tried and tested way to over-

come temptation.—P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Missionary Dies

RAY HAWK

Eddie Bristow, missionary sponsored by the East Chester church of Christ in Kraaifontein, Cape Town, South Africa, suffered a massive brain hemorrhage early Saturday morning, February 13th and died in Tygerberg Hospital that evening. The funeral was on Wednesday, February 17th. This was a shock to the family and to the church here and in South Africa. Eddie had three married children and two still at home. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Yola Bristow and the family. Those who knew Eddie may wish to send a memorial gift to Yola. You may send it by the church at East Chester.—East Chester church of Christ, 1461 E. Chester, Jackson, TN 38301.

Christian Ham Callbook For 1982

RAY HAWK

In April of this year I hope to go to press with the names of all Christians who are involved in amateur radio. If you have a license and would like to be in the 1982 callbook and receive a copy of it, please comply with the following requests.

1. Send me your call and name.
2. Give me your license classification (Novice, Tech., General, Advanced, or Extra).
3. Give me your mailing address.
4. Send me a *self addressed stamped envelope!* If you want one callbook, put a 20 cent stamp on it. If you want two or three, put 2 stamps on it. If you want 10 or more, please put enough postage to cover the cost.
5. Give me the frequency (s) you are usually on and the time in UTC as well as the day (s).

At this time I have over 500 names from the different call areas, plus Canada and other places outside the USA. If you are a ham and you would like to be in this year's book, please send me your information right away!—1461 East Chester St. Jackson, Tennessee 38301.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not in
the Words of

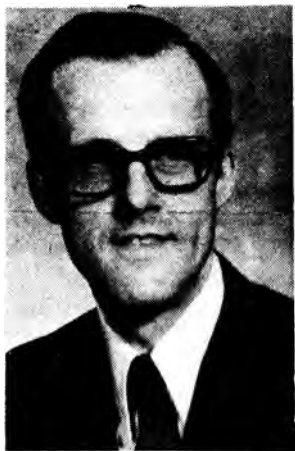
VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 1982

NUMBER 12

A Non-Shrinking Faith

Most Christians, weak and strong alike, ought to be able to answer the following questions with ease: (1) To whom does the church belong? (Matthew 16:18). (2) What was the purchase price of the church? (Acts 20:28). (3) To what does the Lord add all the saved? (Acts 2:47). (4) Of what is Jesus the Saviour? (Ephesians 5:23). (5) What is the body? (Colossians 1:18,24). Can anyone read the Bible and come to the conclusion that a person can be saved without being a member of Christ's church?



WAYNE PRICE

When our faith moves us to be obedient to "that form of doctrine delivered" to us (Romans 6:17), and the Lord adds us to his blood-bought church, just why, in the name of common sense, do some of us then turn our back on it, and quit?

Such individuals ought to pray again: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). When something goes wrong in our lives, and the first thing we do is quit the Lord's church, we immediately cut ourselves off from the means of solving many of life's problems. Besides that, it manifests that our reasoning lacks logic! To blame Christ for our personal problems is about as logical as being mad at the dog, and kicking the cat!

Christ judges our feelings for him by the way we treat his church (Acts 9:4). Now, just what would it take to cause you to quit the church and forfeit your home in heaven? Would you sell your birthright for a bit of pottage (Genesis 25)? Judas betrayed the Lord for just thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 27:3), yet many today betray the Lord for less!

Some fall away because of temptation (Luke 8:13), while others quit because of wealth and/or pleasure (Luke 8:14). Some quit because of a disagreement they have with their companion. Others quit merely because someone else did. What kind of reasoning is this? Notice that all such explanations are geared to this present world. That is our big

problem, is it not? We major in minors, and minor in majors! The inspired writer James declares: "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience . . . 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 1:3,12).

Abraham's faith was strong enough to move him to offer his own son on the altar (Hebrews 11:17). Moses' faith was strong enough to cause him to turn his back on the wealth of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26), and to resist the pleasures of sin (verse 25). Can you imagine this great leader turning his back on God just because he and Zipporah, his wife, had a dispute?

Would the following cause you to quit the church: being imprisoned, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, hungry, thirsty, without sufficient clothing, and in pain? These things never caused Paul to quit (II Cor. 11:23-28). W. H. Bathurst penned these words of a thought-provoking song:

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Tho pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink,
Of any earthly woe . . .

Lord, give us such a faith as this,

and then, whate'er may come,
we'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss,
of an eternal home."

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed . . . 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; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (II Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-18).

My friend, this writer will not quit the church, even if the local congregation FIRES him! Many preachers know what it is to be "in perils among false brethren" (II Cor. 11:26), but dare they quit the church? The Lord declared that those first century Christians would suffer tribulation, and in one statement, he both consoled and warned them, saying: "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24).

Does your faith depend upon outward circumstances? Now, let us be honest! Does it? — 211 N. 5th Marlow, Oklahoma 73055.

A Basic Bible Lesson

W. A. HOLLEY

The church of Christ exists; you can read of its establishment and work and worship in the New Testament. In fact, according to the Bible, the church of Christ is the oldest church in all the earth. The church of Christ antedates all Catholic churches and all denominational churches. The New Testament does not authorize the existence of any Catholic or Protestant church. Book, chapter, and verse, please! Their names and doctrines are not recorded there.


(1) Jesus Christ is the builder of his church (Matthew 16:18-19). He paid for it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). He is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He will save the church (Ephesians

5:23-25). He adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42,47).

(2) The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,47; 11:14-15). It was established in the city of Jerusalem, in the year A.D. 33, as we commonly count time. The church of Christ was not established in the days of Abraham, or in the days of the prophets, nor in the days of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:3-12; 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13-14).

(3) God Almighty has ordained certain items or acts of worship which those who desire to worship "in

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$8.35 per year All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

A Basic Bible Lesson

Continued from page 1

Spirit and in truth" must observe, viz., Bible study, prayer, singing, the observance of the Lord's supper, and making a contribution according to prosperity (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42,47; Ephesians 5:19). This worship includes a special day — the Lord's day — the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). There is no such thing as a Christian sabbath (Colossians 2:14-17).

(4) The terms of membership in the church of Christ, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, are faith, plus repentance, plus baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42,47; Romans 6:3-4). One cannot join the Lord's church. The Lord adds the saved to his church when they become such as should be saved.

(5) The work of the church embraces the edification of itself, preaching the gospel to a lost world, and providing aid to widows and orphans (Galatians 6:10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:13; I Timothy 5:16; James 1:27). These passages do not contradict themselves. It is as simple as this: if the church cannot help widows and orphans, it cannot practice pure and undefiled religion. James 1:27 tells us what to do and I Timothy 5:16 tells us who is to do it. If the Bible teaches that only the individual Christian can Scripturally help widows and orphans, then it follows irresistibly that each Christian must help at least one widow and one orphan or that Christian is not practicing pure and undefiled religion! Hence, a Christian husband and wife would be required to help at least four people, and if they are not doing so, they are not practicing pure and undefiled religion!!

Religious division is a sin. Jesus prayed for the unity of his people. Whatever we do, we must do in the name of Jesus Christ. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

It's difficult to tell who gives some couples the most happiness, the preacher who married them or the judge who divorced them

Why is it that when a fellow's cup of happiness is full, some fool will come along and nudge his elbow?



A Relevant Question

King Saul had turned his back on God, and was engaged in an unjust and very shameful pursuit of David, with every intention of destroying him. But as Saul and his army was camping, David and one of his servants walked into the camp, and found Saul sleeping. It would have been so very easy for David to take Saul's spear and to kill him; and this is exactly what David's servant urged him to do. In fact, the servant said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time" (I Samuel 26:8).



BOB DUNCAN

But David's reply was: "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" (verse 9).

This question of David is relevant in a time when there is a general tendency to rebel against authority — the authority of parents, the authority of civil rulers, the authority of elders, and authority in general.

The fact that Saul had become wicked and was abusing the throne did not give David an excuse to murder him. David could not take the life of Saul, his wicked enemy, without also taking the life of Saul, the king of Israel and the one anointed of God. It was this latter which he was not willing to do. Men do not always do that which is right — even those in positions of authority. But we are taught to honor the position they occupy, whether they are civil rulers (Romans 13:1-5), parents (Ephesians 6:1), or elders in the church (Hebrews 13:17). We cannot stretch forth our hands against them and be guiltless.

A man characterized by less devotion and more unholy ambition than David would have misinterpreted this situation. This is demonstrated by the words of David's servant: "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day" The implication of these words is if God has delivered him into your hands, then certainly God must intend for you to kill him. But David very wisely refused to place an interpretation upon the event which would lead him to commit sin, and to kill God's anointed. We must take care not to interpret any situation in a way as to cause us to engage in wrong. Certainly we believe in the providence of God in our lives, but we cannot know what is providential; therefore we dare not allow our interpretation of certain events as providential to lead us into some drastic action. And certainly we cannot afford to allow our interpretation of certain events as providential to cause us to commit sin. David very wisely overcame this temptation.

David had been promised the throne and had been anointed (I Samuel 16:13). He knew what would be the ultimate outcome of Saul's bitterness toward him. For him to kill Saul on this occasion would be but to hasten the inevitable. He could have reasoned after this fashion: "Why prolong Saul's agony? After all, the throne is mine by divine decree. It certainly cannot be wrong for me to kill him who is trying to kill me, and to take that which is mine already."

But David did not so reason. Instead, he reasoned as follows: "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed" (I Samuel 26:10,11). David evidently knew what some in our time obviously have not learned, i.e., that no end, regardless of how worthy or noble, or even inevitable, justifies the doing of anything that is sinful to accomplish that end.

David was not a situation ethicist. He believed the law of God was to be followed at all times and under all conditions. If there ever had been a time when one could justify in his own mind lifting up his hand against God's anointed, it certainly would have been in that situation. Add to this the fact that it would not have been necessary for David personally to slay Saul. All he had to do was grant his permission; already a servant was begging for permission to do the deed. But David knew better. He knew there is never a time when it is right to do wrong, or wrong to do right. No amount of rationalization could convince him that it would be right to lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed. May it ever be so with God's people of our time.

Making Havoc Of The Church

JERRI MANASCO

Saul of Tarsus "made havoc of the church" (Acts 8:3). Later, this same man, as Paul the apostle, wrote that he had "wasted" and "destroyed" the church (Gal. 1:13, 23). He had been a blasphemer, and injurious to the church (I Tim. 1:13). While these statements refer to the actual physical harm done by Paul and others like him to the church, have we ever considered how we who profess to be friends of Christ can be guilty of making havoc of the church?

Disorderly worship is one of the ways to destroy a congregation and its influence. The church in Corinth had those who had received spiritual gifts, but these spiritual gifts became a major disaster for those brethren because of their abuse. Particularly was this so with those who had the gift of tongues. The services were not edifying, for no one understood what was being taught when the "tongue-talkers" exercised their gift loosely (I Cor. 14:1-6, 12, 17-25). Visitors who may have chosen to drop in on their services were forming uncomplimentary opinions of these Christians (I Cor. 14:23). Therefore, Paul included in the close of his discussion of spiritual gifts an admonition to do all things decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40).

While the spiritual gifts do not remain among believers, the principles set forth by Paul are still relevant to our worship. Orderliness is still the universal appeal of the scriptures. When the assembly is characterized by undue commotion, such as whispering, snickering, note-passing, playing with babies, etc., distraction is to be expected. How can one worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24) if his

Continued on Page 4

Our Relationship To The Law Of Moses

(No. 1)

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Hebrews 10:1). The Old Testament law was not the "real thing" inasmuch as it was only "a shadow" of that which was to come, the will of Christ. One cannot pick apples from the



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

shadow that is cast by the tree; rather, one has to pull the fruit from the tree itself. In our understanding of the Bible, it is imperative that we observe the two major divisions of the Bible, namely, the Old and New Testaments. When Paul instructed Timothy rightly to divide the word of truth, he inferred that it could be wrongly divided (II Timothy 2:15).

The Old Testament is as inspired of God as is the New Testament. "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). Peter declared: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). The apostle Paul wrote relative to the events that took place in the Old Testament in the following manner: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:11). Again he wrote concerning the law: "For 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). The fact is, one cannot understand the New Testament if there is not a general knowledge of the Old Testament. We can see how God dealt with people in ages past and notice the great scheme of redemption's being unfolded that would bring all events leading up to the coming of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. Therefore we should all study the Old Testament for the reasons given by Paul.

However, our relationship to the Old Testament is different from those who lived under it and were subject to it. The illustration can be given relative to this matter as per our relationship to the laws that governed the thirteen original colonies before the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence were written and enacted in 1776. Today, as citizens of the United States, we are governed by the latter and not the former set of laws. Here are some questions that we shall ask and answer that will help in understanding our relationship to the Old Testament law.

1. TO WHOM WAS IT GIVEN? "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). On this occasion, Moses was the speaker. He was addressing

the nation of Israel. We learn that Jacob's name was changed by God to Israel in Genesis 32:28. These people were fleshly descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was the great Hebrew nation. Moses said that God had made a covenant with them — Israel. A covenant is a pact, an agreement between two parties. In this instance, the two parties involved were God and the nation of Israel. The truth of the matter is, the law was never intended for anyone except Israel. The Gentile populace was not to be included in this covenant that God made with Israel. The nation of Israel was chosen by God to preserve the lineage through which Christ would eventually come. The law was never meant for the whole world to observe.

We have observed from Deuteronomy 5:1-3 that the law of Moses was given only to Israel. The only way in which a non-Jew could become subject to the law was by becoming a convert to it.

2. WHEN WAS THE LAW OF MOSES GIVEN? We can find the answer to this question by reading Hebrews 8:7-9: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no

place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Please note the statement relative to "when" the covenant was made with Israel: "... in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." One can trace the journey of the Israelites after their crossing of the Red Sea and follow them down to Elim and then as they camp in the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai. They then moved on to Rephidim. From Rephidim, the congregation encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, some three months after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It was then that Jehovah God called Moses upon the mount to give him the law. (To be continued). — 809 Perry Store Rd. — Opp, Al. 36467.

The Challenge Of Entertainment

It is a unique problem of modern man to determine how to use properly his large amount of leisure time and the abundance of wealth at his disposal. For most of our ancestors, this was no serious problem, as the struggle for economic survival consumed most of their waking hours and money was ever in short supply.

In affluent America, a giant entertainment industry has evolved to meet the need and capture the waiting bucks. Herein lies a second problem: Since most of those in the entertainment industry are devotees of hedonism and Mammon, they are often found in a role antagonistic to true Christian piety. Today the twin evils, lust of the flesh and lust of the eye (I John 2:16), tend to dominate much of the public entertainment. This then becomes the challenge for God's children: to "prove all things; hold fast to that which is good; [and to] abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:21-22).

According to Funk and Wagnalls, "To *entertain* is to engage and pleasantly occupy the attention: to *amuse* is to occupy the attention in an especially bright and cheerful way . . . to *recreate* is to engage mind or body in some pleasing activity that restores strength and energy for serious work" (*New Practical Standard Dictionary*). Surely everyone — including Christians — needs some entertainment, especially the kind that restores strength and energy for serious work. Though not inspired, it is a true proverb that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Our entertainment can be pursued either privately, or with our family, or in broader social groups such as friends, church, or club. In whichever relationship it be it must always be to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31). Most of us tend to think of enter-



JOHN WADDEY

tainment only as a commodity to be purchased and enjoyed in some public theatre. In reality some of the most meaningful entertainment is enjoyed in the home setting with friends and family. What a joy it is to spend an afternoon or evening playing games or working with a mutual hobby! How wonderful for Mom, Dad and the kids to travel, sight-see or go hiking or fishing together. What a delight to gather around the piano to sing together or to break out the old family movies! The Mormon program of a regular, weekly family night is a worthy suggestion for any family. There is rich fulfillment in reading a good book or listening to one's favorite music. All of these things entertain, amuse and recreate without the expense or the setting of a movie or stage show. They are some of the best memories that many of the older generation have, for in a day of hard work, little money, and limited transportation, that is how people met their recreational needs.

In connection with home recreation, we must mention television. That which was once a thrilling, enlightening and beneficial medium of entertainment has now largely degenerated into a sensuous and gaudy parade of needless violence. Beyond those objectionable aspects, it often insults the intelligent mind with its endless hours of worthless drivel. Of course, there are yet a few worthwhile programs the Christian can enjoy, but there is a crying need for careful editing of what is viewed. The negative influence of bad T.V. programing on impressionable young minds is no longer a debate. It would do most families good to station a poster above the T.V. screen with this inscription: "Keep thy heart with all diligence: For out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

When the serious Christian contemplates any avenue of entertainment, the following questions will help him determine whether or not to pursue it:

1. Does it violate any precept or principle of God's word? Such movies and stage shows that have as their primary theme approved adultery or homosexuality would be wrong.
2. Will this form of entertainment strengthen me as a Christian, or will it weaken my conviction?

Continued on page 4

The Challenge Of Entertainment

Continued from page 3

tions and dim the light of my influence? Some things of the world have the ability to choke God's word in our life and make us unfruitful (Matt. 13:22). While some things may not be wrong in themselves, the place, the associations, and the environment might make them undesirable for the Christian.

In connection with the above, we should ask "What kind of people will this cast me with?" Both Scripture and experience teach us that evil companions corrupt good morals (I Cor. 15:33). Bowling is certainly an innocent form of recreation and entertainment, but in the company of ruffians, drunks or "pot" smokers, that innocent thing would be inappropriate.

3. Will my engagement in this activity cause others to stumble? Some things are innocent in themselves, but because of the negative views held by good folks, we would cause offense if we did them. A game of cards (without gambling) is not wrong, but in some areas I have encountered brethren who felt that only a sinner would play such a game. Paul writes of such things in Romans 14: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself; save to him that accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (v. 14). He then urges "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died" (vs. 15b).

4. Will this interfere with my service to God and his church? A perfectly honorable form of entertainment that keeps me from Bible Study and worship assemblies keeps me from seeking God's kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).

5. Is this a good stewardship of the Lord's money which he has provided for my use? He expects us to be good stewards (I Cor. 4:2). Some hobbies and entertainment shows are extremely expensive. The Christian must weigh the needs of God's kingdom and the poor before consuming his resources on such trivial things. The \$500 for a ringside seat at a championship boxing match would provide 1,000 Testaments for hungry souls in Africa. This does not condemn a moderate use of our means for entertainment, only extravagance.

6. Does this interfere with my duty to my family? We see some parents so involved in their bowling league or golfing that they fail to provide proper attention to their mates and children. Parental responsibilities surely are paramount to entertainment privileges. To train a child in the way he should go demands some time (Prov. 22:6). Loving a mate is more important than "keeping one's average up" (Eph. 5:23).

7. Does this respect the rights and property of my neighbor? Some find it entertaining to let the air out of other folks' car tires. Some find pleasure in destructive pranks and tricks that are costly, frightening or inconveniencing to others. Some delight in ridiculing and "cutting down" their friends or loved ones. The golden rule plainly forbids such thoughtless entertainment (Matt. 7:12).

8. Does this exploit other people? Ancient Romans thronged to their colosseums to watch men fight to the death for their entertainment. Many of our early brethren perished as a spectacle of entertainment for those bloodthirsty mobs. Such entertainment was wrong, not simply because Christians died; it was wrong because it treated human life with disrespect. Men were but toys to perform for a vulgar crowd. Their maiming or death was of no greater consequence than an animal's. Man made in God's image deserves a greater

respect (Gen. 1:26-27). Today, we Christians need to ponder any entertainment that similarly exploits a fellow human being. A crowd that screams for blood at a boxing or wrestling match is a near relative to those Romans 1900 years past. That same ugly attitude is sometimes seen at an ice hockey game. Many current movies, stage productions, and TV shows exploit young women by presenting them as sex objects for lustful eyes. We should reject all such, not just because it is lewd (Gal. 5:19), but because of its insulting use of people.

In a word, when considering entertainment, saints

Making Havoc Of The Church

Continued from page 2

attention is diverted from the purpose for which he has come to the service? One case in point is the abuse of the Lord's supper. Corinth was making mockery of that memorial by their careless attitude. The brethren had transformed this communion into a mere common meal, characterized by selfishness and lack of fellowship. In such cases the minds of the worshiper cannot be properly fixed on the suffering of Jesus, and he will be eating and drinking damnation to himself (I Cor. 11:19-29)!! Such irreverence does nothing to improve the spiritual life of the congregation.

The song service may suffer as well from disorderly conduct. Everyone talking, laughing, and in general making merry up to the very moment the first song is announced is not conducive to a very edifying song service. The loud slipping and pounding of songbooks in the book racks testifies to a lack of sufficient preparation for entering into worship. This must really impress our visitors!!

Preachers may contribute to the havoc of the church through less than adequate preparation for sermons and classes. Their divine charge is "preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2). They can do this only through diligent study (I Tim. 4:13; II Tim. 2:15). The preacher who "socializes" too much during the week, then waits until Saturday night to select a sermon outline from someone else's material, and, with little personal study, tries to preach on Sunday, will be of no real value to the congregation. The more perceptive members (and non members who visit) will easily detect the total lack of readiness, and even the less perceptive will see right through the preacher's lack of personal conviction of what he is preaching. The congregation will suffer from spiritual malnutrition, its youth will not be challenged to want to embrace the way of truth, and many visitors will be persuaded never to return!! In short, the influence of the church will be wrecked almost (if not completely) beyond repair. It sometimes takes years to restore what was destroyed in moments or days.

Many other factors could be introduced to show how we may be guilty of destroying our congregations, without realizing it. Such things as incompetent leadership among elders who care very little for the progress of the gospel, or deacons who feel no real compulsion to serve the congregation, members who are lazy in their duty — all these things contribute to the wrecking of a congregation. It is not our purpose to cast needless negative criticism against

must "prove all things, hold fast that which is good [and] abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:21-22). Rather than being swept along in the current with a pleasure-mad throng, we seek out "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . ." (Phil. 4:8). Our commitment is to be like Christ in word, thought and deed. Any item or program of entertainment that fails that test is not suitable for the disciple of Jesus. May God grant us good judgment and moral strength to live up to that holy standard. — Rt. 22, Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN. 37921.

the church; but perhaps what we have offered here may serve to lead us into a careful self examination of our spiritual status (II Cor. 13:5). Ponder it carefully and prayerfully. — Rt. 2, Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

April 4-5, 1982

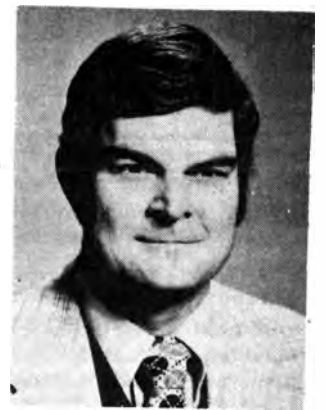
"I look for April 4-5, 1982, to register the greatest psychological shock ever experienced by humankind. I am confident as to the accuracy of my calculations and their epochal importance, *but I could have erred in judgment as to details — even as I have a few times in the past.*

On the above date (Nisan 10 on the sacred calendar) I look for thousands to be called by God — vanishing into thin air! On that date, all Christian believers except for 144,000 (Rev. 14:3), will find themselves still on earth — facing The Great Tribulation. (*Emphasis mine, RH*).

"On May 30, 1982, comes God's fire, answering the unceasing prayers which will have ascended worldwide after April 5. That will be the 2nd Pentecost when 1200, perhaps as many as 12,000, will be endued with Divine power.

"Limited warfare will rage in various areas toward the close of 1983, when it takes on global scope. Then will communist hordes unite and go out to exterminate both Israel and Christendom! That lasts about 21 months. On the day of Trumpets (Sept. 16, 1985), multiplied millions which have readied themselves will then also be called out by the Lord. That even triggers the madness which opens a two week nuclear war. Then does the Lord Jesus Christ return to earth toward evening Sept. 29, 1985 (Tishri 14 on the sacred calendar), fulfilling Mtt. 24:22 and 24:30."

The above article was in Saturday's *Jackson* (Tennessee) *Sun*, February 26, 1982. It is another prophecy (false in nature) that thousands of people will accept without going to their Bibles. It is another false prophecy that when it does *not* come to pass, people will still believe in the prophet rather than believe Deut. 18:22. How strange that people would rather believe a lie than the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12). — 1461 E. Chester Jackson, Tenn. 38301.



RAY HAWK

The really happy man is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

Happiness is often punctured by a sharp tongue.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1982

NUMBER 13

Our Relationship To The Law Of Moses

(No. 2)

3. WHERE WAS THE LAW GIVEN? Again, you are urged to read Deuteronomy 5:2: "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb." The term "Horeb" and "Sinai" refer to the same location in the southern part of the peninsula located between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akabah. "Sinai" is mentioned as a desert and a mountain, in 35 passages of the Old Testament. In 17 passages the same desert and mountain are called "Horeb" or "the waste." Thus, to speak of "Horeb" is to speak of "Sinai" with reference to where the law of Moses was given.



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

4. WHY WAS THE LAW OF MOSES GIVEN? "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgression . . ." (Galatians 3:19). First of all, note that the law "was added." The law had not always existed. The law was "added," that is, added to other covenants made beforehand with such men as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Paul mentioned it was "because of transgression" that the law came into existence. Suffice it to say, that the law brought forth full realization to the minds of men that they were sinners. Paul stated that this was the case: "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law" (Romans 7:7). The law of Moses was given to Israel to discipline and train them as God's chosen people, through whom would eventually come the promised Messiah.

5. WHAT WAS CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAW OF MOSES? Jesus was submissive to

the law of God that was in force during his earthly voyage. In Galatians 4:4,5, we learn: "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." Jesus was indeed born of the virgin Mary and the time period in which he was born was during the Mosaic law; therefore, he was under obligation to his Father to keep that law. In fact, Jesus was the only person to keep the law in perfection. Let's observe the attitude of Christ toward the law of Moses as we read now from Matthew 5:17,18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in on wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." So Jesus respected the law and held it in high esteem. His purpose was not to "destroy the Law." The Lord came to fulfill the law and the prophets. This passage of scripture does not teach that the law of Moses was never to cease; rather the very content speaks of the time when the law would pass away, that is, when all things would be fulfilled. In connection with this thought, it would be good to read from Luke 24:44: "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Jesus spoke these words just prior to his ascension back to the Father. In short, the things spoken of Jesus in the Old Testament had to be fulfilled; And they were, in the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. When such was fulfilled or filled full, the law of Moses was taken away. One of the seven sayings of Jesus while on the cross was, "It is finished" (John 19:30). There are some 250-300 different prophecies in the Old Testament relative to Jesus Christ. The Lord came to this earth and filled all of them.

Jesus lived and died under the law of Moses. He kept it in perfection. He never arrayed himself against the law. He taught that man should keep it, as God decreed. But when Jesus died on Calvary, the law of Moses was abrogated, that is, it was abolished, annulled and repealed. This is exactly what the apostle Paul taught in Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (to be continued) — 809 Perry Store Road Opp., Alabama 36467.

Signs Of The Times

WINFREY HENNESSEE


With the coming of the changeable lighted sign which we see in front of businesses everywhere, a new era in advertising was ushered in. Such quotes as, "If your hair is unbecoming to you, you should becoming to us!" or, "Foreign cars washed with imported water!" are not at all uncommon.

Due to the versatility of these signs, and to the good natured sense of humor of some who change them, we are kept up-to-date on all the bargains, not to mention being rewarded with a chuckle now and then.

Many new car dealerships are now wording their signs to say, "Come in and look, FORGET THE STICKER," all of which loudly testifies to what great lengths one will go in order to make a sale.

While musing upon this subject, I was reminded

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Signs Of The Times

Continued from page 1

That some people peddle the plan of salvation much the same way. Many leaders in the Lord's church will allow the thought of great numbers to take priority over the need for soul saving. Thus they continue to welcome new members into the congregation without first checking them out. Such people boldly ignore what Jesus said in John 10:1: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door of the sheepfold, but climbeth up by some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." When we do this, aren't we saying, "FORGET THE STICKER"?

Sometimes we're afraid to check on multiple marriages for fear we might miss a sale. And if one is unwilling to give up his beer drinking, then we do no trouble him; he might go to another dealer. So we say, "FORGET THE STICKER"!

Peter said in Acts 2:38, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Some say, "Make us an offer, we'll deal." In other words, FORGET THE STICKER!

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "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." This is the STICKER PRICE. There are no discounts, it will not run on regular, and we must have it serviced every day, but when we do this, the warranty will never run out. All the options are standard equipment and we need no fire insurance. With an offer like this, can we afford to forget the STICKER? — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

It is all right to be always looking for compliments — to give to somebody else.

Happiness will never come your way as long as your back is turned on duty.

The man who tried his hand at something and failed might try using his head for a change.



Qualifications Of Elders

(NO. 1)

Many of the questions we receive center around the qualifications of elders in the Lord's church. Often churches suffer for a lack of qualified elders, and sometimes those are appointed to the eldership who are not really qualified. On the other hand, congregations will sometimes deprive themselves of much-needed leadership because some have elevated the qualifications for elders to such heights as can never be attained by any human being. These things suggest we need teaching with respect to the subject of the qualifications of elders.

Must men actually possess all the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1? Yes, they must. Why would the Holy Spirit guide the inspired writer to write, "A bishop then must be . . ." if, indeed, it is not true that a bishop *must* be . . . ? And this statement precedes the list of qualifications in both Titus 1 and I Timothy 3.

Some have suggested that these lists are nothing more than guidelines to be used in selecting the best men for the work, and were never intended to be a list of necessary qualifications. But an examination of the passages involved will impress one with the fact that none of the characteristics listed is something an elder can be without and still be just as well off. And if he can be without a single one of the characteristics listed, how many of them can he lack and still be qualified? And which ones are absolutely necessary, and which ones are optional, and how are we to determine which are which? All these considerations force us to the conclusion that a man must possess all the characteristics mentioned if he is to be scripturally qualified to serve as an elder in the church of Christ.

It may be objected that to say one must have all the qualifications listed is to say that one must be perfect. But such is not the case. There is a vast difference between possessing certain qualifications and being perfect. In fact, it is probably the case that the majority of the qualifications are possessed to the perfect degree by nobody. One might be blameless, but not to perfection; vigilant, but not to perfection; apt to teach, but not to perfection, and so on. But does this mean one could be appointed as an elder who is not at all blameless, not vigilant in the least, and who has no aptitude at all to teach? Certainly not. The truth is, an elder must possess every characteristic in the list. And while he should possess all of them in substantial measure, he likely will possess few of them to the perfect degree.

A failure to recognize this latter has caused some to conclude that no man can ever be qualified to become an elder. But careful reflection will reveal that everything in the list, with the exception of those qualifications involving his being a husband and father, is something toward which every faithful child of God should be striving.

It has been suggested that the list of characteristics in Titus 1 differs from the list in I Timothy 3, and that both Timothy and Titus were expected to take



BOB DUNCAN

their respective letters from the apostle Paul and, from the information contained therein, be able to appoint elders. In other words, the elders appointed by Titus would not necessarily have all the qualifications listed in Paul's letter to Timothy, and vice versa. From this some have concluded it is not necessary for one to have all the characteristics mentioned in order to be qualified.

In answer to this we would observe that, while technically the lists do have some slight differences, they are not really all that different. Not specifically mentioned in I Timothy 3, but listed in Titus 1, are the following: "not self-willed," "not soon angry," "a lover of good men," "just," "holy," and "temperate." But it seems highly unlikely that one would find the man described in I Timothy 3, and yet who did not possess also these characteristics mentioned in the letter to Titus. Not specifically mentioned in Titus 1, but listed in I Timothy 3, are the following: "vigilant," "patient," "not a brawler," "not covetous," "not a novice," and having "a good report of them which are without." But it seems highly unlikely that one would find the man described in Titus 1, and yet who did not possess also these characteristics mentioned in I Timothy 3. In other words, the man described in the letter to Timothy is the man described in the letter to Titus.

One other erroneous theory with reference to qualifications of elders is that the work of elders, like that of the apostles and prophets, was limited to the miraculous age. It is reasoned that elders in the first century were miraculously endowed, and since miraculous endowments have ceased, the eldership also has ceased. While we would agree that elders in most, if not all, of the churches during the apostolic period were miraculously endowed, we would not agree that this fact even suggests the work of the elders was a temporary work. Evangelists during the apostolic period were also miraculously endowed, but this does not prove the work of evangelists was limited to the apostolic period. The purpose of and need for a particular work, not its relationship to miraculous powers during the first century, determines whether that work is to be perpetuated. The work of the apostles was in connection with the revelation and confirmation of the gospel. The apostles need no successors, for they completed their work once for all (Jude 3). But the work of overseeing the congregation is a work that will be necessary as long as the church continues, and elders are those designated by God as the overseers (Acts 20:28). It may also be observed that not one of the qualifications listed in I Timothy 3 or Titus 1 directly involves miraculous powers.

We are firmly convinced from our study of the Bible, from experience, and from observation that churches seriously err which appoint to the eldership men who are totally without just one of the characteristics which the inspired writer said elders *must* possess. But it is also a mistake to expect any human being to possess to a *perfect* degree all the characteristics in the list.

If you're not mature enough to take criticism, you're too immature for praise.

The secret of happiness is to learn to accept the impossible, to do without the indispensable, and to bear the intolerable.

“What A Friend We Have In Jesus”

DOUG MILLIGAN

“A faithful friend is a strong defense: and he that hath found such an one hath found a treasure.” This ancient Hebrew proverb, recorded in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, undoubtedly has merit. While uninspired, the saying points out the fact that good friends are much to be desired and should be deeply appreciated when once developed. The Sage of Israel wrote in Proverbs 18:24, “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Friendship is indeed an important commodity sought by all. Christians ought always to be thankful for the exclusive privilege of friendship with God. We often sing the song, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” That Jesus truly is our friend is manifest by many clear and palpable truths.

We know that Jesus is our friend because he said he is “the way, the truth, and the life,” and that through him we may come to the Father (John 14:1-6). It is in this same reference that Jesus announced to his followers that there are many places of abode in his Father's house and he was going to prepare a place for them. Surely one can see the love and tender care in the gentle words of the Master in this passage. Our Lord seeks to quiet the fears of the disciples prior to his crucifixion. In so doing, he also provided hope for all the faithful of years to come. It is through this promise of our Blessed Friend that we are assured of an eternal home if we remain faithful unto death.

Our gracious Savior further affirms his friendship through his mediation on our behalf. Paul declares, “for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5). John continues this thought in I John 2:1-2: “My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” The scriptures clearly reveal that Christ, as our High Priest has entered into the Holy Place to make atonement for our sins with his own blood offered as the appeasing sacrifice. Thus Jesus is pictured as sitting at the right hand of the throne of God making intercession for us. This particular aspect of Christ's friendship is exemplified in the account given in Luke 22:31-32: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Apparently, Jesus requested that Simon Peter not be tempted above that which he would have been able to bear. Even at this, the omniscient Messiah knew beforehand that Peter would deny him. The Lord's true friendship looked beyond the apostle's immediate shortcomings to his ultimate penitence and faithful continuance in the Gospel. The advocacy of Jesus is available to all who would cast down their sinful practices and call upon his name. Thus it is written that Jesus is our propitiation (I John 2:2). That is, his salvation is available to all men.

There is another way in which Jesus is our friend. Jesus is a friend who helps bear our burdens. Notice that there is a burden to be borne! We are instructed to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily and follow him. Brethren, there must be

trials and burdens, yet our Lord said that he would make them light (Matthew 28:18-20). Paul wrote, “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). Let us always

sing with the spirit and understanding, “What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear; What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer.” — Rt. 1 Box 159 Fayette, Alabama 35555.

The Conversion Of The Philippian Jailer

What Paul and Silas taught was misrepresented by those who used a girl with a spirit of divination for gain. This girl had followed Paul and his company for many days crying out, “These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17). Her constant cry wearied Paul. He cast out the “spirit of divination.” We are not told how the men mer-



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

chandise her “spirit of divination.” They reacted with vengeance. Paul and Silas were brought by them before the magistrates (city officials). Their charge was, “These men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans” (Acts 16:20-21).

Their charges were general accusations with no specifics. However, their unfounded charges had effect upon the multitudes and the magistrates. “And the multitudes rent off their clothes and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely” (Acts 16:22-23). Religious freedom was not practiced in Philippi.

Paul and Silas were treated as dangerous criminals. This is seen when we read, “who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks” (Acts 16:24).

Circumstances were developing that would allow Paul and Silas to plant the word of God in the mind of the jailor. “At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25).

An earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. Immediately all doors opened, and every one's bands were loosed (Acts 16:26). The awakened jailor, seeing the prison doors open, was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. “Knowing that death was the penalty for allowing prisoners to escape, he was about to act upon the Roman code of honor, which required a man to die by his own hand if necessary to escape that of an enemy or an executioner” (J. W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, p. 101).

“But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, do thyself no harm: for we are all here” (Acts 16:28). In the nick of time Paul's voice snatched him back from the brink of eternity.

This brought about a different reaction from the jailor. “Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:29-30).

Paul and Silas stated the conditions of salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). It is a fact that

one can be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The context shows that saving faith requires more than mental assent that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We see that action is required.

In order to comply with the command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, it was necessary that he be taught about him. Paul comments, “How then shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:14-17). Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45). Christ's drawing power is the word. Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

Next we read, “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house” (Acts 16:32). We are not told what part of the word of the Lord was taught. From the reaction of the jailor and his household, we are certain it was the same message taught on Pentecost, to the Samaritans, the Ethiopian nobleman and Saul of Tarsus. It caused him to respond positively to the message of Paul and Silas “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway” (Acts 16:33). His washing their stripes shows repentance. His being baptized the same hour shows the urgency he felt. It demonstrates the importance of Baptism in God's plan for the salvation of man.

THE URGENCY OF OBEDIENCE is seen when we read the next statement. “And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” He rejoiced after his baptism. It was said he believed in God after his obedience.

DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE IN GOD? IS YOUR FAITH MANIFESTED BY OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD'S COMMANDS? — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803

The Modernists Penknife

DAN FLOURNOY

The 36th chapter of Jeremiah records the tragic account of a king's vain attempt to destroy the word of God. In the opening section of the chapter, Jeremiah the prophet is commanded by God to write down in one volume all the predictions he had uttered against Israel, Judah, and all the surrounding nations, from the beginning of his prophetic ministry.

When this is accomplished, the words of Jeremiah are then read to all the people during a general fast. When king Jehoiakim hears of this, he sends for

Continued on page 4

Every man who expects to receive happiness is obligated to give happiness. You have no right to consume it without producing it.

It's easy to keep from being a bore. Just praise the person to whom you're talking.

The man who is always losing his head probably has a screw loose.

The Modernists Penknife

Continued from page 3

the roll of Jeremiah and commands that it be read to him. The king was so displeased with the word of God written by Jeremiah that he cut the roll with a penknife and cast it into the fire. This, however, did not destroy God's word. In the last portion of the chapter, Jehoiakim is punished by God and removed from the throne. Jeremiah is commanded to write another volume to replace the one destroyed by the king.

There are those today, who like the wicked king, are displeased with certain things they read in God's book. Therefore, they try to "cut out" certain sections of the Bible by calling them myths or legends. Many so-called preachers have been influenced by critics of the Bible who have tried to up-date and modernize the Bible by downgrading portions of the Scriptures as fiction.

One such preacher had been with a congregation a few years when he was called to the bedside of one of the members who was very sick. "Perhaps you would

like me to read and pray with you?" asked the preacher. "Yes," replied the man as he took his Bible and handed it to the minister. When he opened it, he was shocked at what he saw. Many of the pages were torn away, some of the chapters were missing, and a number of verses were actually cut out! The preacher asked reluctantly, "Haven't you got a better Bible than this?" The man replied, "When you came to our church, I believed the entire Book. But as soon as you told us that certain sections were not true, I removed them. When you said that some stories were probably fiction and referred to them as fables, I tore them out. I think if I had another year under your teaching, I would have nothing but two covers left!"

Such is the effect of modernism! The critics have so mutilated the word of God with their modernist penknife that there is hardly anything left. They have cut out the miracles of the Bible and denied the pre-existence, Virgin Birth and Resur-

rection of Jesus. The account of creation is said to be of human origin and there never was such a thing as the world wide flood recorded in Genesis. When the critics are through, there is really nothing left of the Bible but the two covers!

However, the modernist's penknife can no more destroy the word of God than could Jehoiakim's penknife in the long ago. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Friends, "the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:8). Those who attempt to silence the message of God only bring his displeasure and condemnation upon themselves.

May we, as the good people of Thessalonica, receive the gospel "not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the word of God" (I Thess. 2:13). The Bible is God's word (II Tim. 3:16). Let us accept its claims, believe its facts, obey its commands and enjoy its promises! — P.O. Box 29163 Denver, CO 80229.

"We Preach..."

recently of a man who converted to Buddhism. He gave as his reason for leaving the church he belonged to: "It was not that they didn't practice what they preached — all they did was preach." Paul's strongest words to the Jews came on this point. He showed them that they did the very things they condemned among the Gentiles. His conclusion was, "The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Romans 2:2,24). One

translated this, "the world hates God because of you." Preachers must practice what they preach. Even more, churches must practice what is preached when it is true, Biblical, and powerful.

God, give us more preachers and hearers. The task is difficult, and the way hard, but never let us rest "till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed." — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

A modern parable tells of a new church building that had these words on the wall behind the pulpit, "We preach Christ crucified" Below this a pot of ivy was placed. This plant grew up the wall until the last words were covered and all one could read was, "We preach"

Some have tried to bring an indictment against preaching, to blame it for some of the problems churches face.

It may be that preachers are the cause of some problems, but this method of teaching is not at fault. It may seem foolish, but it is the method God has chosen to save men (I Corinthians 1:21). Preaching, to be acceptable, must incorporate these elements.

PREACHING MUST HAVE THE RIGHT CONTENT. The approach the preacher uses in preaching will depend on the hearers and the message. Paul preached differently to the Athenians than he did to the Corinthians. However, the content must be the same, no matter what approach is used. Paul said he preached Christ crucified, and nothing else (I Corinthians 1:23; 2:1).

He told Timothy to preach the word (II Timothy 2:2). God's word must be at the heart of all preaching. It must be taken, explained, and applied to our lives. It is a mistake to reverse the process by taking some men's word of inspiration and beauty, add scripture to it and call it a sermon.

PREACHING MUST BE WITH POWER. An old preacher advised a young one, "It is all right to thunder, if you have lightning." Volume, activity, and enthusiasm cannot be substituted for power. This power is in the Word (Romans 1:16). When used properly, the word has more power than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

However, for the sword of the Spirit to be powerful, it must be applied where it will accomplish its purpose. The sharpest, strongest, sword ever made is powerless unless it is drawn. It is powerless if it is only waved in the air or applied to a place where it cannot penetrate the armor.

PREACHING MUST BE PRACTICED. I read



ANCIL JENKINS

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Observe the evil referred to by the man of God. "Sin," the transgression of the divine law (I Jno. 3:4). That which caused the fall of angels who kept not their first estate (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Jno. 8:44). The ruination of man (Rom. 5:12). That which has treasured up endless wrath for impenitent souls (Ezek. 18:20-24; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:46).

Observe now the peculiar characteristic of this evil, "the deceitfulness of sin." Sin is not what it represents itself to be — it is deceitful. As such, it assumes false names. Malice and revenge, the foulest passions of the soul, are considered by some as signs of a good spirit. Such are considered by the world as good men of honor. Pride, so offensive to God, is considered by many as decency, true dignity. Wastefulness is considered by man as generosity of soul. Slander is considered by the world as openness and freeness of mind. Covetousness is considered by many as prudence. Drunkenness and revelling are considered by many as evidences of sociality. Sin, as one can see, generally deceives by false titles. Sin prefers false claims. It claims liberty, from antiquity and a long usage, from the prevelancy of its influence, from the sanctions it receives from the rich and great, indeed, from all ranks of society. It offers false excuses — want of ability to do



JOHN G. SHAVER

otherwise, overwhelming power of the devil, the natural, and therefore in the sight of man excusable — all considered as goodness of motive. It makes false resolutions. It pleads only for the present, the ease and readiness of future amendments, determines only to make a few experiments, and then to seek and walk in the right paths. Repentance, tomorrow; obedience to God, tomorrow. Sin claims the present now, and gives the uncertain, and the constantly procrastinated future to better things. Sin is exceedingly, indescribably deceitful. It deceived angels, Adam and Eve, and in some degree, all of mankind (Rom. 3:23).

Note the effects of this evil. "Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Sin not only deceives, but it hardens its possessor. It hardens the soul, so as to be unconcerned respecting all the statements of the divine word. It hardens against all the admonitions of conscience. It hardens against all the providences of life. It hardens against all the strivings of concerned people. This hardness is unceasingly progressive, until it is total, fixed, and eternal.

Observe the inspired remedy suggested for this evil. "Exhort one another." First, to serious reflection on the extent and purity of the divine law, human weakness, great responsibility, and the provision made for our full salvation from it. Second, to constant watchfulness that we may not be surprised by the insinuations of sin. To earnest prayer for a pure and clean heart, a new and holy spirit, and divine assistance. This exhortation must be mutual — "One another." All have moments of weakness, all are in danger, and we must all care for and love one another. This exhortation must be constant — "daily." Why? Because we daily are in danger. This exhortation of one another must be from the right motives, at proper seasons, with great modesty, and with much love. Let us warn the sinners, caution the saints, exhort all. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, Fla. 33566.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1982

NUMBER 14

"Energy For Life" Is Theme Of Exhibit At The 1982 World's Fair

An exhibit designed to reach out and touch a person's life with the message of God's love will be presented by the churches of Christ at the 1982 World's Fair beginning in May.

The theme of the 1,500 square foot exhibit is, "Energy for Life: God's Love . . . Person to Person." It will be located in the Technology and Lifestyles Pavilion at the Fair, the main non-international building on the Fair grounds.

The exhibit is being developed under the sponsorship of the Laurel Church of Christ in Knoxville and is sponsored by churches of Christ worldwide. It is divided into four main "interest areas," one depicting the theme of "God's Love" and the others illustrating the importance of "The Bible," "Family/Relationships," and "The Church."

Some of the millions who attend the Fair will be searching for answers to problems and fulfillment of needs in their lives," Al Behel, minister of the Laurel Church of Christ, said. "Our purpose is to reach out and speak to these people. Give them answers. Provide them hope. And show them God's love . . . person to person."

"Each area of the exhibit is designed to reach out and touch a person's life, telling him that there are answers to life's questions," Mr. Behel said. "One of our main messages is that God cares."

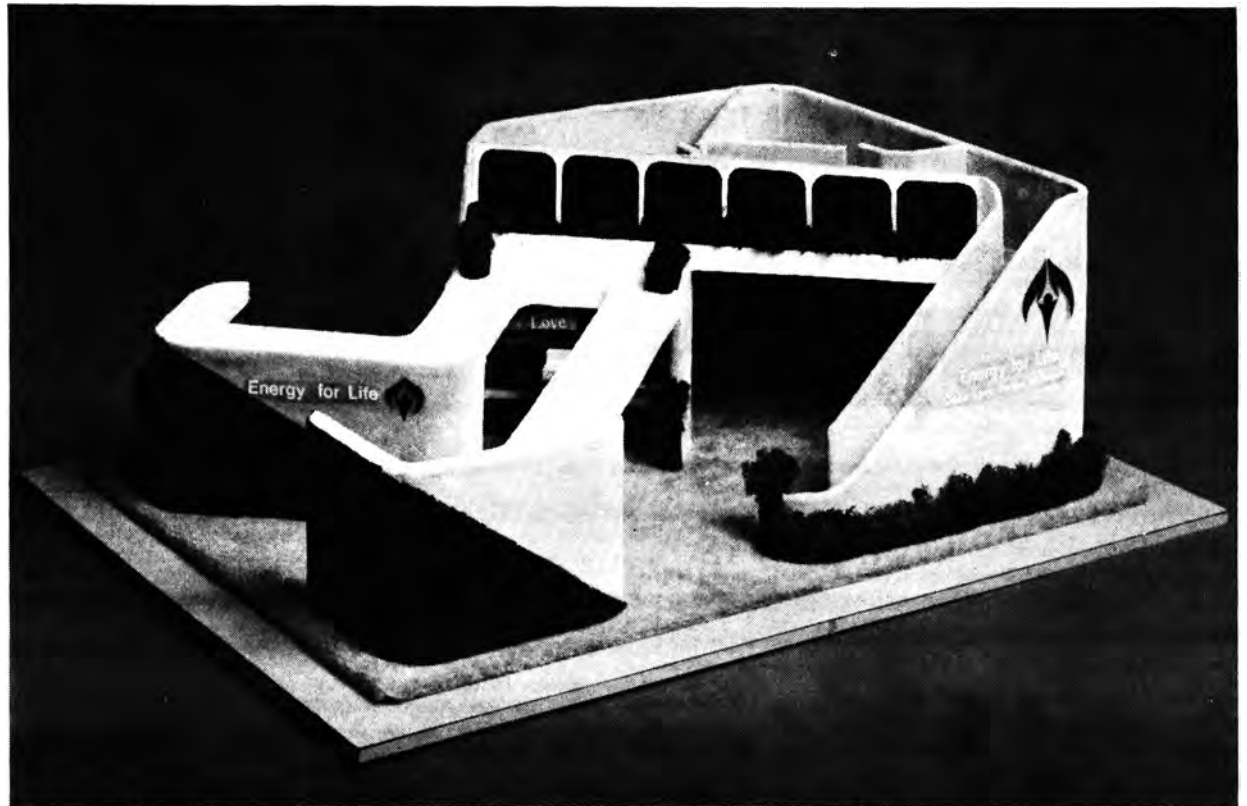
Mr. Behel added that trained Bible teacher-counselors will be available at the exhibit to help those desiring more in-depth study or to register visitors for Bible correspondence courses. Literature designed especially for the World's Fair visitor also will be distributed.

In addition, there will be a number of coordinated evangelistic services by area churches of Christ during the Fair.

The churches of Christ previously exhibited at the New York World's Fair in 1964-65. More than 1.8 million people visited the exhibit, and more than 27,000 enrolled in Bible correspondence courses at the Fair. Some 2,500 baptisms are attributed to World's Fair efforts in New York, including Juan

Monroy, a Spanish evangelist who first learned about the church of Christ at the New York Fair and

has helped the church in Spain expand to 30 congregations since that time.



"ENERGY FOR LIFE"

This is a model of the exhibit planned for the Technology and Lifestyle pavilion at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. The two-level exhibit is divided into four main interest areas, depicting "God's Love," "The Bible," "Family/Relationships," and "The Church." The theme of the exhibit is, "Energy For Life: God's Love . . . Person to Person."



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Kv. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Faithful Unto Death

The Christian race is run by many but won by few. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (I Corinthians 9:24). The prize is reserved only for those who finish the race. As Paul neared the close of his life he anticipated "a crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:8). Why? Because he had finished his course (II Timothy 4:7).



DALTON KEY

The life we live in Christ is not a short sprint. It is a long, grueling marathon. And as in most distance races, the starters outnumber the finishers. There are always those who begin in haste, without considering the distance, without "counting the cost" (Luke 14:28). It takes but a moment's decision to begin; it requires a life-long conviction to continue on to the end.

The true test of any army is how it fights when tired. The horse with the roses will always be a horse that has gone the distance. Most of our conquests result, not from bursts of spasmodic strength, but from steadfast, day in, day out endurance. Our victory over the world will not come overnight. Such victory requires a lifetime of concentrated, consecrated effort.

This steadfast, enduring quality is summed up beautifully in Revelation 2:10. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Many in the end to be faithful; others are faithful for a while, in a few things, until faced with temptation or adversity. But those receiving the crown continue in faithful service until death, yea even "unto death." — Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

Basis for happiness: something to do, something to love, something to look forward to.

Happiness is getting something you wanted but didn't expect.



FROM

THE EDITOR

He Must Desire The Eldership

(Second in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

As we move forward in our study of the qualifications of elders we will allow Paul's brief discussion of the subject in I Timothy 3:1-7 to serve as an outline. We will make comparison with the discussion in Titus 1:5-9.

The first characteristic we will discuss is not listed as one of the things which the inspired writer said "must" characterize one who is to be an elder; it is nonetheless a very important matter. One must desire to be an elder in order to be scripturally qualified. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3:1). In this passage the words *desire* and *desireth* are translated from two different Greek words. The first means, "to stretch one's self out in order to touch or grasp something, to reach after or desire something" (Thayer, J. H., *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, P. 452). The second means, "to have a desire for, long for" (Thayer, P. 238). This latter, says Thayer, is to be compared to our *to set one's heart upon*.

We might, then, paraphrase the verse as follows: "If a man stretches himself out so as to reach the point at which he can serve as an elder, then he has set his heart upon a good work." In *Living Oracles*, a translation edited by Alexander Campbell, the verse appears as follows: "This saying is true. If one earnestly seek the office of a bishop, he desires an excellent work."

How does one "stretch one's self out in order to" become an elder in the Lord's church? Certainly not in the same way one might seek some political office by campaigning for the office. One who would do such likely is demonstrating by that very act that he is not the kind of man needed in the eldership. In fact, one who has reached the point at which he is qualified to serve as an elder in a congregation will not have to call to the attention of the membership his qualifications; they will know about them already. And when they are ready to select and install elders, this man will not be overlooked. One cannot possess the characteristics that would qualify him as an elder, and yet possess them in secret for very long.

One who has his heart set upon the eldership stretches himself out in that direction by cultivating in himself those qualities that are set forth in the Bible as characterizing those who are to be elders. The very picture we get when we think of one's stretching himself out "in order to touch or grasp something" calls attention to the exertion of effort required. Think of one's standing on the ground and reaching up to pluck an apple that is just beyond his reach. At first he cannot reach it, but as he tries again and again he is finally able to stretch himself out and grasp the apple.

The idea expressed by the word translated *desireth* in I Timothy 3:1 can be easily misunderstood. While it may be said to mean *to set one's heart upon*, a proper motive must be understood. Is it wrong for



BOB DUNCAN

one to have his heart set upon being an elder? No, provided his motive is good and honorable. But he must not be motivated by pride or considerations of prestige or honor. Just as men may have their hearts set on preaching, but for all the wrong reasons, men may have their hearts set on being elders for the wrong reasons. Just as the only honorable motives for preaching the gospel involve the desire to glorify God and help men go to heaven, even so the only honorable motives for desiring the eldership involve the desire to glorify God and help men go to heaven.

It is for this very reason that one should never be appointed to the eldership who does not desire that work. Though he may seem to have all the other characteristics in the list, if he is lacking in desire toward the eldership, he is probably lacking also in his desire to glorify God and assist his fellow human beings to gain heaven.

It needs to be emphasized that one who stretches himself out to become an elder is one who has his heart set on a good work. Certainly it is an honor to be appointed to the eldership, but the eldership was not designed by God to be an honorary position; it is rather a work. If one will look at the passages dealing with the work of elders he will be impressed with the greatness of the responsibility one is reaching toward as he sets his heart upon the eldership. Notice the following:

"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. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

An elder could never give careful consideration to these words and at the same time take his responsibilities as an elder lightly. It is the blood bought flock of God placed in the care and keeping of the eldership. The elders are responsible for its welfare. They must watch, and warn, and protect the flock from wolves. One seeking the eldership is seeking a great responsibility.

I Peter 5:2,3 admonishes elders as follows: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." Instead of the word *feed*, the American Standard Version has *tend*. The idea once again is that the souls of all the members of the congregation are entrusted into the care and keeping of the elders. This is the responsibility being sought by one desiring the eldership. Hebrews 13:17 plainly says that elders will give account of the souls of those left in their care and keeping.

Perhaps it is the greatness of the responsibility of elders that keeps some from ever stretching themselves out toward the eldership. But it is also an awareness of this great responsibility which will

Continued on page 3

Our Relationship To The Law Of Moses

(No. 3)

6. HOW LONG WAS THE LAW OF MOSES TO CONTINUE? Let us read again Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made . . ."



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

The law had not always been in existence. It was, in fact, temporary in scope. Notice the expression, "It was added . . ." There had been other covenants prior to the one made with Israel as a nation. For example, God had made a covenant with Abraham, as one can read in Genesis 12:1-3. Observe also that Paul stated that the law was to last "till the seed should come." Galatians 3:16 teaches that the "seed" was Christ. Therefore, the law was to last until Christ came and fulfilled the law and the prophets (Luke 24:44). Again, we read from Galatians, chapter three and verses 24 and 25: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." In Hebrew customs, the schoolmaster (or tutor) was the man who prepared the Jewish boys and then carried them to the place of instruction by their teachers. The schoolmaster (tutor) was not the true teacher but only the one who brought the children to the instructor. Paul said that the law was a schoolmaster which brought the Jewish people unto Christ in order that there might be the justification by faith. Then he said: "Now that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." In short, Paul is here teaching that people are no longer under subjection to the law (schoolmaster).

Another important passage which teaches that the law of Moses is no longer in force is found in Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." The writer herein declares that Jesus shed his blood, not only for us today, but that he shed his blood for those faithful under the first testament. Also, Jesus is depicted in this passage as the testator of a will. While the Lord lived, he was in submission to the law of Moses; however, Jesus was making out his testament during the time when he chose 12 men to become his apostles. After his death, the testament of Jesus was probated in the high court of heaven and executed by his holy apostles in the Spirit.

Today, we are to be governed by the writings found in the last will and testament of Jesus Christ. Peter proposed to build three tabernacles there on the mount of transfiguration, one for Moses (representing the law), one for Elijah (representing the prophets), and one for Christ. God the Father then declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

In summation, we have observed the following points concerning our relationship to the law of Moses:

First, that the law was given only to the Hebrew nation (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). Second, the law was

given to Israel shortly after their departure from Egyptian bondage (Hebrews 8:7-9). Third, the location where the law was given to Israel was in Horeb (Sinai) (Deuteronomy 5:2). Fourth, the basic reason why the law was given was because of sin (Galatians 3:19). Fifth, Christ's relationship to the law of Moses was one of respect and submission. Jesus came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Matthew 5:17,18). Sixth, the law of Moses was to continue in force until Christ came and fulfilled it, nailing it to his cross (Galatians 3:19,16; Colossians 2:14). Today, we are to listen to the Son of God, not Moses. Jesus has left his will for us to learn and follow in his testament (Matthew 7:15-17).

Before we conclude, there is a warning given in the context of Galatians 5:1-3 that needs to be seriously considered: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Please note that Paul referred to the law of Moses as being "the yoke of bondage"

as opposed to the "liberty" in Christ. Some were endeavoring to bind circumcision upon New Testament Christians. Paul stated the principle that if we go back to the law for one thing to bind upon Christians, we are debtors to keep the whole law, that is, the animal sacrifices, the strict regulations concerning the Sabbath, the attendance in Jerusalem at the three annual feasts, etc. In other words, one can't have a part of the law without keeping the whole.

In conclusion, the apostle made it absolutely clear that if any person would try to justify himself by the law during the Christian age, he is "fallen from grace." That statement is too plain to be misunderstood! A Christian can fall from grace; and one way to do it is trying to bind and keep the law of Moses today.

The New Testament of Jesus Christ is the sole authority in religious matters today. All the books of the Bible are inspired of God; however, our relationship to the law of Moses as contained in the Old Testament is different from that of the Israelite who lived under that covenant. If we would know God's will for us, we must study the words of his Son Jesus Christ as contained in the New Testament. — 809 Perry Store Road Opp., Alabama 36467.

The Wisdom Of God Versus The Wisdom Of Men

James contrasts the wisdom of God and earthly wisdom (Jas. 3:13-18). The apostle Paul states that, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (I Cor. 1:25). The wisdom of God is seen in everything he has revealed and in everything he has concealed; in all that he does and in all he withholds (Deut. 29:29). The wisdom of God is most visible when contrasted with the wisdom of men.



S. G. GRAY

By contrasting or comparing the church of Christ to the denominations of men, the wisdom of God is clearly superior to men. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). The church of Christ is one, united, with its members speaking the same thing (Eph. 4:4; I Cor. 1:10). The denominations of men are many, divided, with members teaching doctrines that conflict and contradict. The church of Christ worships God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24; I Cor. 14:15); the denominations of men worship to please men (Matt. 15:9). The church of Christ honors Christ by wearing his name (Rom. 16:16); the denominations of men wear the names of men or names given by men (Acts 4:12).

Concerning the things about which God is silent, his wisdom is seen. God has left many things to the judgment, discretion and taste of man. Different cultures in nations and continents make some things impractical in one country that work well in another. God has kept silent regarding matters of culture.

Suppose God had designated a certain style of clothing for all of his children? Suppose he had commanded the building of a meeting house, its style and furniture? Suppose he had specified the length of the time spent in worship and the exact order in which the worship is to be conducted? In view of all the effects of culture and custom in these areas, don't you know that God was wise not to legislate? — P.O. Box 856 Washington, Ga. 30673.

He Must Desire The Eldership

Continued from page 2

make a man who is an elder a good elder.

In closing this part of our discussion, a word of warning is in order: In many congregations there are some who frankly confess that they do not want to be elders. The responsibility is just too great. But these same ones, under circumstances in which certain actions of the eldership are not according to their liking, would overturn those actions if they had, within their power to do so. These evidently believe themselves to be wiser than the eldership; they would relish the power to dictate to the eldership in connection with certain matters. But they are totally unwilling to allow the responsibility of the eldership to rest upon their shoulders. We must avoid this ungodly tendency.

Many men manage to keep their heads above water because wood floats.

Have you noticed that many people have flat feet — and heads to match?

The Genesis Deluge

"And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. 7:23). The history of the world before the flood is confined to about seven chapters. This includes the account of the creation, the fall, and of the state of things for nearly 2000 years. During this period, sin had dispersed its deadly streams in every direction. Here then, we meet with a pious, dedicated character; but the great mass of humanity had not the fear of God, and were disobedient to the authority of heaven. At length, even the forbearance of God was exhausted; his long-suffering expired; and he said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man . . ." (Gen. 6:3). Then the final warning was given by the preaching of Noah, and the erection of the ark. Then was the threatening of heaven executed; and all flesh, save Noah and his family, perished before him.



JOHN G. SHAVER

Notice first, the Deluge itself. Consider its reality. Those who admit the truth of revelation, do not hold the slightest shadow of a doubt as to the reality of the deluge, not only detailed as a matter of history in this book, but as also referred to in several passages in the New Testament. Christ himself refers to this great occurrence (Matt. 24:37). Peter by inspiration uses it as a powerful illustration (II Pet. 2:5; II Pet. 3:3-6). It rests also on the traditions of many nations. Scarcely a people exists who have not some tradition similar to the deluge of Genesis. The Persians, Egyptians, Chinese, and Americans, just to mention a few. Also, Sir W. Jones discovered that in the oldest books of Indian mythology, there are many records quite similar to the account given by Moses. There are also the natural evidences. It would be impossible for such an event to have taken place without the earth's bearing the abiding evidences of it. Now, do these exist? To this, I must reply, yes, they do. The loftiest mountains, at the greatest distance from the sea, abound with the remains of various types of sea life. Marine shells are found imbedded in the mountains some 13 to 14,000 feet above sea level. That the external crust of the earth has been broken is obvious, from animal and vegetable fossils which have been discovered in all depths of the earth that have been examined. The bones of animals, which could only have existed in hot, arid countries, have been dug out of the earth in great variety, in the coldest of regions.

Consider the means by which the deluge was effected. None who believe in a Supreme Almighty power will dispute God's ability to produce such a deluge. The opinions of those who study natural philosophy greatly vary. Some suppose that it was effected by a comet; others, that by one entire revolution of the earth, the sea was moved out of its place, and covered the face of the earth; and that the bed of the ancient sea became our new earth. There is one simple means by which it was effected, viz., the power of Jehovah God.

Next, consider the universality of the deluge; it extended to the whole earth. All mankind, all animal life, except such as live in waters. We have heard of destructive floods, inundations desolating districts of countries; but this swept over the face of the whole

world; involved all in one common ruin.

Next, consider the terrific character of this great deluge. Men may suffer great calamities by land or sea, for good men have often thus suffered; but this was the effect of divine indignation; the wrath of God. Here was God, justifying his right and authority. The ruler of the universe summoning the elements of nature to punish his rebellious creatures. Holy Writ records on its divine pages the fearful calamities God has brought on disobedient persons, and nations, such as the stoning of Achan, the opening of the earth to swallow up Korah and his rebellious followers, the destruction of Pharaoh and his wicked host, and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. But here, a world is arraigned, condemned, and destroyed. A whole race is swept away, except for Noah and his family. There never was anything like it, nor ever shall be, except the conflagration of the world by fire at the last day (II Pet. 3:3-12).

Notice secondly, the procuring cause of the Deluge (Gen. 6:5-12). The mind of man was totally alienated from God. His heart filled with evil, and only evil, and that continually. The cup of evil was full; the fruit ripe for destruction. The first cause was universal evil. The second was impious rejection of divine influences (Gen. 6:3). That God did strive with man is manifest. It is obvious that he strove graciously,

desiring to save them; and the term includes energy and perseverance. God strove long and hard. The third cause was final impenitency, the last straw. After he had taken the survey, seen the guilt, and determined to punish, God gave 120 years space for repentance; and if there had been a turning from sin, as in Nineveh, doubtless, judgment would have been averted. But these years of grace were all abused, and most likely despised. Final impenitence must bring destruction.

Notice the deliverance of Noah and his family. Now you will see the reasons why God exempted Noah from destruction (Gen. 6:8). If Noah had been like the rest, he would have perished. But Noah, (1) was a godly man. (2) He was a just man. (3) He believed God, and in doing so, feared and obeyed him (Heb. 11:7). Hence, in the day of wrath, God provided for his security, and saved him and his house from destruction.

Let us learn how fearful is the wrath of God (Rom. 11:26). Let us learn how dreadful is a state of carnal presumption and security. May we learn and appreciate the distinctions and rewards which await the righteous. It would be good if what was said of Noah could be said of each of us. "Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 7:22). — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, Fla. 33566.

Sensate Religion

ARNOLD SEXTON

Webster's New World Dictionary defines sensate as "1. having the power of physical sensation. 2. perceived by the senses."

The battle has raged for years over whether religious actions should be directed from outside of oneself or should it be sensate. Of course, those of us in the Lord's church know the Lord directs us through his word, and we don't have to depend upon anything as fickle as our feelings.

As I see it, sensate religion is not a problem just in the area of authority. It also has been associated with the degree of spiritual maturity one believes he possesses. When things are going well at the office (work), home, and at church, there is a natural tendency for us to feel we are spiritually healthy. Conversely, if we experience difficulties in one or more of the areas above, there is a natural tendency to feel a spiritual let down. We allow the things that happen to us to dictate our spiritual health.

One of the hardest lessons to learn is that the greatest spiritual strength is often demonstrated when misfortune has come. The Lord is the greatest

example of this. When his death was approaching, Luke records that he was in "agony." The pressure was so great that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

The circumstances of adversity naturally cause a let down feeling. Too often, Christians associate this with weakness and they sometimes feel that they are not what they should be when they have these feelings. We are not supposed to be ecstatically joyful about everything that happens to us. Real spiritual strength is demonstrated when one continues to function during these periods.

Spiritual strength is not measured by spirited assemblies and devotionals as much as they may benefit us. Real spiritual strength is demonstrated by everyday street fighting of Christian responsibility. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7b). — P.O. Box 345 Mablevale, Ark. 72103.

WORD of GOD

Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new

sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

John 19:40-42

But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace

be unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it unto my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

John 20:25-27



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 1982

NUMBER 15

Religious Freedom - Good Or Bad?

JOHNNY RAMSEY

A nineteen year old boy wrote to the editor of a Dallas paper. "Through religious freedom I have found the faith that satisfies me the most — my parents did not force me to go to church and I am grateful to them for it." Hundreds of our neighbors think this is a wonderful statement and even some preachers express gratitude for religious division so that "everyone can go to the church of his own choice" and be happy.

There is, however, a much higher motivation and a much nobler objective than "finding the faith that satisfies me the most." That loftier ideal is simply this: Doing what the Bible teaches and belonging to the church God ordained! When Jesus prayed for *oneness* (John 17:20-21) that forbade denomination-

alism. When our Lord said: "I will build *my* church" (Matthew 16:18) that removed the scriptural right of searching for any other church. Truly, in all realms of divine truth the impact of Psalms 127:1 is apropos: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."

It is a glaring misuse of freedom for any accountable person to choose his own way for personal satisfaction instead of selecting God's revealed way for personal salvation! The great prophet, Jeremiah, aptly commented: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps." Perhaps you are thinking: "One religion is as good as another in getting from earth to heaven just as one car is as good as another in traveling from Dallas to Houston." But

what if God had made a car for us to travel in? Surely no car men could devise could compare with that one. And the Bible tells us plainly of the church God purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). It is thus our joyous privilege to obey the Truth so the Lord can add us to that church (Acts 2:41). Let all honest men — everywhere — use their freedom wisely and become a part of the religion that pleases God — not man!

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify —
A never-dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky."

Box 235, Rowlett, Texas 75088.

Shocked: Are You Still Crying Out

How could Israel as a nation gain the victory over Canaan in the book of Joshua and reach such a low ebb morally in the book of Judges? The answer is that Israel failed to carry through and rid the land of idolatry. Through compromise they stopped being shocked at sin and crying out against it, and ended up living like those who knew not God.

Have you taken your temperature lately to see how high your spiritual indignation is running against every form of evil? Could it be that we are losing our ability to be shocked at sin and that our voices are growing weaker and weaker in our cry against it?

Some years ago the rock and roll singer, Alice



CURTIS R. DOWDY

Cooper, was on stage hacking a baby doll to pieces with an axe and throwing arms and legs to the audience. A Chicago Sun-Times columnist asked a nearby policeman if what was happening angered him. "What for? It's just entertainment."

What about the beer ads, the four letter profanities, the sex and violence that are part of the family viewing hours on TV, are we still SHOCKED, or are we "getting used" to it? After all "its just entertainment." Right?

Are we crying out against liquor outlets, X-rated movies, adult bookstores, sex parlors that offer to fulfill the fantasies any deviate has ever had, or are we afraid that someone will think that we are unsophisticated and a religious fanatic?

When Jesus began and ended his earthly ministry, he was crying out against the money exchangers and exploiters of the temple. "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and


the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:13-16). "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all of them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:12,13).

Now some have pictured Jesus as being filled with uncontrolled anger. This is not so, but it does point up the fact that our Lord was not indifferent. The cry of Jesus had a noble purpose behind it, which was concern for God's House.

We should be shocked by and cry out against every form of evil, but our cry must grow out of:

1. *Conviction*. The cleansing of the temple was not based on opinion, but conviction, which was produced by the scriptures. John 2:17 reports, "And his

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Shocked: Are You Still Crying Out!

Continued from page 1

disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Could it be that our failure to cry out is because of a lack of conviction? One thing that distinguishes a spiritually alive and vitally growing man is his attitude toward sin. He abhors sin (Rom. 12:9), even in himself. If we have real *conviction*, we will cry out!

2. *Concern*. The cleansing of the temple was motivated by concern. Jesus was concerned that the purpose of the temple was being prostituted. "And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13). The purpose of man is to glorify his Creator, but that purpose is prostituted by sin. This has affected our homes and families. How else can we account for the fact that 50 percent of marriages are ending in divorce, that there were nearly two million cases of child abuse reported in the U.S. last year (over 2,000 cases each month in Tennessee), etc.? It is not, therefore, an overstatement to assert that the home is in trouble.

Are we concerned enough to reach out and teach the purpose of man upon this earth? The starting place is in *our* home. If a parent gives his children good instruction and at the same time sets a bad example, it is the same as bringing to them in one hand wholesome food and in the other poison. As one has said, "We must walk our talk!" If we have real *concern*, we will cry out!

3. *Compassion*. It was out of compassion that our Lord cried out and cleansed the temple. "And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them" (Matthew 21:14). Here is the compassionate Christ reaching out to the poor and down-trodden. Our cry must grow out of compassion for those being victimized by the peddlers of evil. Without compassion, conviction can degenerate into self-opinionated self righteousness and a Pharisaical holier-than-thou hatred that will alienate. God hates sin, but loves sinners; so must I. As we cry against sin, we must reflect the love that flows from Calvary, else the heart of the sinner will never be broken. If we have *compassion*, we will cry out!

May everyone who wears the God given name be shocked at sin and cry out against it with conviction, concern and compassion! — 1518 Highland Avenue Columbia, Tennessee 38401.



FROM
THE EDITOR

An Elder Must Be Blameless

(Third in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be blameless . . ." (I Timothy 3:2). With these words the inspired writer begins to list the characteristics one must possess to be a bishop or elder in the church of Christ.

To be blameless obviously does not mean to be sinlessly perfect. Romans 3:23 states, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This shows that all have sinned in the past and all still do come short of the glory of God. I John 1:8 states, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Jesus is the only man who ever lived a sinlessly perfect life (Hebrews 4:15). It is a mistake, and a tragic one at that, to try to prevent a man's becoming an elder because he is not sinlessly perfect. It is just as great a mistake to expect those who are appointed to the eldership to become sinlessly perfect upon the occasion of their appointment.

Then what does the Bible mean when it says a bishop must be blameless? The Greek word *anepileptos* 'blameless' means literally, "that cannot be laid hold of" (Vine, W. E., *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* [London: Revell, 1962], p. 131). J. H. Thayer, in his monumental *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says the word means, "not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of." He then adds: "that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable" (p. 44). R. C. H. Lenski comments on the word *blameless* as follows: ". . . of such character that no one can rightfully take hold of the person with a charge of unfitness . . ." (*Commentary on the New Testament* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961], Vol. IX, p. 579). In his commentary on this verse, the late beloved brother David Lipscomb said that elders are to be "men whose character is unimpeachable, who stand high in public estimation, known for their pure life and spotless integrity" (*A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles* [Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1958], Vol. V, p. 146). Gerhard Kittel, in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), says the word refers to "one who cannot be attacked (even by non-Christians) because of his moral conduct" (Vol. IV, p. 9).

The importance of being blameless (*without reproach*, ASV) can be fully appreciated by one who considers the fact that elders are to be "ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:3). Only those against whom no charges of unfaithfulness can be sustained would be fitting examples for the flock to follow.

The importance of being blameless can be seen further in the fact that it is a part of the work of elders to recover those who have gone into sin and become unfaithful. They must also warn the faithful against the dangers of sinful practices. But an elder whose life is not blameless will be rendered largely useless in the performance of such duties. How can he rebuke one for some sin of which he himself is guilty? Or how can he rebuke one for some sin when



BOB DUNCAN

he himself is guilty of some other sin which is just as black? If an elder who is not blameless were to call upon an unfaithful member of the congregation for the purpose of admonishing him to be restored, can you not see the predicament the elder would be in when the unfaithful member called attention to the sins of the elder? He would have rendered all the admonitions of that particular elder completely powerless.

In fact, it is interesting to observe that the Greek word here translated "blameless" is a negative form of the word from which our word *epileptic* or *epilepsy* derives; and this disease of the nervous system is so named because it is characterized by *seizures*. This bit of information should help us appreciate what the apostle meant when he wrote that an elder must be blameless. His conduct must be such that it will be impossible for anyone to seize upon some flaw in his character and render him powerless in the performance of his duty.

Some have suggested that it is in connection with the list of characteristics which follows that the elder is to be blameless. We are convinced that one possessing all these characteristics would be one against whom no accusation of unfaithfulness to the Lord can be sustained.

It is interesting as well as significant that the word *blameless* in Titus 1:6 is translated from a different Greek word, *anekletos*. This word, according to Vine, "signifies that which cannot be called to account . . . i.e., with nothing laid to one's charge (as the result of public investigation) . . ." (p. 131). He further adds: "It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person."

It is not difficult to follow the leadership of a group of men whose lives are such that they are never even called into question concerning their faithfulness to principles of truth, righteousness, and godliness. This is the kind of man an elder in the church of Christ must be.

WORD of GOD

Fulfillment

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 all are witnesses.

Acts 2:29-32

Aspects Of Salvation

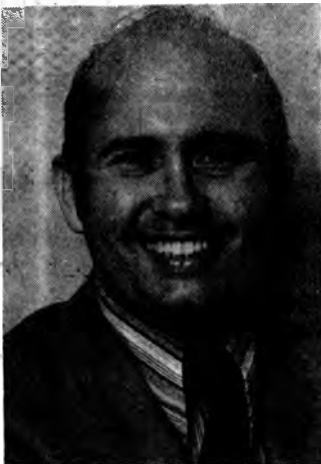
With a theme as important as salvation one would think every intelligent person would be eager to know its meaning and ramifications. Sadly such is not the case. Few folks have more than a passing knowledge of the subject. Still fewer could discuss it from the scriptures.

What is Salvation? Salvation is deliverance from past sins. From that moment in adolescence when we become morally aware of and accountable for our deeds, we have been accumulating a debt of sin. Our sin alienates and separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It carries the penalty of death (Romans 6:23). It burdens us with guilt and remorse (Rom. 7:22-24). In salvation, God washes away all our past sin and guilt when in faith we obey him in baptism (Acts 22:16). Peter says when we repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus, we receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This means our sin debt is paid in full. Paul paints a vivid picture in Romans, chapter 5: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us . . . while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son . . ." (5:8-10). Having paid the price to secure our pardon, Jesus charged his disciples to "preach the gospel to the whole creation" so that he that believes and is baptized could be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

Salvation means deliverance from Satan's power. Everyone who has lived long enough knows the reality of Satan's power in our lives. In our foolishness we become willing servants to this evil, tyrannical master (Rom. 6:16). Realizing our miserable condition, we try to save ourselves, but to no avail. Like Paul, what we want to do, we fail in and what we despise we often do. We too cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:22-24). The apostle tells us how we are saved from Satan's evil dominion. It is through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:25). When we obey from the heart that form of doctrine (i.e., the gospel of Jesus), we are delivered and made free from sin (Rom. 6:17-18). Jesus became a man "that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil: and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Salvation rescues us from God's wrath of judgment. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him" (Rom. 5:9). Divine justice demands that sin be punished. The wages we have earned is death (Rom. 6:23), but "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Since he bore the penalty due us, God can now *justify* us. That means that we are treated just as if we had never sinned! Rather than impose the penalties we deserved, God can forego our punishment because we are saved.

We are saved from this present evil world, according to Paul (Galatians 1:3-4). Most folks overlook this aspect of salvation, but it is significant. Sinners may want to live on earth forever, but God's children anxiously look forward to a heavenly home (John 14:1-3). To depart and be with Christ is far better (Philippians 1:23). On earth there are continual trials and tribulations. Pain, suffering and sorrow are our common lot. In heaven all of these are done away (Rev. 21:3-4). It was a merciful act when God placed the cherubim with the flaming sword at the



JOHN WADDEY

gate of Eden lest sin-cursed men eat of the tree of life and live forever in a world spoiled by sin (Gen. 3:22-24). Because we enjoy salvation in Christ we can pray, "come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

We are rescued from death by our Savior. Though it is the common fate of all men to experience physical death, Jesus will resurrect us from the grave. "The hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live . . . they that have done good unto the resurrection of life . . ." (John 5:25-29). Even though our natural bodies are buried in corruption and dishonor, they will be raised in glorious incorruption (I Cor. 15:42-43). We will then be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord and shall ever be with him (I Thess. 5:17-18).

Our salvation delivers us from the second death. "This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14-15). All who die in sin will spend their eternity in damnation (John 8:21). The saved will hear Christ say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). Jesus promises those who have experienced

the first resurrection that the second death will have no power over them (Rev. 20:6). The first resurrection is that symbolic one every saved person experienced when he died to sin, was buried with Christ in baptism and raised (resurrected) from the baptismal waters to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-5).

You can enjoy this blessed salvation *now*. Hear the apostle John: "These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). To preserve this blessing we must *walk* in the light of his word and the blood of Jesus will keep on cleansing us from all sin. (Such is the meaning of the original Greek text.) **If we do sin, we need only confess that and "he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:7-9).**

Salvation — what a thrilling thought! It is available to all men of every race (Mark 16:15-16). It is a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9). Its conditions are simple and easy (Acts 2:38). It will last you from now unto eternity (Heb. 5:8-9). Will you not claim this marvelous gift today? — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

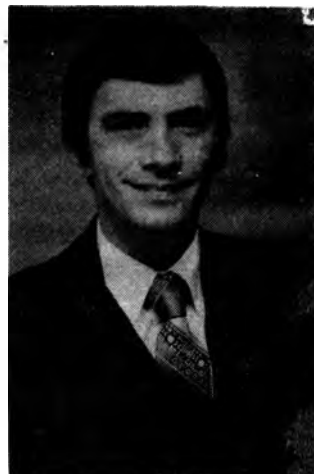
Give Me The Bible

Marriage is a Bible subject. One must study the Bible to understand and fully appreciate marriage — truth which is painfully neglected. Originating with God, marriage began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is the cleaving together, after forsaking all others, of one man and one woman, and these two become one flesh. God, and not man, joins husband and wife together (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6).

God warns man not to tamper with this union. All the applicable information is in the Bible. **Anything** which contradicts the word of God, regardless of its source, is without authority. Marriages do not fail; people do, by rejecting God.

Divorce has become as popular as apple pie and Chevrolet. However, divorce is much more deadly. Divorce (*apoluo*) is defined by Vine: "to let loose from, let go free"; and by Thayer: "used of divorce . . . to dismiss from the house, to repudiate." The terrible sting of divorce burns deeply within the very heart of society. It gnaws, and often rips to pieces everything for which Christianity stands. This issue must be considered only in light of what the Holy Scriptures teach. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:14-16). Divorce is never commanded. However, God does permit divorce when one mate has committed the sin of fornication. Fornication (*porneia*) is defined by Vine: "one who has unlawful intercourse with another's wife." Fornication includes homosexuality, bestiality, and adultery. Fornication is the only Bible reason given for divorce (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9; Romans 7:1-3). God's law is universal. It applies with equal authority to both Christians and non-Christians alike. Marriage is sacred, and must be entered with this understanding.

Remarriage can represent the beginning of a full and happy life. Attack by the horrible monster known as divorce does not mean that one must stop living.



JERRY L. FAUSZ, Sr.

However, the Bible authorizes remarriage in only two instances: (1) death of one's husband or wife, or (2) **unfaithfulness** on the part of one's mate, through fornication. Divorce for any reason other than fornication is the automatic forfeiture of the right to marry. **There is only one ground** for divorce and remarriage. Those entering marriage without scriptural authority, enter into **adulterous relationships**. Eternal torment is **imminent** since such cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). God's will demands that this adulterous relationship be severed. Difficult situations exist because many have failed to heed. When all is said and done, each shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10).

Maturity is essential. Marriage is for mature adults. Success will not come by accident. This writer believes that marriage ought to be special. Too many merely exist. Please consider these suggestions: (1) Remember that marriage is the uniting of two, and that it is a relationship which is bigger than the individual alone. (2) Loving is giving, and giving is love made visible. Do not expect always to be on the receiving end. (3) Marriage is not always a bed of roses. It brings challenging and stressful moments. Both husband and wife must learn to adjust together. (4) Communication between mates equals the difference between wedlock and deadlock. (5) Become involved in things both enjoy, and spend time together. Study the Bible together. Pray together.

Marriage must be guided and sustained by the infallible word of God if it is to be special. **Why not?** It originated with God. Marriage is the **second most important decision** in life. May God help us to **consider** and appreciate it accordingly. — Route 3 Box 329, Amory, Ms. 38821.

The plain fact is that human beings are happy only when they are striving for something worthwhile.

There is only one quality worse than hardness of the heart, and that is softness of the head.

When a youth begins to sow wild oats it's time for father to start the threshing machine.

Our Worship

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Some Christians seem to think of worship as an unpleasant duty which must be performed to appease the wrath of an angry God. It would seem that some great catastrophe might befall them if they don't go through the motions of worshipping. Worship offered with an attitude like this is just time wasted for the worshiper. When we examine the items of worship God has ordained for us, we see a benefit for the worshiper as well as an offering of praise and devotion to God.

SINGING: Surely, we are praising God in this act, but much more. Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Thus, the singing in worship will teach us and inspire us to be better Christians.

PRAYER: Did God give us the privilege of prayer just to make requests of our needs? Could we not offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving specifically as an act of worship to our God? Paul said, "... in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). Prayer will be the greatest source of strength a Christian can find.

BIBLE STUDY: How many modern-day Christians really study the Bible? Not many, I am afraid, seeing the amount of Bible knowledge displayed by some. Obviously, Bible study is for the purpose of obtaining knowledge. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Bible study helps us to know God, and to increase our faith in him in bad times. Those who diligently study will not need to worry about any judgment day surprises.

GIVING: Some have said this is not an act of worship. Some have even made attempts to separate it from the worship. God made giving a part of the activities of the church when it came together to worship. We are told how to give and with what attitude we are to give. Our attitude toward giving is truly our attitude toward the Lord's kingdom. Our giving is really a test of our faith and our love. Paul said "... see that ye abound in this grace also ... prove the sincerity of your love" (II Cor. 8:7-8).

THE LORD'S SUPPER: Some Christians believe that partaking of the Lord's Supper will forgive sins without any additional action on their part. Some come to the worship service, and after partaking of the Lord's Supper, leave before the rest of the worship is completed. This supper was given as a memorial of the death of our Savior. As often as we partake of it we are to be reminded of his death and of his promised return. When we face difficulties in this life we should be encouraged by the fact that Jesus has promised to return for the faithful (John 14:3).

There are many benefits for the worshiper, if the worship is sincere and offered "in spirit and in truth." What we receive from our gathering together will be determined by what we put into it.

HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP:

1. *Trying to worship without preparation.* The world is filled with "instant" products. You just add water and use. "Instant worship" is just going too



DOUGLASS SIMS

far. It is just not possible to turn the world off and turn on our worship at a moment's notice.

2. *Tardiness.* This is a problem in practically every congregation. Constant tardiness indicates a lack of desire to worship. It seems to indicate we feel our worship is an unpleasant obligation we would rather leave off. Some who would not think of forsaking an assembly actually miss several during a year's time by being late so many times. Tardiness hinders the worship of those already assembled when one comes in late.

3. *Indifference.* The worship means little or nothing. Some have just a "form of godliness." Such an attitude will surely be accompanied by an unwillingness to heed any teaching done.

4. *Preoccupation.* A preacher can look at the faces of many people whose thoughts are far away. The

cares of the world have always choked out the word of God in the hearts of many. Worship requires our attention.

5. *Disturbance.* Children need to be brought to worship. Children also need to be taught how to behave in the worship. A constant flow of children in and out of the worship will hinder almost anyone from concentrating. Teenagers and adults account for much of the disturbance. Talking, clipping the nails, fumbling through papers, and a multitude of other things indicate a lack of involvement in the worship.

Our worship to God is one of the most important things we will ever do in this life. We must do all in our power to make sure our worship is acceptable if we hope to be among those who praise God around the throne throughout eternity.—330 East Ave. Cedartown, Ga. 30125.

Zealous For Good Works

The *Devil's Dictionary* defines zeal as a "certain nervous disorder afflicting the young and inexperienced." Certainly the devil would stifle all enthusiasm by leading people to believe that zeal is a mark of immaturity. But such is not the case!

Zeal should characterize all God's people. Paul wrote to Titus concerning the Lord "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). God never intended for his people to be half-hearted or lukewarm. Servants are admonished, "Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord,



DAN FLOURNOY

and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance" (Col. 3:23,24).

Lethargy is the greatest scourge of the church! Lukewarm Christians weaken the work and make the Lord sick (Rev. 3:16). Just claiming to be righteous and showing up for worship will never accomplish the work of Christ. Paul warned Titus of those that "profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

The work of the church will be done by those who are filled with zeal. Zeal will overcome indifference and laziness. Christians need to rekindle their enthusiasm for spiritual things and increase their efforts in serving Christ.

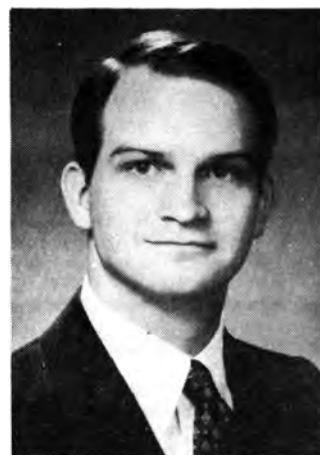
There is work in the church for all who have the necessary zeal. The Lord would have us to be "fervent in spirit, not slothful in business" (Rom. 12:11). May we all, with single-eyed devotion, zealously press on in every good work. — P.O. Box 29163 Denver, CO 80229.

Will You So Will?

David hid the word of God in his heart (Psalms 119:11). Jesus was able to recall appropriate passages from Deuteronomy during his confrontation with Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). The Lord chided the Sadducees for "not knowing the scriptures" (Matthew 22:29). Paul advised Timothy to read, meditate upon, and give himself wholly to the scriptures (I Timothy 4:13,15-16). Again, the aged apostle instructed his "dearly beloved son" to "study ... the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

These examples remind us of our need to know the Bible. Because faith is proportionate to Bible knowledge, we would do well to become better acquainted with the scriptures (Romans 10:17).

And yet many of us are sadly lacking in this area. Why? Could this lack be blamed upon lack of opportunity? We think not. The Bible is still the



DALTON KEY

world's best seller. It is readily available to anyone interested in perusing its sacred pages.

Could our deficiency of Bible knowledge be attributed to a mental inadequacy? Hardly. The small space between our ears has an enormous capacity. The brain's storage capacity has been estimated at one quadrillion bits of information — that's a million times a billion. Most of us use only about 10 to 15 percent of our brain's potential. No, the fault does not lie with meager mentality.

Perhaps our lack of Bible knowledge is due to our lack of will — our lack of will to delve deeply into Bible study. Until we desire to know more about, and more of, God's will for us, we will remain spiritually and Biblically ignorant. We must desire Bible knowledge as we would desire physical food (Matthew 4:4).

Christ taught, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7:17,ASV). Yes, we will know more when we will to know more, and when we put that will to work! Friend, will you so will? — Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

The place to be happy is here, the time to be happy is now, the way to be happy is to make others so.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-7)

"I
th

sneak forth

cts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1982

NUMBER 16

Strife: Causes And Cures

(No. 1)



WINFRED CLARK

Why are men at one another's throats? Why is there so much conflict in the world, in the home, and in the church? Does the Bible give any sort of an answer to these questions? I believe it does. James Four sets forth some of the very things that are involved? Remember that he had been in Jerusalem when the problem of the Judaizers arose. He would be well acquainted with the causes of strife that arose because of what they were doing and saying. What one finds in James 4:1-12 is what creates strife and also what can cure it.

James plainly asks where wars and fightings among them come from? He wants them to look at the source of the problem. It is not enough just to look at the symptoms but one must go back of these and see why they are there. James names in verses 1-6 some of the *causes of strife*, and they could well be described as follows:

Unrestricted Pleasures (v. 1). The ASV says, "Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members." Bro. Woods says, "Pleasure as used here, means satisfaction men seek from the senses and oftentimes the impelling desire for gratification thereof." One who finds pleasure in power of prestige, or preeminence is bound to cause strife. It will first be in his own heart and life and will be carried over into his relationship with others. Such as will allow these desires to camp in their hearts will never be at peace with others. A man who thirsts for power and prestige can never be satisfied, for there is always that unquenchable desire to have more and more. This places him on a collision course with others who may have the same desires and this is bound to cause conflict.

What would you have with more than one Diotrophes in the same church? (III Jn. 9, 10). The

answer is obvious. You would have a war on your hands, for all of them would want to be first. Anybody that has had any dealings with the prima donnas of our day would well know what to expect. Churches have been divided because of this spirit.

Ungodly Practices (v. 2). Notice what James said such people do. "Ye kill . . . ye fight and war." Anybody or anything that gets in the way of that person is apt to be maimed for life. The feelings of others is never taken into account. Do we not have an illustration of this when Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard? The rights of Naboth were not really the thing that mattered as far as Ahab and Jezebel were concerned (I Kings 21:1-16). From this, it is easy to see the cause of strife and conflict when one places no restrictions on his desires. Such was surely evident in the life of King Ahab and not all the Ahabs are dead.

Unholy Purposes (v. 3). Selfishness raises its ugly head in the prayers prayed in this verse. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Such a prayer shows a selfish heart that is interested only in personal satisfaction. Such a person is bound to be an agent of contention when his or her every request is not satisfied.

Suppose everybody prayed like that without concern for the needs and welfare of others. It would be somewhat like the prodigal who made the request for himself and then wasted it on himself.

Unguarded Passions (v. 4). This verse surely describes worldliness that creates unrest and turmoil.

Can an unfaithful husband or wife hope to find harmony in the home? Not on your life. Can a worldly church hope to find peace with God? Not in that worldly condition. God will not endorse flirting with the world. That places such an one on the side of God's enemies. He becomes God's adversary and such is not conducive to peace.

Unheeded Proclamations (v. 5). When people pay no attention to what the scripture says they open the door to strife. When one looks at the warnings of the Bible as though they were empty threats he shows presumption. He assumes that he knows better than God how he ought to act. When he ignores the general teaching of the scriptures on the subject of envy he assumes the freedom to envy and this is bound to promote strife.

One can be sure that strife will come where the warnings of God's word are not heeded.

Unbending Pride (v. 6). At the root of all strife is pride — plain human pride. The Bible abounds with example after example where division came in because pride was present. One has but to go to Genesis Three and there find conflict between man and God because pride got in. After all, Eve wanted to be as gods, knowing good and evil. She had been sold that bill of goods by the devil himself. That pride brought separation between God and man.

(In a later article we will look at the cure for strife as outlined in James 4:7-12.) — P.O. Box 1025 Athens, Ala. 35611.

Waddey To Direct East Tennessee School

M. H. TUCKER

Beginning with the Fall term, John Waddey will become director of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. This announcement was made by the elders who oversee the School on Sunday, March 21. Bill Nicks, who has headed the school since 1980 has requested the Karns elders

to relieve him of the administrative duties. Bro. Nicks will continue his classroom work on a full-time basis and serve the Claxton congregation as minister.

In selecting Bro. Waddey, the elders point to his

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Waddey To Direct East Tennessee School

Continued from page 1

role in helping to establish the school and his active role as an instructor from the beginning. His understanding of preachers and preaching and his ability to see a task through eminently qualify him for the position of director. The attitude of faculty and students alike indicates full confidence in Bro. Waddey's leadership.

When Waddey assumes his school post, M. H. Tucker will serve as minister for the Karns congregation, a post Waddey has filled for fourteen years. Bro. Tucker will continue to serve as an elder and teacher in the School of Preaching as well.

With this reorganization of work assignments, the elders hope to bring the school's enrollment up to its capacity of forty students and to broaden its base of support throughout the brotherhood.

In accepting this assignment Waddey related his great appreciation and admiration for Billy Nicks and commended the good job he has done. He affirmed his intention to continue the same basic policies of the school to seek to provide a balanced program of training for prospective preachers with a heavy emphasis in three areas: Bible knowledge, practical skills, and evangelistic fervor.

The school had its beginning in 1970. It is a work of the Karns Church of Christ and its entire program is under the supervision of the Karns elders.

Since its beginning, the East Tennessee School has sent forth some seventy men, trained to preach the gospel at home and abroad.

If happiness could be bought, few of us could pay the price.

Folks who hide their heads in the sand won't leave any footprints.

In the days when a woodshed stood behind the American home, a great deal of what passes as juvenile delinquency was settled out of court.



FROM

THE EDITOR

An Elder Must Be The Husband Of One Wife

(Fourth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . the husband of one wife . . ." (I Timothy 3:2). This simple statement tells a great deal about those to be selected as overseers in the churches of Christ. The Bible is beautiful in its simplicity and simple in its beauty. Confusion in religion arises when men depart from the simple instruction of the word of God, and introduce their own ideas.

The passage here being considered shows clearly that only men can serve as bishops or elders in the church. A large segment of the denominational community as well as some within the church of our Lord have been swept up into the feminist movement, and insist that women should be permitted to serve as elders. A man reputed to be an elder in a congregation of the Lord's people was quoted in a publication as saying that he visualizes a time when "women can do anything in the church that men can do." One sister in Christ explained Paul's teaching with reference to the role of women in the church as resulting from his "inability to incorporate immediately into his life the full meaning of Jesus' teachings and to completely rid himself of his Pharisaic and rabbinic background." The thing wrong with this kind of reasoning is that it makes the inspired word of God nothing more than the bias opinions of fallible men.

It is significant that a great deal of what is being said by feminists in the church has to do with insisting that women should not be oppressed, that they are not inferior, and that they should be given the opportunity to use their God-given talents. With this no one would argue. But for anyone to insist on occupying positions which the Bible denies them is to rebel against the God who gave us our talents. The sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16) was the sin of presuming to put themselves into a position which God had assigned to others. For this they lost their lives. No godly woman wants to occupy any place which God does not want her to occupy; those who want to occupy places from which God has withheld them are not godly.

A woman simply cannot be "the husband of one wife." The Greek word *aner* 'husband' is a word which denotes a man as opposed to a woman. Of its 215 occurrences in the New Testament, 156 times it is translated *man*, fifty times it is translated *husband*, six times it is translated *sir*, one time it is translated *fellow*, and twice (Luke 24:19 and Acts 3:14) it is not translated. It is never used to refer to a woman or to both men and women.

I Timothy 3:2 shows also that only those men who are married may serve as elders in the church. The passage does not say that an elder, if he is married at all, must have only one wife. It says he "must be . . . the husband of one wife." If he is not married at all, he cannot be the husband of one wife, and consequently cannot scripturally be an elder.



BOB DUNCAN

But why would God require that a man be married? It is not because marriage is a holier state than being unmarried; neither is being unmarried more holy than being married, as our Roman Catholic neighbors insist. We would caution also that Paul does not list being married as a qualification for one to be a faithful Christian. Were such the case, he would have excluded himself. But being married is a qualification which must be possessed by those to be appointed to the eldership.

It is not necessary for us to know why God requires the things he requires. But there is no reason to believe God has given any arbitrary commands with reference to the qualifications of elders; there is a reason for every characteristic required. We may not know all the reasons why God requires that a man have a wife before he can be appointed to the eldership, but we know one reason. He must have children (I Timothy 3:4), and one cannot properly have children without being married. (The matter of having children will be discussed in its proper order.)

One other qualification mentioned in the same verse with this one we are discussing would be enhanced by having a wife, i.e., the matter of his being "given to hospitality." While it would be possible for one who is unmarried to exercise hospitality, it would not, in most cases, be very easy. There are also other areas of his work as an elder in which a good wife would be a great asset, especially as his work might involve him in interaction with those of the fairer sex.

Our text also makes it clear that an elder must be the husband of *but* one wife. It is necessary to avoid putting into the eldership one who is guilty of any deviation from God's plan with respect to marriage. Polygamy was rather common among the ancients, as it is among those in some parts of the world even today. The practice of divorcing and remarrying is so widespread that practically every congregation of the Lord's people is affected by it in some way or another. Elders must be men who have kept themselves free from the immoralities which so commonly undermine the sacred institution of marriage.

What about one who is scripturally divorced and remarried? Can he serve as an elder? He can, provided his divorce and remarriage does not cause him to lack other qualifications, such as having a good report of them which are without (I Timothy 3:7). One who has divorced his wife because she was guilty of fornication, and who has married another scripturally marriageable woman, is, indeed, the husband of one wife. He no more has two wives than if he had never married but once. In the sight of God he is no more married to the first wife than if she had died.

Now, appointing a scripturally divorced and remarried man to the eldership may be unwise in certain circumstances. If there are questions in the minds of a large number of people about the scripturalness of his divorce and remarriage, or if it is thought by many that his own failure as a husband contributed to his first wife's unfaithfulness — these things might make it wise to pass this man by in appointing elders, though he is, in fact, the husband of one wife.

The Power Of One Christian

W. A. HOLLEY

Just as one sinner can do great damage both intellectually and morally, even so just one Christian possesses wonderful power to change, for the better, a world lost in sin (Ecclesiastes 9:17-18; 10:1; Matthew 5:16).

Obviously, one cannot be a Christian unless one first becomes a Christian. Before Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christ, he was a Pharisee; but after he obeyed the gospel of Christ, he became a Christian (Galatians 1:13-14; Philippians 3:3-9; Acts 11:26).

When Saul/Paul learned that his Pharisaic religion was wrong, he did not remain in disobedience (Acts 26:19). With the greatest possible dispatch, he became obedient to the will of Christ (Romans 6:3-4).

What did this former Pharisee do to become a Christian? There are some things which he did not do!! Namely, he did not "get religion or get saved" as so many claim to have done today. He was not saved by "faith only" (Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4, 17-18. Cf. Romans 1:5; 16:26). Again, he did not "pray through to salvation" as is often argued today (Acts 9:8-9; 22:10-16; 26:15-23). Well, what did this man do? He obeyed the gospel of Christ (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). What does obedience to the gospel of Christ involve? It required Saul to believe that Jesus is the Christ, to repent of his sins, to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

LET US NOTICE THE POWER OF ONE CHRISTIAN

(1) One Christian can be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). His whole heart and life can be wrapped up in staunch and steadfast service to the great Cause of our Lord (Matthew 6:33).

(2) One Christian can faithfully perform his duties and meet his responsibilities to Christ and the church, despite whatever hardships, persecutions, or trials that might come his way (Philippians 4:13; Acts 20:22-24; II Corinthians 12:9-10).

(3) One Christian can engage in the preaching or teaching the truth of God to others, regardless of the obstacles or hindrances that may attend one's way (Acts 20:26-27; II Corinthians 11:22-33). Acts 8:1-4 tells of the disciples' being scattered abroad but they "went everywhere preaching the word." If one cannot teach or preach in a public way, one can support others who can (Cf. Exodus 17:8-13).

(4) One Christian can be a source of encouragement in leading others to help relieve the real needs of the sick, the old-aged, the distressed, and the bereaved. What a great need exists for the services of both men and women to aid those who cannot help themselves! Peter went to the home of Dorcas when her body lay in an upper room surrounded by her sorrowing friends (Acts 9:36-43). Paul raised a special collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8:1ff; 9:1ff; Romans 15:25-28). Verily, Christians serve Christ when they serve others (Matthew 25:31-46).

(5) One Christian can be an instrument through which the work of God is accomplished on earth (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1). Herein lies the greatness of Paul. This man realized that he could be salt, light, and leaven to a world lost in the darkness of sin. You — you — you, as a Christian can follow Paul's wonderful example of living and working and teaching for Christ (I Corinthians 15:10; II Corinthians 11:23ff; 12:15). Our modern world desperately needs your hands, your feet, your mind, and your tongue to be used as instruments of righteousness for the glory of God (Romans 6:12-13).

(6) One Christian can control the lusts and sinful passions of the flesh (I Corinthians 9:27). One

need not follow the examples of the Herods, the Achans, the Jeroboams, Jezebels and Athaliahs, and that of Ananias and Sapphira. Thank God, there are higher aspirations and nobler deeds than these! One human being, through the atoning blood of Christ, can clean himself up, keep himself clean, be faithful unto death, and claim immortal glory in the great after-a-while. No responsible human being is forced to live a dirty, filthy, foul, nasty life. Jesus came to lift man to higher planes and fairer climes (John 14:1-6; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:14).

(7) One Christian can work for peace and harmony among the people of God. How terrible it is when division, fussing, quarreling, and backbiting exist among those who talk much about going to heaven!! How wonderful it is when we take "sweet counsel together, and walk unto the house of God in company" (Psalms 55:14). "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalms 133:1). Christian, be a peacemaker, not a peacebreaker! Try to still troubled waters; never, never stir up a stink!

(8) One Christian can learn to accept things as

they are without undue complaint. A disease that cannot be cured must be endured. Change the things you can change; but the things you cannot change, you must somehow learn to live with. You may have a terminal disease, but, remember, life, itself is terminal. Paul, the peerless apostle, whatever his station or lot in life, whether he liked it or not, adjusted his life to that situation (Philippians 4:1-13).

(9) One Christian can — yes, can — be faithful to Christ and to his worship and service even unto death. You can urge and exhort others to follow your example. If you cannot preach a sermon, or teach a class, or lead in prayer, or serve at the Lord's table, you can be present; you can put yourself on the Lord's side. If others refuse to be faithful, you can still be faithful to the Lord's will and way (Titus 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 10:24-25).

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (II Corinthians 13:11). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Grace And Law



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). We often use this verse to contrast the old Mosaic Law with the new way of grace and truth through Jesus Christ. We emphasize to our religious neighbors that we are no longer under the law of Moses but under a different system made possible by the death of our Lord. However, we must be careful that we do not leave the wrong impression in the minds of others, that is, the law of Moses was void of God's grace, or that the system of grace excludes law.

The grace of God preceeded the law of Moses and was included in it. Regardless of when a person lived in ages past, there had to be a response to the unmerited favor of God in order to receive the benefits therein. Paul declared in Romans 4:16: "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all." A man was never accepted of God simply because of his race or national origin. He had to possess that faith like unto Abraham in order to be blest by the grace of God. That type of faith motivated one to obey the commands of God. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain . . ." (Hebrews 11:4). "By faith Noah, being warned of God . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance . . ." (Hebrews 11:8). These are just a few examples of faithful men who responded to God's grace as recorded in Hebrews, chapter eleven.

The grace of God was evident in the overthrow of the city of Jericho. "And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand, Jericho . . ." (Joshua 6:2). Now that's unmerited favor! Joshua

and the people of Israel had not done anything toward capturing the city, yet God said, "I have given into thy hand, Jericho." Instructions were given from God and followed by Israel relative to what God wanted them to do. In their faith, the people marched. At the blast of the trumpets and the shout of the people, the walls of Jericho fell. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). The works performed by Israel did not cause the city walls to fall, rather it was God's grace.

God's grace can also be seen in the curing of Naaman (II Kings 5). This man had leprosy. There was no earthly cure for this terrible disease. However, when Naaman finally obeyed the command of the prophet of God to dip seven times in the river of Jordan, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II Kings 5:14). The waters of Jordan did not cleanse him. It was when his faith motivated him to obey the command of God that the grace of the Lord was bestowed upon him.

Throughout the Old Testament the wonderful grace of our heavenly Father is clearly seen. Law does not exclude grace.

In contrast, the system of grace does not exclude law. God is the giver, salvation is the gift, and man is the recipient. No one denies that we are saved by the infinite grace of the Heavenly Father. The apostle Paul had made this truth evident in his writings: ". . . by grace have ye been saved . . ." (Ephesians 2:5). This "grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11). We learn in Hebrews 2:9 that Christ tasted of death for "every man." Does this mean that God saves man without man's having a choice in the matter? Certainly not! Jesus taught in Matthew 7:13,14 that the "many" in contrast with the "few" would be eternally lost, the reason being that man determines whether he will obey or disobey Christ.

But, someone is ready to reply, "if man has a part in his salvation, such works will nullify the grace of God." Not so! That grace of God which has appeared also instructs men to deny "ungodliness and worldly lust" and informs us how to "live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-

Continued on page 4

Grace And Law

Continued from page 3

14). Man has to respond to the grace of God by conforming his life to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. In Ephesians 2:8 we learn, "for by grace have ye been saved through faith" Faith is man's part in salvation. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace . . ." (Romans 4:16). If there is not response (faith) on the part of man, God's grace will not save. In the great Roman letter, Paul mentions "obedience of the faith" in the beginning and in the ending of this epistle (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Faith is the foundation of obedience. The faith

that saves is one that obeys (Hebrews 5:8,9). It is a living, vibrant, obedient faith (James 2:24,26). While the works of the law could not justify anyone, it is a work of God that we believe on his Son (Galatians 2:16; John 6:29). The Lord requires that a man repent of sins, confess his faith in Jesus Christ and be immersed for the remission of sins (Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9,10; Mark 16:16). When, in our faith, we respond to the commands of God, we know that we have not merited salvation. Jesus taught, "Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all things that are

commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). It is not a matter who saves but rather when God saves a man.

Paul declared that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Yes, there is law under the system of grace, and the commandments ordained of God for man to obey do not nullify his grace. — 809 Perry Store Road Opp., Alabama 36467.

The Language Of Cain

The arrogance of Cain! It is bad enough to have God question one's conduct, but also to evade the question of God and ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is even worse.

Cain was guilty. He had killed his brother and there was no way to hide it. However, instead of confessing his sin, he tried to evade his responsibility. Cain killed his brother because of jealousy. However, he was guilty of another equally great sin. He failed to understand his relationship with Abel. If he had seen



ANCIL JENKINS

more clearly his responsibility to Abel he might have reconsidered his actions.

WE ARE OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER. We have a responsibility to all men since we are all made in God's image. All men of accountable age and reasonable mental ability are subject to the punishment caused by sin. They can enjoy the benefits of the blood shed on Calvary. We have this in common with all men.

We have an especial responsibility to our brothers in Christ. Paul taught us to feed our enemy if he is hungry (Romans 12:20). If we have such an obligation to our enemies, what do we have toward our brothers in Him? This takes precedence over any objection to those not of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

WE ARE OUR BROTHER'S BROTHER. The obligations placed on us, being fellow members of the body of Christ, are great. We are bound by many

spiritual cords. We are sons of God. We share a common inheritance. Our spiritual goals are the same.

This binding with the cords of brotherhood places great responsibility on us. We cannot harm our brothers as did Cain. Whatever might hurt, physically and especially mentally and emotionally, should be withheld.

We cannot neglect our brothers. To withhold what is needed and necessary is the same as doing them harm.

Matthew Henry made this comment on Genesis 4:9: "They who are unconcerned in the affairs of their brethren, and take no care, when they have opportunity, to prevent their hurt in their bodies, goods, or good name, especially in their souls, do in effect, speak Cain's language." — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Message To Parents

Being a disciple of Christ is no small matter. Jesus taught the importance of having him first and foremost, and loving him above all others. This must be understood. However, it occurred to this writer that in Luke 14:26 Jesus also conveys a significant message to fathers and mothers. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother . . . yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."



JERRY L. FAUSZ, Sr.

The aforementioned verse contains a message for fathers. Accept your place as head of the home (Ephesians 5:23). This is your God-given responsibility. Example provides a means by which others can at least begin to understand true discipleship. Love for your wife says much about your love for the Lord (Ephesians 5:25). Remember to care for her as the weaker vessel. Appreciating her as a help meet is also in keeping with Bible teaching (Genesis 2:18). Wives are not slaves. Concern for your children is further evidence of devotion to God. Discipline is never easy but always necessary (Proverbs 13:24). It must be administered with love (Ephesians 6:4). Insistence upon Bible study and attending all the services of the church is not always a welcomed demand. But it is absolutely essential. Abstinence

from the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and filthy language will help make it less difficult for others (I Corinthians 3:16-17; I Thessalonians 5:22). Sinful recreation (dancing, mixed swimming, etc.) must be forbidden (Romans 12:1-2). There are other sins less apparent, and just as deadly, but nothing can justify the aforementioned. Laughing and weeping both are part of life. Winning and losing are also involved. But fathers can help make it much easier, by instructing and showing others how to have Christ first in their lives.

Mothers are so precious. But there is also a message for them. Submit yourself unto your husband (Ephesians 5:24). Always keep the Lord first. Love and reverence your husband (Titus 2:4). Care for the children is a responsibility enjoined upon both parents. However, mother's tender and instinctive love cannot be matched. Happiness within the home depends greatly upon attitude. Take pride in the appearance of your home. The psychological effect is unmeasurable. Be concerned about the well-being of your family. Proper attitude means so much. Being a mother and keeper at home represents wisdom from above. It is part of God's plan. Mother's work is far too important and time consuming for her to become bored (Titus 2:5). Her tender love and care cannot be explained nor taken for granted. Nothing is more desperately needed. Example is no less important with mothers. Younger women must learn (Titus 2:4). Apparel, conduct, recreation, and manner of speech must all be worthy of emulation. It may sound difficult for some, but Bible study and seeking Christ first will make it happen.

God has imparted grave responsibility upon parents. Your children shall remain with you for a very brief period of time. They will then take what has been learned and live a life on their own. That too shall be comparatively brief. But each precious soul shall spend eternity somewhere. There is so much to do in so little time. Let us seek Christ, pick up our cross, and follow him. Maybe others will follow us (I Corinthians 11:1). This short poem is offered for your consideration — it is called *Make the Message Clear*:

Speak ten thousand words, one may fail to comprehend.

But provide an example, and it shall be a different trend.

Please! help another become a disciple of Christ today.

Father and mother, the message is clear, show them the way. — Route 3 Box 329, Amory, Mississippi 38821.

Happiness is in the heart, not in the circumstances.

Two heads are not better than one, considering the present price of haircuts.

Another trouble with juvenile delinquency is that it's harder to say than "just plain cussedness."

Happiness does not come from what you have, but from what you are.



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1982

NUMBER 17

The Greatest Assurance: No Condemnation

ROMANS 8:14

Upon entering Romans 8 one quickly finds the most comforting chapter of Romans, perhaps of the entire Bible! It ranks with Psalm 23, John 14 and I Corinthians 15. Probably part of its glory resides in the stark contrast it offers to the near despair of chapter seven. "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (7:24). Romans 7:14-25 seems to depict a hopeless warfare as the "flesh lusts against the spirit" (Gal. 5:17). But in Galatians 5:16 Paul had just said, "Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Romans 8:1-7 is a divinely inspired commentary on that verse.



MARTELPACE

The freedoms emphasized in Romans (as set forth by Nygren) are: Freedom from the wrath of God by God's love (5:1-11); Freedom from sin through baptism (6:1-14); Freedom from the law through the death of Christ (7:1-6), and Freedom from death through the Spirit (8:1-11). Truly, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17). We have been called to liberty (Galatians 5:13).

Strangely, although perhaps not so, the word "Spirit" is nowhere found in Romans 7, but He fills chapter 8! So long as we try to war against the flesh without the Spirit we fight a losing battle. If we avail ourselves of the Spirit's "law of life" we become "more than conquerors." The great blessings provided and given in Romans 8 are numerous; I counted 21 but there may be more. If we have the first, "no condemnation," the rest will come naturally. A few are life, peace, made alive, sonship, witness, heirship, hope of future glory, all things working for our good, and God is for us. What others can you find?

The Old Law condemned by pronouncing sin and judgment. In Christ that is gone! We are shown

that not even now are we in "the body of this death" (7:24). Remember that the Law made people see their sinfulness and helplessness. "No condemnation" does not mean that we will entirely escape the Judgment Day but rather escape "the judgment which follows the sentencing" (Arndt-Gingrich). In Christ we should live as though we are pardoned because we are! Some still live with the fears of a prison house. Remember, Romans 6:3 established that we are "baptized into Christ." Now we are in "faith-union" with Christ, having died with him, been buried with him, and been raised with him (6:4). We are now so much *with Christ* that Paul can switch back and forth easily from the Person of Christ to his spiritual body ("corporate personality" — Bruce). The latter is comprised of Christ who is at God's right hand and all his people who share his life of "no condemnation."

To be "in Christ" is to be a member of the church. It is not just a name on the books, but it is to be a limb or an organ of his body. As such we are dependent on him for life and he is dependent on you for his will to be done on earth.

"No condemnation" is often misapplied to mean, "I have no condemnation; therefore I can't lose my salvation." This is not the thought under consideration. Paul is just showing what you have while in Christ. One might run into a cave for safety during a storm, but that does not guarantee all future safety (Whiteside). Being set free does not rob us of all responsibility for future conduct. By sin's very nature it must be condemned wherever it is found, whether in a Christian or a sinner. But in Christ condemnation can always be avoided.

The thought of chapter 7 is reduced to one sentence in 8:2,3. Many want to find something mysterious in "spirit," but it need not be so. The Spirit indeed gives life, but he does so through words (John 6:63). What gives life is what saves; this is simply the gospel (Romans 1:16).

It is only the "law of the spirit of life" that makes free from "the law of sin and death" (8:2). But what is the "law of sin and death"? It cannot be the law of Moses. If it did, Paul was saying, "The law of Moses could not set me free from the law of Moses" (Whiteside). It is rather the principle which was

working through the flesh mentioned at 7:23-24 (the "different law"). The law of Moses could not set us free from the principle of warfare in the flesh which causes us all to be spiritually dead through sin.

That law couldn't do the job because it was weak through our flesh (8:3). It is the weakness and vulnerability of man that gives sin a beachhead in your life (Barclay). To "live according to the flesh" (8:5) is to live dominated by its dictates — the desires of human nature. But *in Christ* one can live a life dominated by the love of God. It is because the appetites of the flesh so often lead to sin that "flesh" is called "sinful." "Sins of the flesh" are not just sexual sins, for among them are wrath, envy and murder (Gal. 5:19-21).

Some think Christ gave us power to keep the righteousness demanded under the law. This would mean we now have a superhuman power to live above sin. "Such an interpretation flies directly in the face of Paul's whole view" (Nygren, p. 317). Our salvation is because of what Jesus did, and not what we can now do.

Christian holiness means that we have a new spirit (II Cor. 5:17). What the law was powerless to produce because of inadequate human material is produced by the forgiving power of Jesus' death. It is not what we can do but what Jesus did for us.


We are not holy because we can now perfectly keep 10,000 precepts. It has something to do with the new heart provided the "new creature" in Christ. Indeed, we are to have a new love in appreciation of God's love (I John 4:19), and this does indeed fulfill the law (Rom. 13:9-10).

To run and work the law commands,
Yet gives me neither feet nor hands;
But better news the gospel brings;
It bids me fly, and gives me wings.

A vine does not produce grapes because of an Act of Congress, but because it is naturally tied to the vine and the vine's own life is in it; in our case, this is Christ's life.

Jesus now covers and protects us. When Cuba was under Spain an Englishman was arrested for lingering over a man another had stabbed. He was arrested and scheduled to be shot at sunrise the next day.

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



FROM
THE EDITOR

An Elder Must Be Vigilant

(Fifth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)



BOB DUNCAN

"A bishop then must be . . . vigilant . . ." (I Timothy 3:2). It is interesting to notice that the American Standard Version has instead of *vigilant*, the word *temperate*. But neither word fully conveys the idea expressed by the Greek word *nephalios*, which literally means "holding no wine." The translators of the King James Version believed, and correctly so, that the word is used here, not in its literal, but in its metaphorical sense, i.e., *to be calm, dispassionate, and circumspect*. The same Greek word is translated by the word *sober* in verse eleven of this chapter and in Titus 2:2, and it seems fairly obvious that in all these passages the word is to be understood in its metaphorical sense.

An elder must be characterized by the ability to think and reason clearly — that which the man who is filled with wine most certainly cannot do. This is the idea the apostle wished to convey by the language here used. The word *vigilant*, when carefully considered, may more nearly convey the idea intended by the apostle than one would think at first glance. In the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, there is a discussion of the synonyms of the word *aware*. The following statement is made: "*Watchful* and *vigilant* imply acute perception of what is dangerous or potentially so." Is that not precisely the idea the inspired writer intended to convey? At least we know there are several passages which bear out the need for this kind of perception on the part of elders. Notice some areas in which elders must be especially vigilant:

Elders must be vigilant with reference to their own lives. The elders of the Ephesian church were admonished: "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" (Acts 20:28). Taking heed to his own spirituality must take precedence in the life of an elder over his work of shepherding the flock. How can one lead others in the way of truth and righteousness when he himself is not walking in that way? Elders must furnish examples for the flock to follow (I Peter 5:3). All too often we see an eldership simply holding meetings to decide what the congregation should (or should not) do, instead of leading the congregation in carrying out its program. Such an eldership sees itself as a board of directors, with underlings serving to carry out the decisions of the board. Such an eldership will accomplish little in its efforts to lead the congregation in accomplishing the will of God.

True, an eldership must have meetings and make decisions with reference to the congregation. But in order to get the congregation to involve itself in the program of work outlined, an eldership must lead the congregation in carrying out that program. Why is it an announcement may be made that all who will may meet on a given Saturday to do a cer-

tain work of the church, and less than ten percent of the congregation will show up? Likely it is because they see certain of the elders not showing up, and they simply will not do themselves what their own leaders refuse to do. Before elders can oversee the flock, they must take heed unto themselves.

It must not be overlooked that taking heed to oneself includes continuous spiritual development through personal devotion. An elder, despite the importance of his work in the eldership, cannot afford to allow himself to become so busy that he neglects his own personal Bible study and prayer. He must, first of all, take heed to himself.

Elders must be vigilant with reference to the welfare of the congregation. "Take heed therefore . . . to all the flock . . ." (Acts 20:28). Elders should be acutely perceptive concerning the dangers surrounding the flock. There is the ever-present danger that members of the church might simply lose interest in things spiritual, and just quit the church. Elders must be vigilant with reference to such matters, and those who are absent from the assemblies should be contacted and admonished to be faithful.

Another danger which threatens the souls of men and women in the church is worldliness. We are living in perilous times, with reference to worldliness. Things formerly condemned by all religious people — dancing, social drinking, immodest dress, etc. — are now looked upon by many, even in the church, as being harmless. If the church is to maintain its separation from the world, elders must be on guard against such dangerous attitudes.

God's flock must also be protected from false teaching. It is not possible, of course, to see that members of the church are not exposed to false teaching. There is too much of it being done on radio and television for that. But an eldership must do its best to see that members of the church are armed with a knowledge of the truth, so that they will not be deceived by false teachers.

Elders themselves should be students of the word of God, so as to be able to defend the flock against false teaching. Their perception concerning dangers facing the church can be enhanced greatly by reading good religious periodicals and by attending lectureships conducted by faithful brethren.

Elderships should employ gospel preachers who will "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2), so that members of the church may be informed. Good programs of Bible class teaching, with teachers dedicated to the truth, will help prepare members of the church to overcome the dangers which confront them.

It is sad to note that Paul warned the Ephesian elders of some false teachers who would arise, it seems, from the eldership itself. "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Such makes dealing with error doubly difficult on the part of the faithful. Not only must they take a stand against one by whose side they have labored, but also they must stand against one whose influence in the congregation is great. In all probability, innocent souls will be deceived and the church will be greatly damaged. To avoid this sort of thing elders must be vigilant.

As Paul concludes his warning to the Ephesian

The Greatest Assurance: No Condemnation

Continued from page 1

The British ambassador learned of it. He went to the man before the firing squad, threw the "Union Jack" over him and said, "Now, shoot if you dare!" The power of England protected him. The governor reviewed the case and released him. With Jesus around us, and us in him, the fiery darts of Satan cannot harm us. — 816 Holly, Kennett, Mo. 63857.

Retail Liquor Stores

WINFREY HENNESSEE

The good people of McMinnville and Warren County, Tennessee once again have reason to rejoice. Legalized liquor which Satan and his disciples had placed on the ballot, December 5, 1981 was defeated.

There are many reasons for the outcome of this election, even though the Devil's helpers dressed up their side of the issue, and made it as attractive as possible. But I suppose the deciding factor must have been the consideration for the teenagers and young people of this county.

From the time our children are infants, we carefully prepare their food, all the while teaching them to eat right, and by all means keeping poison and other such things out of their reach.

In verse five of the twenty third Psalm we read: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The shepherds of the Holy Land sheep ranges must always be vigilant, especially during the spring time. Poisonous plants abound there which are fatal to grazing animals. The shepherd must go ahead of the sheep, looking for these plants, grubbing them out with a hoe, and placing them upon little stone pyres, some of which were built by shepherds of Old Testament days. By the next day they are ready to be burned. The sheep in the meantime are led into this pasture, which is now free from poisonous plants, and in the presence of their deadly enemies, they eat.

David knew sheep and their ways, and he translated this into a lesson we can all understand.

The Christians of this county are to be commended; they built the pyres many years ago, and on election day they did not fail to use them.

One can still purchase whiskey in our county by

Continued on page 4

Continued on page 3

Strife: Causes And Cure

(No. 2)

In a previous article we looked at some causes of strife according to James 4:1-6. Now we look at the cure prescribed by James in 4:7-12.

It is good that James did not just detail the problem of strife and then not tell us how such could be overcome or avoided. Surely a solution to wars and fightings was needed. In six verses he outlines some things that would resolve many of their problems and help them avoid others. Strife could be overcome:

By Submission (v. 7). "Submit yourselves therefore to God." This equals putting oneself under God's control and direction and that will take care of the problem of pride that promotes strife. Self will be lost sight of as one submits his will to doing God's will. Wanting to and having our own way has led to so much heartaches and trouble. Wasn't this what Jeroboam did in his dealing with Israel? Wasn't the plan he devised to keep the ten tribes out of Jerusalem of his own devising? (I Kings 12:26). Had he submitted to God's will would not the matter have been different?

By Standing Against the Devil (v. 7). "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." That passage pretty well tells us who is at the bottom of all strife. The child of God is to set himself in battle array against satanic attacks. One is not left without counsel as to how he may successfully do this. Read carefully Ephesians 6:10-18. One can be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might by putting on the whole armor of God. By taking a stand and resisting the devil one defeats his efforts to divide God's people into warring factions. Look at Satan's efforts in Eden and in the wilderness. He sought to alienate the first and second Adam from God. He succeeded in the first but failed in the second for he was resisted there (Matthew 4:1-11).

By Seeking God's Fellowship (v. 8). "Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you." It is in this course of conduct that there is safety. It is interesting to note that after the conflict Jesus had with Satan angels came and ministered unto him (Matthew 4:11). Such fellowship would surely be sweet after the fight with the devil. Surely we want God's favor and fellowship and such a desire will keep one ever doing what God wills and thereby avoid strife with God and brethren.

By Singleness Of Heart (v. 8). Note the admonition, is given to "cleanse your hands, ye sinners." This would be done by one's submission to God's will (I Peter 1:22). Such will entail straight living. There will be no cheating on God or others. After all, it is sin that brings strife and where man seeks to separate himself therefrom he avoids strife. This is true in his relationship with God, in the church, and in the home.

By Singleness Of Heart (v. 8). Note the admonition "Purify your hearts ye doubleminded." Doublemindedness shows a man seeking to be religious, but only in part. He has two minds, and these two will be at odds with each other. There can be no peace where these exist. Such conflict will spill over out of a person's life and have an effect on his dealings with others.

By Sorrow For Sins (v. 9). "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." Only when one sees the sin of strife and envy coupled to selfishness will he be sorry for such. When he comes to see it for what it is he will regret such. Peace can be



WINFRED CLARK

had where people have this penitent attitude. Strife will cease to exist with this disposition.

By Self Surrender (v. 10). "Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and he shall lift you up." Self is lost sight of and God and his law are seen. Things are left in God's hands as one submits to his control. The disciples had some problems about who would be greatest and they were told to humble themselves (Matthew 18:1-4). When they forgot about self and started thinking about the Savior, the conflicts subsided.

By Speaking As We Ought (v. 11-12). What one says concerning others can well be a cause of

strife. If one speaks not evil or against others he surely can avoid conflicts. When one "talks down on one" he acts as a critic and sets himself up as a judge in matters in which he has no business. God's law forbids certain kinds of speaking and when one speaks in spite of what the law forbids, he judges it to be worthless. He goes right ahead and slanders or misrepresents a brother. Such would surely foment strife. Thus, we see the solutions to the causes of strife. They can be avoided or removed by a proper attitude striven for on the part of all who love God and the Bible. Such can be avoided without compromise of one single thing that is right. — P.O. Box 1025 Athens, Ala. 35611.

Attributes Of Christ's Church

Near the city of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus promised his apostles: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Even his death at the hands of Jews and Romans did not deter him from keeping his word. On the third day he arose triumphant from the tomb and some 47 days later his glorious church came into existence. The birth date of Christ's church was Pentecost Sunday in the 33rd year of his life. The place was Jerusalem. The event is recorded in the Acts of Apostles, chapter 2.

The apostles were gathered together. The Holy Spirit which Christ had promised them (Acts 1:5,8) came as a sound of the rushing of a mighty wind and filled all the house where they were sitting. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

Guided by God's Spirit, the apostles preached the good news of the resurrected Christ. They showed Jesus to be the fulfillment of the ancient messianic prophecies. Three thousand Jews were convicted of their sins and driven to cry out, "what shall we do?" Peter answered them, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). As many as gladly received his word were baptized and the Lord added unto them about three thousand souls (2:41). From that day forth the church is spoken of as an existing reality. (See Acts 2:47 KJV, 5:11, etc.).

This was no denomination or sect founded by a sinful man, it was the kingdom of God upon the earth. It was not just another great religion that would take



JOHN WADDEY

its place beside Buddhism, Hinduism and others. This was the straight and narrow way that leads to life (Matt. 7:14). This was God's family of saved children destined to live with him in eternity (Ephesians 5:23-28).

The Church of Christ is Divine in Origin. It was God's plan from eternity to make his will known to men through the church (Eph. 2:10-11). It was predicted by the Hebrew prophets that his church would be established in the last days of the Jewish state, in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Daniel foresaw a kingdom not made with human hands (i.e., divine in origin) that would become great and fill the whole earth (Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45). Christ made preparation for his church while on the earth. In his death on the cross, he purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28). Through his chosen apostles he established it. God appointed his Son "to be head over all things to the church . . ." (Eph. 1:22). Today he reigns as both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) over his church kingdom. He has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18).

Christ's church is universal in its outreach. In Daniel's vision the kingdom of heaven, which began as a little stone, became as a great mountain that filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35). God did not ordain different churches for different nations such as the Church of England and Church of Scotland. Rather he planned a church that all nations would flow into (Isa. 2:2).

On the cross, the Savior "abolished the enmity . . . that he might create in himself of the two [races, Jew and Gentile] one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross . . ." (Eph. 2:15-16). Now, in Christ's church there must be no social, racial or national distinctions. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek . . . bond nor free . . . no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). In his great commission Jesus sent the apostles into "all the world" to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

It is the mission of God's people to tear down the

Continued on page 4

An Elder Must Be Vigilant

Continued from page 2

elders, he says, "Therefore, watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). The admonition to *watch* is an admonition to be characterized by *vigilance*.

It would be difficult to find greater incentive to be vigilant than a sober realization of the truth stated in Hebrews 13:17: "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 for you." The elder who understands the simple fact that he is overseeing the welfare of the souls of men, and that he must give account to God for those souls, will certainly understand the importance of the requirement to be vigilant. One not characterized by vigilance simply must not be appointed to the eldership.

Attributes Of Christ's Church

Continued from page 3

walls of separation, and never to be guilty of building them.

The Lord's church is eternal in duration. Daniel wrote that "the God of heaven [shall] set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . ." (2:44). Earthly kingdoms founded by men bear the seeds of their own demise. They live a few hundred years at best, and then fall. The kingdom of heaven will stand till Jesus comes and delivers it up to God his Father (I Corinthians 15:24). The church revealed in the New Testament is as relevant, vibrant and valid today as in its infancy. It's meaning, message and ministry are as needed today as in that first century. The world is yet lost and in need of salvation. It is her task to take the message of salvation to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16). The poor are still with us in great numbers and it's ministry is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27). The world today languishes in ignorance, error and superstition as two-thousand years ago. The

church is God's beacon light in the world, holding forth the word of life and hope (Philippians 2:15-16). As long as sin-cursed men inhabit planet earth, so long will there be a need for the church of Christ to enlighten their minds, soften their hearts, refine their conduct, bring them salvation and prepare them for eternity.

The church is two-dimensional. Many folks have been turned off towards the church because of a bad experience with some of her members. This reminds us that the church has two distinctly different sides: the divine and the human. The former is all perfection, without spot or blemish, being the product of the Divine mind. The latter is as weak and fallible as the material of which it is made. A local group of Christians is no better than the sum of its members. While on earth's side of eternity, none of us reaches perfection. Even of God's people it is true that all sin and fall short (Romans 3:23). We are but sinners saved by his grace (Eph.

2:8-9). It is, therefore, impossible to find a perfect congregation. If we should, we would surely spoil it by our imperfect presence.

The church planned by God and established by Christ is perfect in its structure, doctrine and duties. We dare not lift a hand to change one practice or precept (Revelation 22:18-19). We must, like Moses, "make all things according to the pattern that was showed" him (Hebrews 8:5). Thus, while we are militant to follow exactly that divinely given blueprint for the church, we will be patient with brethren who are struggling to live up to the Christian ideal in their lives and worship.

What a marvelous privilege it is to be invited to be members of "the church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. 12:23). May we never cause offence to the church of God (I Cor. 10:32) but rather give him "the glory in the church: unto all generations" (Eph. 3:20). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Why Is The Word *Love* Not In The Book Of Acts?

DAN BILLINGSLEY

Much of the teaching and preaching about "love" in the church today doesn't "ring true" to the Bible; it sounds just like denominational preaching. It is shallow, artificial, and unscriptural to those mature in the faith and established in the truth. Their emphasis on "love" moves them from the "truth" of the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:13-15) to the false and emotional level of the denominational world. Such false conceptions and teaching will neither glorify God, save the lost, nor edify the church.

We must teach *true biblical love* as revealed in the Scripture (I John 4:7-18); we must follow in the example of the apostles (I Corinthians 11:1); but we dare not abuse this doctrine before the world or in the church.

One of the most revealing facts of the New Testament is that the word "love" is not used in the book of Acts. This is the book of inspiration and work of the Holy Spirit in the apostles (John 16:13); this is the book of conversions to Christ in the apostles' preaching of the "great commission" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16); this is the record of God's revealing the truth of Jesus Christ (John 8:32,51). This is the gospel of grace (Acts 20:32); this is the gospel of the establishment of the church (Acts 2:38-47); this is the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:13-26); this is the gospel of faith, repentance, confession, baptism and salvation. This is the testimony of apostolic eye-witnesses (inspired of God), and not *one time* does the record show that they used the word "love" to preach Christ to a lost world!

Love for God, Christ, truth, the church, and the lost, *was the motivating force* behind their efforts (I Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:6; Romans 13:8; I Peter 2:17), but "love" was not the leading, cutting-edge, of the apostolic message. Men cannot know of the love of God separate and apart from the gospel; and any preaching that denies the gospel of Acts denies the true love of God!

Today's emotional concept and teaching concerning "love" is not the friend of Jesus or man; it proves to be an unscriptural and damnable heresy (II John 9-11; Romans 16:17-18). Much of today's preaching about "love" is really a cowardly effort of those who are afraid of preaching and defending the doctrinal truth of God which conflicts with both the sinners of the "carnal" world (I John 2:15-17), and the sinners of the "religious" world (I Timothy 1:18-20; 4:1-16). This immoral preaching of "love" is compromising the truth of the Bible in an effort to make the gospel more palatable to sinners and false

teachers. It leads to an attitude which will ultimately deny doctrinal authority (II Timothy 4:1-5), overlook blatant sinfulness (I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21), and lead men to believe that "love" replaces faith and obedience to the truth of God.

Apostolic preaching in the book of acts (motivated by love) was a message of enlightening truth to men lost in sin (Philippians 2:16). It was preaching: the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:14-36), faith and repentance (2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31), baptism (2:38; 8:12; 10:48; 16:31-33; 18:8; 22:16). It was a message about the New Testament church (2:41,47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:1-4, 12; 20:28). It was a message against the false teaching both among the Jews and the Gentiles (13:38-52; 15:1-41; 19:1-41). The apostles and their preaching were divinely successful in leading men to salvation in Christ, and maintaining the truth of God in a world of sin and religious error.

Gospel preachers in the past were never accused of not loving God or lost men, and their message echoed the apostles' doctrine in the restoration of New Testament Christianity. However, the modern concept of "love" leads men to believe that they can be *more spiritual* than those who stress ". . . all things that pertain to life and godliness, *through the knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and virtue . . ." (II Peter 1:3). They believe that they can *walk more closely* to God than those who ". . . walk in the truth" (III John 4). They contend that "love" *meets the needs* of man better than the doctrine of Christ which is ". . . able to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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). They maintain that "love" will produce *more unity* and *brotherly kindness*, but the Lord says that unity is produced by men's believing the truth of the apostles' preaching (John 17:20-21), and that brotherly love is produced among those that obey the truth (I Peter 1:22). Man's "love" does not save him from sin, the gospel does (Romans 1:16); "love" which neutralizes and compromises the truth of God is the work of the Devil (II Corinthians 11:13-15). This modern preaching of "love" is really the gospel of Satan, for it teaches men to hate and rebel against God and his gospel of truth.

True Bible "love" is when men walk after the commandments of God (II John 6). True Bible "faith"

is when men love the truth (I John 5:9-13) more than the acceptance of human doctrine or praise of men. Love is the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22), that which is produced in the Christian through the knowledge of the gospel. Men who are *in sin* are the enemies of God (Romans 5:10); they are dead in trespasses and sins; they are children of disobedience and wrath (Ephesians 2:1-7). However, they may learn of the love of God which offers them the gospel of salvation (I Corinthians 15:1-4), and then upon their obedience to God, they may begin to love God as a Christian in the church (I John 4:19). No man can really love God — in the biblical sense — and remain in sin, lost and undone without Christ. Love is the fruit of the influence of the word of God in the Christian's life. This is why every epistle (Romans-Revelation) to the church speaks of the need for Christians to grow and walk in love of God and the brethren.

The love of God and the gospel law of Christ are synonymous! The mercy and grace of God are synonymous with the truth of the gospel and the law of Christ! The love of God does not negate nor compromise the law of liberty that is in Christ Jesus and which saves the souls of men (James 1:21-25). The gospel of faith and repentance was the cutting-edge of the apostles' doctrine to people lost in sin in the book of Acts, while love was a predominate theme in the epistles to the church.

The apostles truly loved God, the truth, the church, and the lost men and women of the world, when they went forth to preach (Acts 1:6), but love was not the predominate theme of their message. It is really no mystery why the word "love" is just not used in the record of their preaching in the book of Acts, for the true definition of love (*agape*) was manifest in their obedience to Christ, and their sufferings for his truth and church. True love in the New Testament is not how you "feel" about others, but what you "do" for God and his Cause. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father . . ." (John 14:21-23). — 403 Welch Street Denton, Texas 76201.

Retail Liquor Stores

Continued from page 2

going to those who break the law, but by voting *No*, the Lord's people struck a blow at Satan that he will not easily forget. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.



Words Of Truth

— speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1982

NUMBER 18

The Cross Of Christ

The peerless apostle Paul relates, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). By the cross of Christ is not meant the mere wood on which he was crucified. It is superstition, and not piety, which is strengthened by handling and contemplating crucifixes. The word of God is void of any authority for the use or venerating the sign of the cross. By the cross the apostle refers to the suffering and death of the Redeemer, that death by which atonement was made for the sins of the world. To glory signifies to boast, or delight in. Three propositions will place the subject of the text in its fulness before us.



JOHN G. SHAVER

First, those things highly prized by others were despised by the apostle. There is an obvious tendency in the human breast to boast of something other than God. The Jews boasted that they were the children of Abraham. So also might Paul, but he did not. Pious ancestors will not avail, unless we possess their virtues and excellencies of obedience to God's will. The Pharisees boasted of their great superiority over others; they were those separated ones, the peculiarly holy of the people. Paul, in his ignorance, no doubt gloried in this; but when he was enlightened by the gospel, the spirituality of the law and his own sinfulness were made manifest. Spiritual pride and glorying is monstrous in the sight of the Lord. Who can stand in the Divine presence? Who is justified when God judges? Now Paul affirms that he is "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8), and that now Jesus is all, and he is nothing. Men often boast of their learning and talent. So might the apostle, but he did not. With regard to education, it had been under the distinguished Gamaliel. Paul possessed a mind of the highest order, yet of these things he did not boast. Men often boast of their civil distinctions and immuni-

ties. So might Paul. Besides being exalted as a distinguished and zealous Pharisee, he was a Roman citizen. Yet, however others might exalt in these things, Paul did not. He cared not for the wealth and honors of this world, for all these things he counted as dross for Christ.

Second, that which was treated with the greatest contempt was the object of the apostle's glorying. Everything connected with Christianity was hateful and odious, both to the Jews and pagans, especially the preaching of Christ and him crucified. In the estimation of the people, the person and rank of Christ were contemptible. His doctrines were so — humility, meekness and mercy. His condescension was so — the minister of the poor and of the vile. The universality of his gospel was so, especially to the Jews. Hence, when he referred to the widow of Sarepta, and to Naaman, they tried to cast him headlong. His disciples were so; they were lowly fishermen. But most of all his cross was so. In this his reputation and station in life were assailed. He now became as a slave, his character was vilified, he was ranked with malefactors. Hence his cross everywhere was a stigma upon his followers; and it has been so everywhere and to this day, that the carnal mind has hated and despised his cross. Yet this was the apostle's object of supreme love and glorying. He wrote and preached about it everywhere.

Third, The apostle had the highest possible reasons for glorying in the cross of Christ. From these reasons we must select the most interesting and prominent. As we look at the cross of Christ we see the curse removed from our guilty and helpless world. But how could he redeem the world? How could he roll away the black cloud of divine displeasure? By becoming a curse for us. He was tried and sentenced, enduring the painful death of the cross, standing in the place of transgressors. We see that all the blessings of salvation flow from the cross. There is pardon (Col. 1:18), there is peace (Col. 1:20-21), and there is sanctification or holiness (I Jno. 1:7). The cross of Christ furnishes us with our plea in prayer, a way of access to God. What is the great argument which renders prayer effective? It is the finished work of Christ upon the cross. Here all the covenant of peace was ratified; here all the fulness of salvation was obtained; here all the promises of God are fulfilled. There had

been no grace, no mercy or hope, but for the death of Christ. The sinner would have had law, justice, holiness and truth against him. We see the cross of Christ as the great incentive to the love and service of God. The unselfish love of God kindles ours. When we observe what the cross really is we find that we are not our own, but we are bought with a price and give ourselves to God in complete submission to his will. We see in the cross the only constraining power to induce us to exercise love and mercy to our fellow-man. With an understanding of the cross we cannot be revengeful, haters, malevolent or evil.

What think ye of the cross of Christ? Do you, as Paul, glory in it? These are the evident signs: faith in him who died on that cross, and in his gospel (Jno. 8:24; Mk. 16:15-16; Heb. 11:6), repentance of the sin that has separated us from God (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30), confession of him who died on the cruel cross of Calvary (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10), baptism into him who died on that cross (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27), and a grateful devotedness of ourselves to his service and glory (Rev. 2:10). The rejectors of the cross of Christ must perish. There will be no other Savior, no other remedy for sin. Is it any wonder that Paul, with a contrite and loving heart said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."? — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, Fla. 33566.

The Pew Packers Class

In years past, having a class for small children "up front" before the regular worship service was a common practice in many churches. It seems the practice has been abandoned for the most part in recent years.

At the Freed-Hardeman Lectures this year I was reminded of the value of these classes for the children. I sat in a class taught by Bro. Keith Parker, a most capable gospel preacher in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Keith was a part of a "Pew Packers Class" in a small church in North Alabama back in the mid sixties. He said he still remembered learning the songs and Bible facts learned in that class.

Continued on page 4

Words Of Truth
 (USPS 691-760)
 "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
 — Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
 1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
 FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
 P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

FROM
THE EDITOR

An Elder Must Be Sober

(Sixth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)



BOB DUNCAN

"A bishop then must be... sober..." (I Timothy 3:2). We normally think of one's being sober who is free from intoxication by alcoholic beverages. Certainly one who is intoxicated is not sober, but one may be lacking in sobriety and yet not be intoxicated by some alcoholic beverage.

According to Thayer, the Greek word *sophron* 'sober' is formed from two other Greek words, *sozo* 'save' and *phren* 'mind.' So the idea of holding on to or preserving one's mental faculties is inherent in the word. Thayer's first definition of the word is, "of sound mind, sane, in one's senses." He further defines the word as meaning, "curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate." Instead of the word *sober*, the American Standard Version has *sober-minded*.

This Greek word occurs only four times in the New Testament. It is translated by the word *sober* here and in Titus 1:8, which also lists this characteristic as one of the qualifications of elders or bishops. It is translated by the word *temperate* in Titus 2:2, and by the word *discreet* in Titus 2:5. The verb form of this same word occurs six times in the New Testament, and twice (Mark 5:15 and Luke 8:35) it calls attention to one who is said to be "in his right mind." In II Timothy 1:7 a noun form of the word occurs, and is translated "sound mind."

This bit of information should help us to understand that those who are to oversee God's congregation cannot be impulsive, gullible, or unreasonable men, but that they must be those who are sane and sound in their thinking. They must be those who are able to see a situation in all of its aspects, and to act in a responsible manner. They must not be excitable or passionate, but self-restrained; they must not be flighty or flippant.

How does this characteristic relate to the work of an elder? It must be remembered that, contrary to the thinking of some, a part — a major part — of the work of an elder as an elder involves making decisions with reference to the congregation. The decisions of an eldership, in the very nature of the case, will influence the welfare of a congregation to a large degree, and will even help determine the eternal destiny of souls. The responsibility for such decision making cannot be taken lightly; it cannot be assumed with a flippant or flighty disposition.

Many pressures are brought to bear upon an eldership in connection with decisions it is called upon to make. There is the temptation to allow one's emotions to over rule his intellect. Being sober-minded will help overcome such a temptation. The feelings of an elder's close personal friends in a congregation may prejudice him one way or another in connection with important decisions to be made by the eldership; it may be he does not even realize he has become influenced in this manner. Being sober-minded will avoid mistakes along this line.

The members of an elder's own family may be a detriment to him in his decision making. Unless he is sober-minded, their feelings about a particular

matter may make it impossible for him to be completely objective. Certainly their feelings, like the feelings of all other members of the congregation, should be considered. But being sober-minded will keep the elder from being unduly influenced by the members of his own family.

In this connection, most of us have heard stories of elders who could not express their views in meetings of elders without first consulting their wives. We have heard also about the elder who would attend the elders' meetings and help in making the decisions, and then in the next meeting announce that he had reconsidered certain matters and changed his mind. This is often interpreted to mean, and without doubt correctly so in some cases, that the elder talked to his wife about the matter and she was not pleased with the decision. This writer recently heard from a reliable source of an elder who would frequently excuse himself from the meetings for a few minutes. It was later learned that he was going to the telephone to call his wife to find out how to vote on certain questions that had arisen. On other occasions his wife would even be sitting in the car outside the building, and he would go out and consult with her, and then come back into the meeting ready to express "his" views. One with no more confidence in his own ability to think a matter through and then cast his vote in an elders' meeting has no business being an elder.

Being sober-minded will also help avoid mistakes caused by considering only certain aspects of a situation, emphasizing one aspect of the work of the church to the neglect of another. Every congregation, for example, would like to experience a continual and substantial increase in attendance week after week. But in our zeal for increased attendance we may be tempted to neglect sound teaching with reference to unpopular Bible themes, such as the distinctive nature of the church, liberal giving, or abstaining from the things of the world. "What will increase our attendance?" may become a more important question than, "What would God have us do?" A congregation may allow itself to be swept into liberalism through its neglect of the truth while building its Bible study attendance.

On the other hand, an over emphasis on the dangers of liberalism while neglecting other matters can be damaging to the church. Attention must be called to error and warning must be given with reference to departures from the faith. Elders must see to it that congregations maintain their loyalty in contending for the faith once delivered (Jude 3), but a congregation which does nothing but warn against false teaching and liberal practices will soon wither away and die. Sober thinking on the part of elders will avoid either of these extremes.

Sobriety on the part of an eldership will also enable it to act so as to assure the long term welfare of the congregation. What might seem the proper action to take with reference to a particular situation at the moment might not be that which would be in the best overall interest of the congregation in the long run. Men who are unable to see beyond the present and the immediate effect of their actions do not qualify as elders.

A word of warning is in order. As we consider the necessity of sobriety on the part of elders, let us not confuse sobriety with timidity or fear. Being overly cautious may hinder the church in its work and keep it from accomplishing its purpose in the world.

Problems In The Church

I read of a psychologist who was invited to speak to a group of preachers. As he introduced himself to each preacher he said, "I am sorry to hear about the problems where you preach." Nearly half of them responded, "It was there before I came." The other half said, "It is improving." However, one fellow responded, "What problem?" Later the psychologist played golf with this preacher and discovered that he also lied about his golf score.



ANCIL JENKINS

This illustrates that every church has problems. Problems are not the result of having an imperfect pattern. God has given us a perfect pattern for His church. The problems come because we are people. We are imperfect. As imperfect individuals, we often bring our problems on the church.

The way to help the church with its problems is to help people handle their problems. So often Jesus, in his dealings with people, went to the heart of the matter. Instead of a further discourse on worship or his divinity, Jesus began to counsel the Samaritan woman about her marriage problem. He saw the Rich Young Ruler's difficulty was not in keeping commandments but in overcoming covetousness.

Most problems today come from a lack of spiritual maturity which is caused by selfishness. The result is a lack of real love. There can be no perfect love where there is selfishness.

Do you want to help the church with its problems? First of all determine to press toward maturity. Solving your problems will help the church solve some of its. Also determine to help others in their quest for spiritual maturity. A genuine, loving concern and willingness to help can do much in overcoming the problems that the church faces. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

The Glory To Be Ours When Saved By Hope

Romans 8:18-25

This is another comforting part of Romans but one of the most controversial. We will not lessen that controversy by this article but probably add to it. One is particularly reminded of Peter's comment on Paul's writings when we come to this passage; some things are indeed "hard to understand" (II Peter 3:16).



MARTEL PACE

It answers the question, "Is life worth living even with all its troubles?" Paul's answer is a positive, "Yes!" Why? "Because of the glory to be revealed in us." It may seem that we suffer so much here that we are not really God's children. Don't worry! All will be changed one day. Now read the text of Romans 8:18-25.

Romans 8:16-18 reaches the grand climax showing what the gospel provides. Even the sufferings endured provide a helpful benefit. It is difficult for us to imagine what it was like to be a Christian when Paul wrote. One was subject to mockery, scorn and false accusations. It was common to hear their Savior denounced. They said he was the illegitimate son of a Nazarene girl and a Roman soldier. His followers were counted as fools, they lost their jobs, businesses and property. They were accused of eating babies in their Communion and of being atheists (they had no God that could be seen)!

But none of this would compare with the glory coming. It is truly a "light affliction" (II Cor. 4:17). It is light because the time is relatively short. It is light compared to the eternal reward's being so far more glorious.

What is the "creation" of Romans 8:19-23? One writer said there are eleven different views on this! Where there are so many different views it does not pay to be dogmatic. The problems are over "the creation," "first fruits of the Spirit" and "we ourselves." Most make it apply to the *natural world*. Their view is that all animals and even vegetation is groaning, waiting for our revealing as God's sons! I have trouble believing my dog and my peach tree are groaning until the whole world sees I am a child of God. Who can believe that? Claiming that Paul here uses poetic license is too much license for me.

The passage speaks of a glorious deliverance from death. Another view is that all creation suffered the curse of death because of Adam's sin. But where did we get the idea that death came upon animals and vegetables because of Adam's sin? Surely Adam and Eve could eat fruit before they sinned. Did big fish refuse to eat little fish until after the Fall?

It is silly to say of vegetables that they "were subject to futility, but not of their own will" (8:20). They have no will of their own nor are they to be delivered to glory (8:21). This is hardly a "bold personification"; that would be too bold and too personifying to be sensible!

Remember the purpose: 8:19-23 was written to encourage Christians to endure suffering. With that in mind the word "creation" may be more readily explained. The footnote of the A.S.V. on II Cor. 5:17 says "creation" for "creature." It is the same word here as in Romans 8:19-22. Only Christians are concerned with the great event of v. 21b (being "delivered from the bondage of corruption"). The church was "created" in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:15, which has the verb form of "creation"). What Paul says in Romans 8:18-19 is true of the church and only of the church.

Who are the "ourselves" and "firstfruits of the

spirit"? (8:23.) All Christians have the indwelling of the Spirit but it hardly seems appropriate to say that all Christians have the "firstfruits." The *latter* perhaps, but not the first fruits. "Firstfruits" alluded to the first and best of Israel's crops that were devoted to God. Certainly the apostles had the "firstfruits" and could perform amazing miracles as a result. Paul is saying, "Don't be surprised that the whole church suffers, because even we leaders of the church — the apostles — have to suffer and groan." They were even a "spectacle" to the world (I Cor. 4:9).

But things will balance out for our good (8:28). The tormentor, Nero, did not light his garden by burning on a cross as did God's saints. He did die of his own hand on June 9, 68 a.d., while waiting for soldiers to take him away to be executed for his crimes. His last days were spent in terrible fear. He was only 31 years old! Two years short of our Lord's life. There is hope for the *creation* (God's church) who suffered and died but not for Nero.

We are saved in hope (8:20, 24-25). Other than Jesus, Paul was the world's greatest optimist. Worldly men lose all hope when they suffer. H. G. Wells was a wonderful optimist at the turn of the century when he felt evolution was lifting us all to a higher plane. But shortly before his death in 1944 he wrote: "Man, who began in a cave behind a wind-

break, will end in disease soaked ruins of a slum." Such is the end of humanism; it will drive all to despair.

Paul saw the ruin of man's world, but he also saw hope. At the end he had an "eager expectation" (8:19). The word *apokaradokia* meant "a leaning forward, looking eagerly for the first rays of dawn's glory." Because of this hope, Paul could never be totally in despair.

How horrible is all the world's suffering! What if you could hear it all rolled together as God can. Who could stand the wail of the human race? The slaughtered Abels? The groaning of the wounded on all battlefields, and even conquerors as they look at the price of victory? Titus at Jerusalem called God to account that the suffering was not his doing.

We don't see that hope yet (8:24), meaning we don't fully possess or enjoy it. We speak of "seeing a good time" or much sorrow or pain. We mean we haven't experienced these things. But that hope we have is truly our anchor of the soul that keeps us moving onward. Why hope for heaven? Because there our Father will wipe away our tears, where we will never die or decay, where we will never sorrow again. What a wonderful hope. — 816 Holly, Kennett, Mo.

Sin And Its Consequences

There is a tendency to reduce the effect of sin, especially our own. Only God can estimate the enormity of sin. Since God is perfect, he can see the offense of sin.

WHAT IS SIN? John wrote, "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (I John 5:17). He also said, "Everyone that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4). When one violates his conscience, it is sin. Paul taught, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). Doing nothing is sin. James penned, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

SIN HAS TERRIBLE EFFECT UPON MAN. This is seen in its consequences. Sin drove Adam and Eve from their paradise home, the garden of Eden. When Eve yielded to the devil's enticement to eat the forbidden fruit, she committed the sin that caused her and her husband, who also ate, to be cast out of the garden. Cain's punishment (Gen. 4:11-15) came to him because of his false worship. Abel had offered the lamb. This was offered by faith (Heb. 11:4). Cain's worship was an act of worship according to his will rather than God's. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Cain was told he was cursed from the earth. When he tilled the earth, it would not yield its strength. He was to be a fugitive and a wanderer. His reason was, "my punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:11-15).

The flood was a consequence of sin (Gen. 6). Other instances of sin and its effect are the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:20), Israel's fornication (I Cor. 10:8), Achan's sin (Joshua 7:16-26), and David's sin with Bathsheba (II Sam. 11:24; 12:15-23; Ps. 51:3).

The price of atonement shows the awfulness of sin. It cost the life's blood of God's only begotten



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Son (John 3:16).

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN TO US? It separates us from God. Isaiah stated the universal principle: "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" (Isa. 59:1-2). How keen is your sense of evil? At the university of Southern California, mice were being prepared for a space flight. The mice were laboratory bred; for generations they had lived in captivity. None of them had ever seen a cat. Yet, whenever a few drops of cat scent were placed in one of two passageways, the mice refused to travel through the one that suggested a cat's presence. Some unknown instinct told the mice that cats are their enemies (Margaret J. Anderson, *Decision*, June 1970, Pg. 14). We must learn that sin is dangerous. Paul said, ". . . abhor that which is evil . . ." (Rom. 12:9).

Sin brings spiritual death (Rom. 6:23; Jas. 5:19-20). The sinner often bears physical consequences. One comes to regret every bargain with sin. A twelve-year-old boy was talking to a crippled, old man who was sitting on the park bench. The boy asked, "why are you crippled?" The man replied, "A twelve-year-old boy did this to me." Immediately the boy became all eyes and ears; that was his age. "Yes," said the man, "when I was twelve years old, I began to use tobacco; now my lungs do not work properly. A few years later, I began to drink beer and then whiskey; that damaged my brain. Along with drinking and smoking, I began to gamble. Now I have nothing to my name; I lost everything; I am a poor, broken-down old man. Yes, sir, a twelve-year-old boy did this to me" (*Church Newsletter*).

Others often suffer because of our sin. The alcoholic, the child abuser, etc. often brings havoc upon his family.

The final consequence is hell (Rev. 21:8).

ALL KINDS OF SIN BRING CONSEQUENCES. We shall notice three classes. (1) Sin is a transgression of moral law. Paul wrote, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man

Sin And Its Consequences

Continued from page 3

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" (Gal. 6:7-8). When we lie, steal, etc. we commit moral sin. (2) Sin is the transgression of positive law. One can commit sin by doing nothing. In Matthew chapter twenty-five, the judgment is illustrated in the condemnation of those who failed to make the stranger in, did not clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison, or feed the hungry. (3) Reli-

gious error can dash one's hope of eternal life. Paul speaks of those who pervert the gospel of Christ. He warns those who teach or accept false teaching will be accursed (Gal. 1:6-11).

SALVATION DOES NOT VOID THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. The non-Christian must have faith in Christ (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24), repent of his sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30), confess his faith in Christ as God's Son (Rom. 10:9-10) and be baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27).

The erring child of God must repent and pray and confess his fault and ask the prayers of his brethren (Acts 8:22; Jas. 5:16; I John 1:9; 2:1-2).

Though forgiveness may be ours, we may bear the marks of sin for life. If the alcoholic destroys his health with alcohol, he will have to live with that until death.

"Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Planting And Producing

It will not be very long until the farmers begin their task of preparing the land and planting seed for this year's crops. Even we who have gardens annually anticipate the time when we can enjoy working the soil. It is indeed a wonderful experience to be able to enjoy the vegetables from the garden. There is an age old truth that we would like to bring to your attention once again, that is, you always reap as you have sown. This seems very simple and elementary but it is very profound.



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

In the study of the parable of the sower or soils as recorded in Luke 8, we learn that Jesus used the common and known to teach the unknown truths to those of sincere and honest hearts (8:10). Jesus said that the seed is the word of God (8:11). God's power of salvation today is the gospel of his Son (Romans 1:16). The word never changes. It will always produce after its kind. The soil is also most important because it represents the various kinds of hearts. If there is a failure in reaping, such cannot be blamed on the seed, for therein is the God given power to germinate and reproduce. James said that we should "receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls (James 1:21). Peter declared that we have "been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (I Peter 1:23). Wherein is the failure? It must be in the soil or the heart of a man. Some hearts are like the hard ground, others like the stony and thorny ground. Please notice the following observations.

1. In order for the seed (gospel) to be effective and produce, the soil (heart) must necessarily be prepared to receive the seed (gospel). It is written that Rehoboam did that which was evil "because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah" (II Chronicles 12:14). In contrast we read of a faithful servant of God: "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances" (Ezra 7:10).

2. The seed (word) must be sown (preached) in the soil (heart). This is the responsibility of the sower (Christian). Jesus commands that we are to go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15). The more seed that is sown, the greater the harvest. Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, my brother?

3. The seed (word) will always produce after its kind. In Genesis 1:11,12, we learn that "the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was

good." This principle is true in the moral and spiritual kingdom: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7,8). Whenever the gospel of Christ is taught and obeyed, only Christians and churches of Jesus Christ

are produced. Nothing more and nothing less. One can be a Christian today just like in the first century by obeying the same gospel. To become a New Testament Christian, one should, as a penitent believer, be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38). — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp., Ala. 36467.

Steadfastness Or Speed

As a sports fan, a jogger, or even a fast walker, you know there is a vast difference between a sprint (100-yard dash) and a marathon (more than 26 miles). A burst of speed is good, say if one covers the first 100 yards in 10 seconds, but in the long run, it is the ability to stick with it mile after mile that counts. Steadfastness, not merely speed, determines the winner. The same is true with preaching. Many times men go into a congregation expecting to see immediate results. When such does not happen they leave looking for ground that is more fertile. This was not a practice of those faithful ones in the Old and New Testament.

Take, for instance, Ezekiel. God told Ezekiel in advance he was running a marathon. "And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house" (Ezekiel 3:4,7-9). Would short term preaching have been enough? Certainly not! God warns him that there were tough times ahead and much hard preaching was needed, but eventually some good would be done.

Who in the Bible that preached the word of God did it in a short time and had immediate success? Did Moses, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, even Christ himself? The answer is obvious.

Ezekiel was running up against an audience that would be callous, hard of hearing, and indifferent to his message. Ezekiel would, and did, need strength for the long run — 22 years of it. Are we ready for a long run or a short sprint? "How then shall

they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10:14). It is up to the minister of each congregation to look down the road a long ways instead of looking for a chance to go to another congregation. Much good can be done in long-term preaching, but the preacher and congregation, have to be determined to work together toward this end. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." — 5 Ludwell Street Charleston, S.C. 29407.

The Pew Packers Class

Continued from page 1

When my own children were small, they would sometimes ask if we would be having class on a particular night or would we just have preaching. Have you ever considered that Sunday night is the only time we meet with nothing for the children to participate in directly? They need something on their own level which involves participation. This can be done in a most effective manner with a "Pew Packers Class."

In February, 1979, I started such a class in the Cedartown congregation. We have had as many as 23 children in the class at times. We have our Bible drills, let the children tell Bible stories, sing songs and have each recite a memory verse each time. Their enthusiasm is enjoyed by the others of the congregation as they watch and listen.

There are some other benefits from this class. The most noticeable of these is the increased Sunday night attendance. I have seen parents leave children at home on Sunday night, and in some cases they have stayed home with them. If the class is an enjoyable one, the children will want to be there on Sunday nights. They will even demand to be brought so they can go to class.

Don't you think this "old fashioned" practice of a class for the little ones can be of value today? Perhaps this will be the answer to keeping many of our young people we are losing as they grow up. — 330 East Ave. Cedartown, Georgia 30125.



BARRY FIKE



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most r,
the Words of Truth and

— speak forth

— Acts 26:25

Somebody's Little Girl

BOBBY KEY

I have just returned from the hospital where I visited a young woman. Old beyond her years, she has experienced six pregnancies with only one living child, her frail body is so ravaged with disease, she has undergone serious surgery. At the tender age of eighteen she has experienced more of what the world has to offer than most do in a lifetime. Suffering from gonorrhea and other complications she will not live through the week. She has all but been deserted by her family and friends, and she has never been married. Life is empty and meaningless to this unfortunate child of our times.

Could this be your little girl? Parents, we have an awesome responsibility! In cooperation with God, we brought a life into the world that never existed before; but now that it does exist, it will never cease to exist. Whether our child's eternal destiny is heaven or hell depends largely upon us. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). An unfaithful Christian mother said, "I brought my child into the world and that ends my responsibility. It is no concern of mine what he does with his life, it is up to him if he wants to attend church or become a Christian." This is the attitude of too many parents.

No parent intends for his child to come to such an end as the girl I described. Yet, "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). Two things contributed to this girl's downfall: lack of parental restraint and bad company. Sin promises much, but there are millions of hopeless, hapless, helpless individuals languishing upon beds of affliction as a living testimony that as we sow we must also reap (Gal. 6:7). After a night of sin, there is a day of regret and gloom; and after a lifetime of sowing to the flesh, there is an eternal night of endless darkness. Unless parents begin to take more interest in their children, this story will be repeated many times over.

Mothers must share the blame for children's going bad. Call the roll of sons of great men, and for the most part, you will get but sorry responses unless the mothers are found worthy. The molding influence of the mother is traceable in the lives of the majority of faithful men and women serving

the Lord today. A good mother is worth a hundred preachers in the influence of that mother's child. Mothers, in this fight of God and right, so much depends on you.

A child has the power to become. When a boy thrusts his hand in yours, you never know what to expect. It may be smeared from his latest sandwich or moist from the tadpoles and wiggletails he has just caught, but whatever its condition, remember that it is the hand of the future! Someday this hand may hold a Bible from a pulpit, or a revolver from a dark alley. It may be the skilled hand of a surgeon, or the cunning hand of a gambler. It may be steady and true as it moves the controls of some scientific instrument, or shake uncontrollably as it grasps a bottle. Thank God that hand is now yours to hold and to guide!

Many years ago a rough boy attended a Sunday School and made it tough for every teacher he had. Finally he was led to the door and told not to come back. He didn't come back but rather began a life of crime and bloodshed that perhaps is unequalled in modern times. Finally, before a theater entrance in Chicago one evening his body was riddled with bullets. In one of Chicago's papers a most unusual picture appeared — only the feet of the dead desperado showed. The caption under the picture was brief: "These are the feet of John Dillinger!" The editorial comment was heartsearching: "Who knows where these feet might have gone if someone had guided them aright . . ." What a terrible price to

pay for neglect.

A young boy came to his father and said, "Dad if you don't do something to help me, I am going to commit suicide." The busy father was stunned to know that anything was wrong. The boy went on to tell his father of his ventures into sin and the contracting of a dread social disease. The father sent him to an institution for treatment. Believed to be cured, he was sent home and married a pure, beautiful, young girl who soon gave birth to a son. The mother died in child birth, and the baby was deficient both physically and mentally because of his father's diseased body. Whatever a boy sows in his younger years, he may expect to reap in his later years. A few weeks passed and in desperation the young father picked up a revolver, went outside and took his own life.

The baby lived. He stood in a long line of people in Buffalo, New York waiting to shake the hand of the President of the United States, William McKinley. As he grasped the hand of the President, he drew a gun and took the life of McKinley. Not long afterward, he was brought to justice and was executed. This grim octopus of tragedy had tentacles that reached into the lives of many people; it started with the failure and the neglect of parents who were too busy making a living to guide a son in the way he should have gone.

P.S. I have received word that the girl I visited in the hospital has died. She was somebody's little girl. — 124 B N.W., Miami, Okla. 74354.

Mothers Are So Precious

EARLENE ROSE

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. — Proverbs 31:10

Mothers are so precious, and memories are so dear;
We feel a touch of heaven whenever they are near.
A mother's kiss that heals the smallest little pain
Can also mend a heart, and help it love again.

The understanding touch of mother's warm embrace

Assures us she has traveled along the very place
Upon the road of life where we must walk today,
And from her wisdom gleaned, she gently guides our way.

In everything we do; in every joy we share;
In every battle triumphed; in every cross we bear;
A mother's love goes with us; her presence ever near.
Yes, mothers are so precious, and memories are so dear. — 1701 20th Ave., Northport, Ala.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church, on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Real Darkness

Several years ago this writer was invited to visit and tour an underground mining operation. It sounded interesting and so the invitation was accepted. Distance to the working area was about 2100 feet straight down. Our trip was begun after getting into all the miner's paraphernalia. Travel time was 19 seconds by a large elevator. It was not at all like the mines seen in movies, and much more than anticipated. Impressive and very dirty best describes the first thought. Very little is done by the old pick and shovel. But the actual mining or digging is carried out by a machine called — you may have guessed — the miner. Exposed body surfaces begin to blacken from the coal dust after only a few hours. Your's truly would be down only two hours. Every worker has a specific job to perform. Without the proper equipment the operation would shut down. Safety is a major consideration. Every job involves danger. But the foreman explained that bolting the ceiling was perhaps the most dangerous. There were many things within the mining operation to impress the beholder. However, there was one matter more impressive than anything else — when the lights were turned off. Nothing could be seen. Not even your hand held in front of your face. Light to the slightest degree did not exist. It was a darkness unknown before this day. "Now that's real darkness," was the only comment made.

Darkness is something that nobody is particularly fond of. There is a certain unexplainable fear it brings on. Light sustains life, and God provides the light. This is true in both the physical life as well as the spiritual life (Genesis 1:3; Psalms 119:105). While the plague of darkness was over the land of Egypt, God gave light to the Israelites (Exodus 10:21-23). It is written, ". . . even darkness which



JERRY L. FAUSZ, Sr.

"A bishop then must be . . . of good behaviour . . ." (I Timothy 3:2). The Greek word used here is *kosmios*, and is translated "orderly" in the American Standard Version. This same word is translated "modest" in I Timothy 2:9, and in the same verse the verb form of the word is translated "adorn."

The following comments are from Albert Barnes' *Notes on the New Testament*: "Coverdale renders it, *mannerly*. The most correct rendering, according to the modern use of language, would be, that he should be a *gentleman*. He should not be slovenly in his appearance, or rough and boorish in his manners. He should not do violence to the usages of refined intercourse, nor be unfit to appear respectable in the most refined circles of society." He further adds: "other things being equal, the refined, courteous, polite gentleman . . . will always do more good than he who neglects the rules of good breeding."

With the idea that an elder should not be rude, rough, and boorish we could not be more in agreement, but we believe there is more in the word than that. R. C. H. Lenski has written the following in his commentary: "This has been regarded rather superficially when it is taken to mean 'the refined, courteous, polite gentleman . . . of good breeding.' Is this word ever used thus? The Greek calls the gentleman *kalos* not *kosmios*. Like the two preceding adjectives, this one also denotes a quality of mind and character which will then naturally manifest itself in the life."

Thayer defines the word here translated "of good behavior" as meaning, "well-arranged, seemly, modest. Of a man living with decorum. A well ordered life." R. Finlayson, commenting in *Pulpit Commentary*, says the elder "must have a love for good rules." Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says, "The concept always contains the idea of control of the body and its movements and impulses." Kittel also uses *order*, *adornment*, *self-controlled*, *disciplined*, *well mannered*, and *honourable* in his discussion of *kosmios*.

The characteristic we are here considering will manifest itself in every area of a man's life, and will also be seen in the balance obtaining between the various areas of his life. The well-ordered life will be a life with priorities properly arranged, and with attention's being given to different aspects of one's life and work in proportion to the importance of each aspect.

The one who is "of good behaviour" is one who conducts himself in an orderly and well mannered fashion in connection with the affairs of the church. One around whom a great deal of contention and strife always seems to generate likely would not make a good elder. One whose rudeness stirs up hard feelings, and causes a congregation to be needlessly in an uproar is not "of good behaviour." There are those who have hearts of gold, and who are ever so dedicat-



FROM

THE EDITOR

An Elder Must Be Of Good Behavior

(Seventh in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)



BOB DUNCAN

ed to that which is right, but who simply do not know how to behave themselves in a way that will promote the general well-being of a congregation of the saints. There is such a thing as standing for the right, but doing it in the wrong way.

One must be "of good behaviour" in his day to day relationships to become an elder. Those with whom he works or does business, those who live in his neighborhood, those who are associated with him in recreational, community, or civic activities all should recognize in him one who is mannerly, disciplined, and courteous. A congregation overseen by those who are otherwise simply will not have the respect of the people in the community.

While the family relationships of an elder are to be discussed later, it is in order to mention here, in connection with this particular qualification, that one must be "of good behaviour" in the home to be appointed to the eldership. Nothing can destroy respect for a man more quickly and thoroughly than a lack of respect on the part of the members of his own family. As the leader of his own household, he should conduct himself in an orderly and affable manner. His practice of self-control, his balanced life, his good judgment — all these should command the confidence and respect of every family member so that each one is happy to follow his leadership.

It needs to be mentioned also that the real test of one's behavior or orderliness is in his reaction to stress or difficulty. It is easy for most of us to conduct ourselves in an orderly and respectable manner so long as everything is going well with us. But when we are provoked, or when someone has been rude to us, or when the crisis comes — these will separate those who are qualified for the eldership on this particular point from those who are not.

Let no one think "of good behavior" suggests a tolerant, easygoing, acquiescent, or docile disposition. All Christians must stand for that which is right and against that which is wrong. Those who do so will find themselves in conflict with the world and, at times, even with some who are members of the church. But the Christian can still conduct himself in an orderly fashion. Jesus did not yield or bend when tempted by the devil (Matthew 4), but he conducted himself with dignity and order.

One who cannot order his own behavior with disciplined self-control and dignity should never be appointed to the eldership.

Most juvenile delinquents are youngsters who have been given a free hand, but not in the proper place.

It isn't easy for an idea to squeeze itself into a head that is filled with prejudice.

Why is it we never experience growing pains in the head?

delinquents are children who have reached the age when they want to do what papa and mama are doing.

Attributes Of God

God is! The heavens declare his glory (Psalms 19:1). So evident is his existence that there is no excuse for atheism or idolatry (Romans 1:19-20). Only a fool denies the existence of a supreme being (Psalms 14:1). Nature's revelation of God can only tell of his power and wisdom; to serve him properly and to worship him with understanding, we must know more about God. Through the Holy Scriptures, God has revealed himself to humanity. To that record we now look to learn what God is like.



JOHN WADDEY

“The Lord our God is *one God*” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Our God is one in contrast to the myriads of gods of paganism. Our God is the one universal God. Israel's neighbors each had a god for their locale. There is but one seat of divine government in the universe. No creature, force or power in the cosmos possesses the nature and attributes of our God, Jehovah.

God is manifested in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At his baptism, Jesus stood on Jordan's banks, the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven (Matthew 3:16-17). We read of “God the Father” (Galatians 1:3), God the Son (Hebrews 1:8), and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4). This plurality is reflected in Creation when “God said, Let us make man in our image . . .” (Genesis 1:26). In Revelation 4:1-5:7 we see the Father on the throne of heaven, Christ the Lamb and the Holy Spirit with seven fold power before the throne. Ours is the triune God.

“God is a *Spirit*” (John 4:24). “A spirit hath not flesh and bones,” said Christ (Luke 24:39). Thus our God is not made of flesh, nor is he temporal or subject to the limitations of a corporeal frame. Being a spirit, God is invisible to mortal eyes (I Timothy 1:17).

Jehovah God is *omnipotent* i.e., all powerful. He asked Abraham, “Is anything too hard for Jehovah?” (Genesis 18:14). He is “God the Almighty” (Revelation 4:8). Only an omnipotent being could create the universe by the word of his mouth (Psalms 33:6). Likewise, only he could destroy it (II Peter 3:7-12). His name *Jehovah* speaks of his power. Only he is the *self-existing one*. God alone is totally independent in his existence.

Our God is *omniscient*; he knows everything. All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13). “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18 KJV). The hundreds of fulfilled prophecies demonstrate the supernatural knowledge of God who declares “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done . . .” (Isaiah 46:10). Truly he is the all-seeing God; nothing is hidden from his sight (Psalms 69:5).

The Lord God is *omnipresent*. Solomon said, “Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee . . .” (I Kings 8:27). “Am I God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him! . . . Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah” (Jeremiah 23:23-24). Because he is present everywhere, he can be with each disciple, wherever he be, to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Any sinner seeking after God can find him, since “he is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27). It is impossible to hide from God. We can only submit to him or be punished

(Psalms 139:7-13).

Jehovah is *eternal* in existence. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God” (Psalms 20:2). Because he is “eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God [we owe him] honor and glory” (I Timothy 1:17).

God is *unchangeable*. “With whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (James 1:17). He is “the same, yesterday and today, yea and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). Men may be changeable and fickle, but our God is totally dependable.

Our Lord is perfect in *holiness*. “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah . . .” (Isaiah 6:3). No sin or sinner can stand in his presence (Isaiah 6:1-7). His “word is very pure” (Psalms 119:140). “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Psalms 145:17 KJV). A holy God demands — requires — holy living in his people (II Corinthians 7:1), and holiness in worship and service (Psalms 29:2 KJV).

The great Jehovah is *omnibenevolent* or infinite in goodness. “Jehovah is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works” (Psalms 145:9). Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the heavenly Father (James 1:17). He works all things together for good for those who love him (Romans 8:28). “God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man” (James 1:13).

Our God is infinitely *just*. “Righteousness and

justice are the foundation of thy throne” (Psalms 89:14). Abraham affirmed, “shall not the Judge of all the earth do right” (Genesis 18:25). Since all must stand before him in judgment to receive their eternal rewards or punishments, it is comforting to know that he will not judge according to appearance, but will judge righteous judgment (John 7:24).

The Lord is *merciful to save his people*. He “is not willing” that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). His great love and kindness were demonstrated in the giving of his only begotten Son as a sacrificial offering for the salvation of a lost race (John 3:16). Accepting his own Son's death in lieu of our's, he now extends generous pardon on simple terms, easily met by any man (Mark 16:15-16). To insure that no one would misunderstand the terms of forgiveness, he recorded it in the Sacred Volume and has preserved it to this day. That word is able to save our souls (James 1:21). He pleads with all men to come and freely accept the gift of salvation. Was ever such love found in mortal man? Only God could love us and let his Son die for us when we were weak, ungodly sinners and enemies (Romans 5:6-10).

Oh, what a mighty and wonderful God we have. Let us love and serve him all our days. — Route 22, Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN. 37921.

Real Darkness

Continued from page 2

could be felt.” God provided light during the departure from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 13:22). It was also provided in the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15:20). But it was darkness and destruction for the Egyptians. God's mercy and loving care was manifested in many ways. But his guiding light either by pillar of fire and/or by his word is most impressive.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the true light (John 1:7-9). Egyptian bondage and deliverance as well as the light were all types, and a shadow of things to come (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5). We must study and learn from the Old Testament because all scripture is inspired of God (Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16-17). However, if one is to walk in the light, his authority is the New Testament for which Jesus Christ died (Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 9:15-17). Christ fulfilled all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). Therefore one must be in Christ to receive benefit from the true light. Many still prefer darkness (John 1:11). The antitype of Egyptian bondage is the bondage of sin, which is also real darkness. Faith, repentance, confessing Christ and baptism all represent the response of a good and honest heart to the light which the Bible, the word of God provides (Psalms 119:105).

Deliverance is also possible. The antitype of crossing the Red Sea is baptism, and walking in newness of life (I Corinthians 10:1; Romans 6:3-4). But many stop short and refuse baptism or deliverance from the bondage of sin (Acts 22:16). Destruction is eminent just as sure as the Egyptians were destroyed. New Testament baptism represents a burial at which time one's sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. This places one in Christ, and in him there is no darkness (I John 1:5). All spiritual blessings to include heaven are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Baptism or immersion in water represents the only entrance to the kingdom or church which Jesus Christ died for and purchased with his precious blood (Matthew 16:16-19; Acts 2:38,47; 20:28; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12). It is not possible to love Jesus Christ, and come out of darkness without

obeying (John 14:15; I John 1:6). The accountable individual is reminded that there is only one body (church), and that baptism is just as important as your eternal destiny is (Ephesians 4:4-5; I Peter 3:21).

Individual resurrection is also necessary (Colossians 2:12). This involves walking in newness of life or in the light (Romans 6:4; I John 1:7-9). Some are baptized merely to get wet or become wet sinners. There was no death, burial, and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16; 6:3-4). Worshiping God in spirit and in truth is commanded, and required of all Christians (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:25). Attending all the services appointed by the elders is also necessary (Hebrews 13:17). But walking in the light after becoming a new creature includes much more (II Corinthians 5:17). It involves picking up one's cross daily, and existing as a living sacrifice for Christ (Luke 9:23; Romans 12:1-2). Jesus paid the price and offers so much with so little demanded.

God help us to accept in faith and obedience the true light through the written word of God (John 12:48; James 1:21). Failure to recognize and accept these truths is to remain in *REAL DARKNESS*, and destruction is eminent. — Route 3 Box 329, Amory, Mississippi 38821.

Some people grow up and still remain juvenile.

The secret of happiness is to count your blessings while others are adding up their troubles.

The only thing some people keep in their heads overnight is a cold.

Every boy, in his heart, would rather steal second base than an automobile.

What Is The Preachers Job?

I suppose almost everyone living in America, regardless of his economic, educational or religious background, has a notion of some kind of what the word "preacher" means. Most would easily define it as, "one who preaches," and that would be absolutely correct. But, there is often a great deal of uncertainty among people, even religious people — even preachers themselves — about what the preacher ought to preach. In his preaching, what is the most important message to be declared, and what approach (or methods) should be followed? Fortunately, the same questions were around in the days of the apostles, and Paul provided the inspired answer. This he did in II Timothy 4:1-5. The following is a brief analysis of the passage using the English Bible and Vincent's WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTA-



PHILLIP GRAY

MENT, Vol. 4, pp. 318-322:

(1) "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; (2) Preach the word; be instant (or, 'be ready; stand by, be at hand, be present') in season (when it is convenient), out of season (when it is inconvenient). 'Timothy is . . . to discharge his duty to those with whom he deals, whether it be welcome or not. '); reprove ('Rather, *convict* of their errors. '), rebuke ('The word implies a *sharp, severe* rebuke, with, possibly, a suggestion in some cases of impending penalty . . . '), exhort ('to exhort' is 'to incite by argument or advice: urge strongly: to give warnings or advice: make urgent appeals,' according to WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY) with all longsuffering (patience) and doctrine (teaching; 'The combination is suggestive. Long-suffering is to be maintained against the temptations to anger presented by the obstinacy and perverseness of certain hearers; and such are to be met, not merely with rebuke, but also with sound and reasonable instruction in the truth'). (3) For the time will come when they will not endure ('put up with' NIV) sound doctrine ('Or *healthful teaching*'); but after their own lusts shall they heap to

themselves teachers, having itching ears ('Or, *being tickled in their hearing* . . . Seneca says: *Some come to hear, not to learn, just as we go to the theatre, for pleasure, to delight our ears with the speaking or the voice or the plays*'); (4) And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables ('More correctly, *will turn aside*.' For 'fables' the NIV has 'myths'). (5) But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions (suffer hardships), do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Therefore, to summarize Paul's answer to our questions, a preacher is one who preaches the word, when it is convenient and when it is not. It often is not when his listeners do not want to hear it. His method (or approach) in preaching is to convict men of their wrongs, sharply and severely rebuking those in error, and making urgent appeals for all to do right. Is it not sad that the time has come when many will not endure, or put up with, the healthful teaching of the Bible, but will listen only to that which tickles their ears and is pleasing? However, the preacher is "to discharge his duty to those with whom he deals, whether it be welcome or not". — Rt. 1, Box 55-D, Grove Hill, Ala. 36451.

Is It Scriptural?

abandoned. Issues were debated in our lectureships. Visiting evangelists examined proposed or current innovations in the "light of the Bible." When our preachers were together, whether in a casual meeting or a planned preacher's luncheon, the major thrust of their discussions had to do with the soundness or scripturalness of the latest fad among us.

Borrowing a phrase from a denominational manual we observe that "now it is different." Elders hear of an activity employed by others that is getting results. They discuss the feasibility of inaugurating the program in the local congregation. Considered is whether we have the personnel needed to perform the work, the prospects of success, the financial cost, and the way it will be received

by our people. If one raises the question as to whether it squares with scriptural principles he is met with a cold stare, as if his fellow saints had heard the voice of a corpse. This may exaggerate the case a little, but very little.

Many factors combine to produce this sad state of affairs, but we fear that the greatest single problem is lack of respect for the Bible as the inspired, inerrant word of God. Men and women who know that God seeks to direct their path solely through the medium of his revealed will surely see the need to find a thus saith the Lord in all they do. How long has it been, brother, since you heard someone ask, "Is it scriptural?" Think on these things. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

The divine injunction is, "Wherefore if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Peter 4:11). The inspired warning has it, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . ." (II John 9). David came to realize that God had made a breach upon his people when they would have fetched the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, because they failed to seek him "after the due order" (I Chronicles 15:13).

It has ever been incumbent upon man to act in harmony with the revealed word of God in all matters religious. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Our ways are not God's ways, nor our thoughts his thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). But God has expressed his thoughts and revealed his ways through the word of the inspired penman (I Corinthians 2:9-13). In the absence of a "thus saith the Lord God," man is without authority to speak or act in the cause of the Lord (Isaiah 7:7).

It is not the design of this article to discuss the method of how we may establish Bible authority, although this is an essential element in seeking the Lord after the due order, but to lament the dearth of an appeal to the scriptures as our sole authority for every teaching and practice. Nor is it our purpose to resurrect the spirit that used the phrase, "is it scriptural," as an excuse to object to matters authorized under generic authority, but not delineated as to the manner of execution. This was properly labeled an "anti" attitude. Men wrecked churches across the land with this unwholesome, if not unholy, approach to the question of scriptural authority.

Time was that much of the discussion of any proposed work or activity within the churches of Christ centered around the matter of it's scripturalness. This was, in fact, the first consideration. If the proposed project did not pass this criteria it was



R. W. GRAY

The true strength of a congregation is not found in the large number of people on the roll, the amount of money in the treasury, the host of prominent citizens found among the membership nor the beautiful and expensive building which might be owned by the local church. Such could be in evidence because of a strong, spiritual group of saints but would not necessarily and always be true.

You can read the history of the early church and learn that this statement is accurate. The kingdom of God is manifested in such qualities as "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." While we sometimes pride ourselves in the fact that our attendance has increased and our contribution is at an all time high, we must understand that true strength is to be measured in the matters pertaining to the spiritual development



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

in the individual Christian.

Such growth is not necessarily reported in our brotherhood papers as progress reports. For example, a Christian lady related to me that if she worked two days in a week, one day's salary would be given to the Lord. That's just wonderful! A brother told me once that he had the chance to have his overseer fired because of personal difference, but didn't, since the man would not have support for his family. That is growth, because prior to this brother's conversion to the Lord, the two men had actually fought. You witness a sister who at one time neglected the worship now attending faithfully because of her love for the Lord — that's growth. You notice the increased interest in Bible study in a brother and hear him talking to others about the need of obeying Christ — that's growth. A brother forgives another of personal injury — that's growth. A husband and wife who once fought and fussed all the time now live in peace and harmony, rearing their children in the way of the Lord — that's growth.

It is a beautiful thing to see people growing in the "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." I ask you in a personal way, are you stronger today than you were a year ago? — 809 Perry Store Rd., Opp., Ala. 36467.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am
the W

forth

6:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1982

NUMBER 20

Esther

FRANK CHESSE

Every age boasts of extraordinary people. Esther was such a person. Prior to becoming the queen of Persia, she had at least four major things working against her.

First, she lost her parents at an early age. For a young girl to lose her parents in the tender years of youth is a tragedy of immense proportions. Though obviously grateful to be clothed with the love of Mordecai her cousin, such was no substitute for the joy of growing up in a real home.

Second, she was reared in a pagan environment. Esther's presence in Persia was the result of the idolatry of her ancestors, forcing God to bring judgment upon Judah by means of the Babylonians, who were later conquered by the Persians. The nature of her Persian environment can best be seen in the king's response to Haman's inconceivable proposal. When Haman proposed the annihilation of the entire Jewish race, Ahasuerus coldly and unhesitatingly declared, "do with them as it seemeth good to thee" (Esther 3:11). Immediately, orders were dispatched to the various provinces to "destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women" (Esther 3:13), after which "the king and Haman sat down to drink" (Esther 3:15).

Third, she was denied a normal life. The triune goal of every Jewish girl was marriage, family and a home of her own. No doubt, Esther had often dreamed of those very joys of womanhood. Instead, she was placed in the harem of a king. In pagan society, it was not unusual for an undesired woman in the king's harem to exist in virtual solitude. Even as queen, Esther informed Mordecai on one occasion that she had not been with Ahasuerus for thirty days (Esther 4:11).

Fourth, she was compelled to sacrifice her virginity to a pagan king. For a young woman like Esther, virginity would be among her most treasured possessions. It would be something she would guard with her life until she could give herself in marriage to the man of her choice. Instead, she was taken from her home and given to Ahasuerus like some kind of material object, a man whom she had scarcely seen and for whom she had no love and no feeling.

What kind of person would one normally expect to

come forth from such conditions? A woman angry with the world, possessing an intensely bitter spirit and sour disposition; one who felt cheated by life; a person with a negative attitude toward everything and everyone. But even more acute were the temptations she faced on the other side of the tracks. She became the queen of the most powerful nation in the world. Following the death of Haman, all of his immense wealth was given to her (Esther 8:1). Thus, Esther lived daily with some of the most potentially destructive forces with which man has ever had to contend: power, enormous wealth and worldly fame. Only eternity will reveal the legions destroyed by these. From these molds one would expect to see an individual characterized by arrogance, egotism and self-sufficiency. In contrast, note Esther's sterling character.

First, she exhibited an humble and submissive spirit. Choice women throughout the kingdom were assembled in Sushan the palace from which Ahasuerus would choose one to be the queen of Persia. These women were the most beautiful in the kingdom. No doubt most of them came from homes of the socially elite, women who had been pampered, petted and catered to all of their lives. For the most part, such women would be vain, arrogant and demanding. Prior to spending the night with the king, each one issued her demands and received what-

ever she desired (Esther 2:13). In contrast, Esther "required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women appointed" (Esther 2:15).

Second, she possessed a lovely personality. "And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her" (Esther 2:15). Providence? Yes, but respecting man's free moral agency, even providence must have something with which to work.

Third, she manifested a respectful and obedient spirit. Even after the royal crown adorned her head, the record declares, "Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him" (Esther 2:20). She was queen of mighty Persia. She was powerful, wealthy and famous. How easy it would have been to forget Mordecai, even to view him with contempt; but not Esther.

Fourth, she was willing to sacrifice her life for her people. "I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16). She was willing, not only to surrender her power, position, wealth, and fame, but even her very life.

Esther is living proof that an individual can recover from personal tragedy, rise above a pagan environment, conquer extreme difficulties and be a blessing to the world. — Route 5 Thomson, Georgia 30824.

The Way Of False Teachers

W. A. HOLLEY

There are false teachers whether we wish to admit it or not. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Again, "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1).


Since there were false teachers/prophets among first century Christians, we should not be surprised to find false teachers among the people of God, even

today. We sincerely suggest that Acts 20:28-31, I Timothy 4:1-5, and II Thessalonians 2:1-12 be read and let us take warning.

Hymenaeus and Alexander are examples of false teachers who lived and preached in the early church (I Timothy 1:19-20). Elymas is another false teacher who sought to turn others from the truth (Acts 13:7-12).

A sermon is not a gospel sermon just because someone says it is. Sermons which urge people to get saved, or to pray through at a mourners' bench, or to

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Christ, The Answer

Christ invites, "Come unto me, all ye that labour 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).

In Christ we have the panacea for all the ills of earth. Only Christ can provide true rest. Only Christ can cleanse the sin-stained heart and aid us in our feeble efforts to keep the heart pure. Only Christ can provide us with a shining example of how to live within this robe of flesh so as to please the Father. Only Christ can lead us through death's valley of the shadow into the rest of heaven itself. Yea, as Paul declared, "Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11).

The coming of Christ brought grace and truth, hence it also revealed life and peace. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). As a result, Christ was able to affirm, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Likewise, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). This peace-bringing, life-giving salvation is found in no other name but the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). No wonder Christ invites, "Come unto me."

The answer to life's problems is not found in the bottle, whether it be the pill bottle or the booze bottle. Our ills will not find their cure in either the classroom or the courtroom. The solution will not be found in the pseudo-sage philosophies of twentieth century "free thinkers." Our most plaguing problems are rooted in our one most plaguing problem — sin. Because only Christ can provide remission of sins, only Christ is the answer, the solution, to life's problems.

Christ was right when he affirmed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). — Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.



DALTON KEY

"A bishop then must be . . . given to hospitality . . ." (I Timothy 3:2). Instead of "given to hospitality," Titus 1:8 says he must be "a lover of hospitality." But in the Greek the distinction does not appear; the same Greek word is used in both passages, and both phrases accurately translate the Greek word *philoxinos*.

Actually this Greek word is compounded from two other words: *philos* 'friendly' (the verb form, *phileo*, means to love), and *xenos* 'stranger.' Hence, one who loves and is friendly to strangers is one who is given to hospitality. A noun form of this word is found in Hebrews 13:2, where the admonition is given: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers . . ." It is found also in Romans 12:13, where all the saints are admonished to be "given to hospitality." It seems significant that in the same paragraph with both of these references to hospitality there is an admonition to brotherly love (Hebrews 13:1 and Romans 12:10). And in I Peter 4:8,9 the admonition to "have fervent charity among yourselves" immediately precedes the injunction to "use hospitality one to another without grudging." From these instances it becomes quite plain that hospitality is a natural outgrowth of love. Those who, as a matter of course, do not exercise hospitality are obviously lacking in love for the brethren and for strangers. Is it any wonder that God makes this one of the requirements for becoming an elder?

Love is the basic and primary motive behind hospitality, but there are a number of secondary motives which should prompt the exercises of this beautiful virtue. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:9,10). In this passage, *gift*, *minister*, and *stewards* capture our attention as these are used in connection with the exercises of hospitality. The means wherewith we are able to exercise hospitality are given by God, and are to be used in ministering to or serving our fellow human beings. But these means do not belong to us; they belong to God, and we are nothing more than stewards. The idea of stewardship demands we practice hospitality.

The Golden Rule motivates us to practice hospitality. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). While the Greek word translated "given to hospitality" in I Timothy 3:2, and "a lover of hospitality" in Titus 1:8 derives from the idea of befriending *strangers*, one does not have to be a



BOB DUNCAN

FROM
THE EDITOR

An Elder Must Be Given To Hospitality

(Eighth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

stranger to be a recipient of hospitality. We have already noted the admonition, "use hospitality one to another" (I Peter 4:9). Christians of the first century, because of their love for one another, practiced hospitality among themselves. All of us appreciate an invitation to enjoy the hospitality of our brethren, if for nothing more than a glass of water or iced tea. If we enjoy being the recipients of hospitality, the Golden Rule would indicate we should also be providers of it from time to time.

Another reason we should be given to hospitality is to secure the personal blessing or blessings available to those who do so. We may not know ahead of time what all of those blessings are. The writer to the Hebrews wrote: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). Do not misunderstand; God does not send angels to us as he sent to Abraham (Genesis 18) and Lot (Genesis 19). But the picture of the judgment in Matthew 25 makes it clear that we serve our Lord by serving our fellow human beings. And the Lord has assured us that "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple . . . shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). We are assured of blessings as we exercise hospitality, but we cannot always know ahead of time the greatness nor the nature of the blessings that will accrue to us. Publius, a barbarian, graciously received and lodged Paul and his company on the island of Melita (Acts 28:1-8). Little did Publius realize that his kindness to Paul would result in the miraculous healing of his father. Miracles are not performed today, but blessings do come in ways that are unexpected. This barbarian was willing to do what a number of brethren are not willing to do, and that despite the fact he had a sick father.

Being given to hospitality is one of the very finest and most effective ways of putting oneself in a position to promote the gospel and the church of the Lord. Hospitality was exercised in the first century to promote the gospel. Gaius was Paul's host, as well as the host of the whole church, while Paul wrote the book of Romans (Romans 16:23). Philemon's home was to be Paul's home as the apostle journeyed in his work of preaching (Philemon 22). In modern times there may not be as great a need for that kind of hospitality to promote the gospel. But there is a great need for the kind of hospitality that will enable us to know each other better and love each other more. There is no doubt in the mind of this writer that one of the reasons we are not converting more people is the fact that we never really get to know our prospects well enough to gain their confidence. And one reason so many who obey the gospel become unfaithful is that members of the church do not spend enough time with each other in the home atmosphere.

It is easy to see why God will not accept as an elder one who is not hospitable. He knows that such cannot effectively oversee the flock. He does not know

Continued on page 3

Is Your Name Written In Heaven?

Jesus encouraged his disciples, "But rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:20). This is a wonderful thought. This record, to which he referred is "the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). Those whose names are written there shall enter the eternal city, which is heaven.

Many courthouses in the country have plaques on the walls listing the names of men and women who gave their lives in service. This is to honor their memory.

BUT JESUS SPOKE OF A GREATER HONOR. He sent out the seventy. He gave them many powers. They came back rejoicing saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." But Jesus said, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but **RATHER REJOICE, BECAUSE YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN**" (Lk. 10:17,20).

Are our names written in heaven? How can we have our names written in the book of God?

The Bible often refers to such a record. (1) When Moses was pleading for Israel that God might forgive their transgressions, he stated, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray, thee out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ex. 32:23-32). (2) In his crying against the wicked the psalmist David said, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Ps. 69:28). (3) In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul made a request concerning those "whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). (4) In the book of Hebrews the writer speaks of "the general assembly . . . of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23). (5) In the book of Revelation there are many such references: "He that overcometh . . . I will not blot out his name out of the book of life . . ." (Rev. 3:5). "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb . . ." (Rev. 13:8). ". . . and they that dwell on earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life . . ." (Rev. 17:8). In telling of the judgment scene John wrote, "And I 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 those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

fire" (Rev. 20:12-15).

God's word calls it "my book." It is "the book of the living," "the book of life," and "the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN THERE? Members of the Lord's church are enrolled in the lamb's book of life (Heb. 12:23). The church is called the Lord's house (I Tim. 3:15). It is designated the family of God (Eph. 3:15). Christians are entitled to a place on the family register, the lamb's book of life.

Jesus and Paul clarify the family relationship to God (John 3:5; Gal. 3:26-27). The Holy Spirit uses the word of God as the agency to beget the soul (I Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18). The word teaches the necessity of the birth of water (John 3:5; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3). The Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN? Are you a member of God's family? (1) Have you believed in the Lord as the Son of God? (2) Have you turned from the world and its sinful practices, prompted by faith in Christ? (3) Have you confessed your faith in Christ before men? (4) Have you been buried with him in baptism for the remission of your sins? This is the Lord's plan by which he enrolls his children into his family, the Church (Acts 2:47).

There are many honor rolls but only one enroll-

ment really counts. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

GOD'S CHILDREN MUST LIVE FOR HIM. Each child of God must live a faithful life. He should so order his life in Christian living, worship of his God, and in service of the master as an heir of heaven.

Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Paul also said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). Paul exercised all care to be faithful to the very end of life. Jesus said, "But he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). John was inspired to write, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

WILL YOUR NAME BE THERE? When the roll of the redeemed shall be called, will you be able to answer? Will you hear him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"? (Matt. 25:21). — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Faith And Feelings

Many religionists trust solely on their feelings in determining the right or wrong of a matter. One can be heard to say, "I had rather have this feeling in my heart than a stack of Bibles," or, "I know I am right because I feel it in my heart." Certainly, a person should be conscientious in whatever one believes. The Lord requires a man to be honest of heart; however, sincerity alone does not guarantee that which is believed is the truth. The heart can be deceived and be deceptive. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

There are some things in which a person may believe and be wrong without jeopardizing his soul. A businessman may place his trust in some banker and yet lose his savings due to the dishonesty of the one in whom he believed. You could



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

have all faith in the man selling you an automobile, believing the mileage on the odometer, yet learn later that you had been deceived. In both cases, there would have been the loss of money and/or the value of the product purchased, but one's eternal salvation would not have been adversely affected.

There are Biblical examples wherein feelings felt in one's heart were deceptive and even fatal. In I Kings 13, we learn of the prophet from Judah's being sent by God to cry out against the altar erected by Jeroboam, King of Israel. He was faithful in discharging his duties. Jehovah had instructed this prophet not to eat food nor drink water and not to return the same way after his mission at Bethel. But an old prophet lied to him, saying that God had told him that the man from Judah could stop at his house to eat bread and drink water. The young prophet believed this lie and was devoured by a lion. No doubt he felt in his heart that the truth was being told, but he was wrong. That deceptive feeling in his heart cost him his life.

Saul of Tarsus believed that he was doing God's will by slaying the Christians of his day. After his conversion, he made this statement regarding the feelings he had in his heart: "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1). Again, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I did in Jerusalem . . ." (Acts 26:9,10). We know of no man more sincere than Saul of Tarsus but he was wrong even though his feelings were right.

Jesus spoke of the blind leading the blind and both falling into a pit (Matthew 15:14). The blind followers are to be pitied, not because of the error of their way, but in their integrity they had been led astray.

In contrast, faith is not produced by floundering feelings. Faith is based upon reliable evidence. John wrote of the reason of the miracles performed by the Lord: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30,31). Faith therefore is not a "leap in the dark."

An Elder Must Be Given To Hospitality

Continued from page 2

the flock, and they do not know him. He has not really demonstrated that he cares for them, and they have not really learned to place their confidence in him. This will not be true in the case of an elder who is given to or is a lover of hospitality.

We have earlier referred briefly to the fact that the wife of an elder comes into the picture with reference to this particular qualification. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a man to be given to hospitality if his wife were inhospitable. Preparing meals, or even refreshments, for guests in the home normally falls within the domain of the woman of the house. In this sense, and to this degree, a man's wife could be the determining

factor in deciding whether he is qualified for the eldership in this particular respect.

We realize as men and women grow older and health problems develop it is not possible for them to entertain guests as they once did. We know of many fine elders and their wives who fit into this category. They practiced hospitality extensively when they were able, and would do so today if health permitted. They can and do still serve faithfully and effectively in other areas of the work. The fact that such are retained in the eldership, and very wisely so, offers no justification at all for waiving this particular qualification when selecting men to be appointed as elders.

Continued on page 4

The Way Of False Teachers

Continued from page 1

accept Jesus as your personal Saviour, or be saved by faith only, or just lay your hand on the radio/TV and be saved, or that one is saved by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost, are not gospel sermons; they are False Sermons!! Where is the book, chapter, and verse that shows that sinners are saved according to the notions presented in this paragraph?? If such is God's way of saving sinners, why does the Scripture not say so??

Every false teacher claims to be a teacher of truth. No false teacher would announce beforehand that his purpose is to deceive and to lead astray. Many preachers have splendid educations, wonderful personalities, charming voices, but they are not gospel preachers because they do not preach the gospel; they preach the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13). Satan is a pastmaster at deceiving mankind, even transforming himself into an angel of light; his ministers — and he does have ministers — also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

How can we recognize false teachers? Well, measure his preaching by the Holy Scriptures. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud [a fool, margin], knowing nothing, but doting [sick, margin] about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings [to revile or scold in harsh, insolent, or abusive language WAH], evil surmisings [to imagine or infer on the slightest grounds; conjecture, WAH], perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (I Timothy 6:3-5; CF. Jeremiah 8:20). In order for a preacher to have both God and Christ he must "abide in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9-11).

Each false preacher talks much of how much he loves the Lord; how much he loves truth; how much he loves the Bible; and how he loves the souls of men. But he will substitute his own notions and ideas for the plain and simple truth of God. A false teacher ignores the Lord's plan of salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21), the essentiality of the church Jesus established (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6), and he turns aside the Lord's items of worship, substituting his own, because he thinks his way is more beautiful and more in keeping with man's nature (Acts 2:41-42,47; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; John 4:23-24). And so he adds special robes and garbs, pianos and organs, images and pictures and pageantry designed to satisfy the fleshly mind.

Is it not true that such preachers possess an amazing knack for avoiding certain passages of Scripture? It is passingly strange that denominational preachers can preach a lifetime and never preach the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). How is it that an honest preacher can overlook these passages? On one occasion I asked a well-known denominational preacher if the Bible teaches that the sinner should believe and be baptized in order to be saved? His reply was, "Yes, I think I have read something similar to that, but I don't remember where it is to be found." I, then asked him, "Have you ever preached such a doctrine?" His answer was, "Of course not!"

A gospel sermon cannot avoid the Great Commission! Nor can a gospel sermon contradict Peter (Acts 2:36-38); it cannot deny what Peter said in I Peter 3:20-21; it cannot add to nor subtract from God's holy word (Revelation 22:18-19); it cannot misrepresent James 2:14-26, claiming that sinners are saved "by faith only." Gospel sermons do not

suggest that alien sinners are saved in answer to prayer (John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). God is the father of his children only; God is not the father of the devil's children (John 8:44; I John 3:10). Only those who have been born of water and of the Spirit have the right to address God as their Father in heaven (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

I know that a preacher may not have time to discuss

all the Bible has to say on every subject. But I am disturbed when some truth is constantly avoided because of unbelief! I am disturbed when a so-called gospel preacher pays lip service to the word of God, and goes on preaching the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:1-13; II Timothy 4:1-8). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Faith And Feelings

Continued from page 3

The apostle Paul stated it in this fashion: "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12). He possessed this great faith because of the proper evidence that Jesus was the Son of God. This kind of faith produces a victorious life: "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). There is to be found no wavering in the affirmation of faith by these men. They believed, they knew.

Today, we can possess the same quality of faith. How is it possible? In Romans 10:17, we read, "So faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The word of God produces faith in the hearts of all honest seekers of truth. Our faith is in proportion to our knowledge and acceptance of the divine word of God. Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God," because he had seen the Christ. Today, our faith is based upon the testimonies of faithful witnesses who saw the Lord and wrote his message down in order for us to read and thereby obtain faith. We walk by this faith and not by the opinions and feelings of men (John 20:28,29; II Corinthians 5:7).

The Bible speaks of "one faith" (Ephesians

4:5). This is "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). This has reference to the system of faith which was once deposited, the sound doctrine, the gospel of Christ, the divine revelation of redemption of God through Jesus Christ. Our faith is based upon this message written by inspired men of God (Ephesians 3:3-5). The unwritten (feelings) and written creeds of men cannot be relied upon in the matter of salvation. Only "the faith" revealed from God.

If we would know anything required of us in order to please God we must study his word. We accept God as being the only true God by faith, and we also believe that he will reward us eternally because of our faith and trust in him (Hebrews 5:8,9; 11:6).

My friends, don't depend upon a "feeling that is better felt than told"; rather, search the scriptures daily to learn what God wants you to do in order to be saved (Acts 17:11). Permit the Holy Scriptures to be your only guide in religious matters. Then, never waver in your faith, for salvation eternally is promised to those who remain "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10). — 809 Perry Store Road Opp., Ala. 36467.

Neither Catholic, Protestant, Nor Jew

Have you noticed how we all tend to apply labels? Not labels on cans or boxes, but on people, groups, and movements.

We like to divide politicians into either conservative or liberal. We often label people as sullen, or friendly. They may be either out-going or quite. Children may be tagged as hostile or submissive.

This action is not only a mistake in dealing with people, but also with religion. Men have tended to label all religions as either Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. This may be accepted by most religious groups, but is not taught in the New Testament.

Jesus and his apostles teach us that there is but one church. There was only one church planned, purposed, prophesied, and established. All deviation from this plan is of man's doing, and not of God's will. Jesus called it, "My church" (Matthew 16:18). Paul taught the church was the one body and the one bride of Jesus (Ephesians 1:22-23;



ANCIL JENKINS

5:23-27).

There is a sense, however, in which the Lord's church is Jewish. It has its roots in the Old Testament. Many references are made to it by the prophets. Just as the descendants of Abraham were once the chosen people of God, now all who belong to Christ are the true chosen people of God (Romans 2:25-26).

There is also a sense in which the church of the Lord is catholic. The word *catholic* means "universal." Jesus intended for his church to be for all people and nations. He sent his disciples to all the world to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). All people, tribes, races, and ethnic groups are loved by him and can come to him for salvation.

The church of the Lord is also protestant. The word *protestant* means "to protest." The Protestant Reformation came as a reaction to the corrupt religious teachings of the sixteenth century. Today, the church of Christ protests against sin, corruption, and all teaching contrary to that which Christ delivered to us (Jude 3).

There are no labels in Christianity. You do not have to be either Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. You can be a member of the church Jesus died for and established. You can be a Christian. Nothing more, nothing less — just a Christian. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, N.M. 87106.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1982

NUMBER 21

"Where Do Mistakes Go When You Rub Them Out?"

The title of this article was the caption under a picture in a recent comic strip. The scene depicts a young girl sitting at her desk with a pencil in her hand. She had made a mistake in spelling a word and had erased the letter. At this point she asks, no doubt her mother, "Where do mistakes go when you rub them out?" That is a pretty good question.



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

My thoughts immediately turned to the mistakes we all make in life. Some mistakes are not always sinful; however, all of our sins would indeed be mistakes. Sin is a transgression of God's law; sin is unrighteousness; sin is a failure to comply with the commands of God (I John 3:4; 5:17; James 4:17). Sin is universal in scope: "There is none righteous, no, not one." "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10,23). When a person complies with the terms of pardon presented by the Christ, forgiveness can be obtained. "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

When sin appears as a debt, an unfilled obligation, then pardon is spoken of as a cancelling. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgression for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins." "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out . . ." (Isaiah 43:25; Acts 3:19). Jesus cancelled out our debt of sin on Calvary when he shed his atoning blood for us.

When sin appears as an estrangement from God, then forgiveness is represented as reconciliation. Man's sins separated him from his God (Isaiah 59:1,2). But God has made it possible for fallen man to be reconciled to him through his Son Jesus Christ. This was the message of reconciliation

proclaimed by the inspired preachers in the first century (II Corinthians 5:18-20). It is in the body of Jesus that both Jew and Gentile can enjoy friendship once again with the heavenly Father (Ephesians 2:16).

When sin appears as an indictment, forgiveness is spoken of as a justification. Paul expressed it in this manner: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). To be justified is to be declared guiltless, to be absolved of any wrong doing, to be acquitted, to make or to be declared right. The whole world has been indicted by the court of heaven as being under sin (Romans 3:19). To be set free from the guilt and bondage of sin, justification must be sought in Jesus Christ.

When sin appears as a pollution, forgiveness is represented as a cleansing. Zechariah prophesied: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). The apostle John spoke of the Savior when he wrote,

" . . . unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). Jesus himself declared, as he instituted the supper, "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). That fountain which was opened was the side of our Lord from whence flowed the atoning blood.

When sin appears as a disease, forgiveness is represented as a healing. In reference to the coming Messiah, Isaiah wrote, "But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). In the New Testament, we learn of the work of the Great Physician, "Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we are healed" (I Peter 2:24). There is a balm in Gilead; there is a physician there. Jesus Christ is the healer of the

Continued on page 2

Let Us See The Nail Prints

WINFREY HENNESSEE

The Jews of Jesus' day were very much like our modern day "Jehovah's Witnesses." In Luke 4:5 we read: "And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." The devil offered all of these things and the glory thereof, if the Savior would only bow down and worship him.

The Jews were expecting an earthly king, and nothing else would they accept. Many people today will believe the things they can see and feel; anything temporal and physical they'll buy, but the spiritual side of the story is different. Isn't this what our denominational neighbors are doing when they preach Premillennialism?

When Jesus refused to accept Satan's offer, he knew the people would condemn him to die a physical death.

I wonder if we would receive him any better today. We say we would with our mouths, and we say we would in our songs, but our actions speak louder than words. Some of us can't find the time to come to mid-week Bible study, but can always manage to meet with the Thursday night bowling team. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$1.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

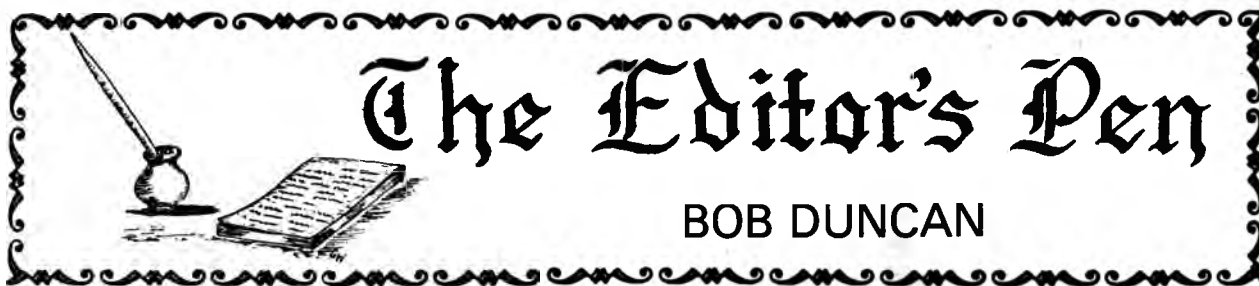
“Where Do Mistakes Go When You Rub Them Out?”

Continued from page 1

malady of sin (Jeremiah 8:22; Matthew 9:12,13).

Where do our sins go when they are forgiven? That too is a most difficult question. However, the Word of God does offer us some understanding on this subject. Take for instance the passage found in Micah 7:19: "He will again have compassion upon us: he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Sin in this verse is regarded as a personal enemy, which by God's sovereign grace will be entirely subdued. As God destroyed Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, so shall he cast our sins into the depths of the sea of forgiveness and forgetfulness (Exodus 15:4,10). If you will observe, the Lord will cast our sins into the "depths of the sea," and not on the shore where they can be washed back again. In Psalms 103:12, we learn, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." In reference to the new covenant that God would make with Israel and Judah, the promise was made, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). Thus we learn that the Infinite Intelligence possesses the attribute of forgetting sins that are forgiven. To some degree, we understand how this is possible. Loving parents have often forgotten as well as forgiven the mistakes and sins made and committed by their children. In perfection, our heavenly Father forgives and forgets the sins of his penitent children (I John 1:7,9).

My friends, if you have not had your sins blotted out by the blood of Christ, please, as a penitent believer, be baptized in his name in order to obtain his divine forgiveness (Acts 3:19; 2:38). And God who forgives will also in his mercy forget your transgressions. — 809 Perry Store Road Opp, Alabama 36467.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Be Apt To Teach

(Ninth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2). The very finest commentary on this particular qualification is one written by the apostle himself as he instructs Titus with reference to the qualifications of elders: "Holding the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9-11).



BOB DUNCAN

The phrase, "apt to teach," translates a single Greek word, *didaktikos*, which is defined by Thayer as meaning "apt and skilful in teaching." R.C.H. Lenski, in his comments on this verse, says, "Ability to teach means not merely a fair natural aptitude but the qualification of having been taught." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, in a usage note under the word *apt*, says *apt* is used "when probability based on a natural or known tendency is implied."

One does not qualify for the eldership on this point merely because he possesses some innate or latent ability to teach. He must have demonstrated his ability and skilfulness at teaching in order to be qualified for the eldership. It is a mistake to consider one as qualified on this point merely because it is believed he has the potential to develop into a teacher of the word of God. While all Christians, including elders, should continue to grow in knowledge as long as they live, the eldership is too grave a responsibility to place a man into with the mere hope that he will soon become a capable teacher. That would be like giving a man a job as the pilot of a huge passenger plane in the hope that he will learn to fly. What would you do if you had boarded a 747 to cross the Atlantic, and over the intercom came a voice which said: "I would like to introduce to you our pilot. He has logged many hours of flight time as a passenger on this airline. He has read the operator's manual through several times, and has even watched as other pilots flew the aircraft. But this will be his first time at the controls. We are confident of his latent ability, and we are sure we will not have flown many miles until he has developed into a first-class pilot"? Yet this is the very kind of reasoning some use with reference to the appointment of elders.

We have in our possession a sermon delivered by our beloved brother E. R. Harper at the Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas on the morning of October 20, 1950. The sermon, entitled, "Elders, their Work and Qualifications," was published in booklet form. The following is quoted from that sermon:

"I realize this word *apt* is a relative term, just as many of these others are and some possess them to a greater degree than others

but every man to qualify as an elder must possess the ability to teach to a degree that the church can be edified, built up; the truth defended and the gainsayers put to flight. You know and I know that there are scores of men serving as elders of the church who do not know the Bible; who can't teach the word of the Lord; who can't put to flight the gainsayers; and if the defense of the truth were left to them the church would die. Such men, though good men, are not elders and should never have been selected and when selected had they been anything like qualified they would have known that such men cannot serve as an elder in the church."

We agree totally with this fine statement, and would add that churches which are led away into sin and error are so led because elders are lacking in this qualification. Some preacher comes along with his false theory, and the elders, not knowing the word of God as they should, are not able to refute his error. Consequently the church, including in many cases the elders themselves, is led astray.

Two things are implied in connection with this qualification: (1) a good knowledge of the word of the Lord, and (2) some skill in imparting that knowledge to others. Just one of these without the other is not sufficient. One might have a good knowledge of the Bible, but without the skill to impart that knowledge to others he would be totally unable to "convince the gainsayers . . . and vain talkers and deceivers . . . whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:9-11). On the other hand, all the teaching skill in the world will not enable one to teach that which he does not know. In order to qualify for the eldership one must have demonstrated that he has both the knowledge of the truth and the skill to convey that knowledge to others.

Actually there is a third thing implied in the expression, "apt to teach," i.e., the probability that one will teach based on his past performance. One might have grown up in a Christian family, attended all the Bible classes, studied the Bible in a Christian college, and be highly trained and skilled in the teaching profession, and still not be "apt to teach." It could be that an examination of his performance within the past few years will reveal that he has not taught anyone, either publicly or privately. For one reason or another — maybe because he is too busy — he has not set up or conducted any home Bible studies, will not participate in a visitation program, and has said, "Let George do it this quarter," when asked to teach a Bible class. He has the ability and the skill, but he has not been teaching, and he is not "apt" to. Appointing him to the eldership won't change that fact.

It needs to be mentioned in connection with this particular qualification that attendance at gospel meetings and special lectureships is a "must" for elders and those aspiring to the eldership. When outstanding preachers from throughout the brotherhood are brought to area churches for meetings, lectureships, etc., it is foolish for one sincerely interested in improving his ability to teach not to avail himself of the opportunity of hearing these well-informed men. The cost in time and effort to hear such men would be more than repaid in growth in knowledge of God's word and how to

Continued on page 3

The Problem Of Pentecostalism

It has been the sad misfortune of the Lord's church to be plagued by a constant uprising of false teachers. Such men rend and tear the body before they walk away or else are driven from our midst. In this lesson, we deal with one of those unhappy situations.



JOHN WADDEY

Pentecostalism is an attitude towards Christianity that substitutes human emotions, desires and experience for the objective authority of the New Testament. This attitude is detected in people doing things religious because it seems right to them. This is the foundation of all denominationalism. Such folks seek after soul-shaking emotional religious experiences. The "Jesus-freaks" said it all when they said, "Why get high on drugs, when you can get high on Jesus?"

Their search for an emotional "high" was seen in unstructured religious services; spontaneous singing; group prayers with special effects such as candles, campfires and darkened rooms; informal preaching that was casual, shallow and emotional; informal dress and manners and an obsessive interest in the Holy Spirit based on a serious lack of sound Biblical knowledge.

Such emotionalism soon led to a so-called *glossalalia* experience of "tongue speaking" and alleged Holy Spirit baptism. Then came the claim of divine healing. Not finding a warm welcome in most congregations of our brotherhood, they were drawn into fellowship with sectarian charismatics of all sorts and kinds. The end results were feelings of spiritual superiority towards other brethren and ultimately, schism and separation.

Since the days of the Protestant Reformation, subjectivism has prevailed in most of the religious world. Especially since World War II, this philosophy has prevailed in most areas of life. The waves of subjectivism finally sloshed over the sides of the ship of Zion and many were stained thereby. Most brethren thought such could never happen to us. But our people were ripe for such error. They were especially weak and deficient in knowledge about the Holy Spirit, his mission and work. A cold, sterile formalism had settled over many congregations. Such was often perpetuated by preachers and elders. This atmosphere left disciples restless, hungry and thirsty for spiritual life and activity in their congregations. Concurrently there was a widespread failure to understand what true spirituality is. Also there was a breakdown in our teaching on Bible authority. A deficient type of teaching concentrated so much on what was wrong that it neglected to teach what was

An Elder Must Be Apt To Teach

Continued from page 2

teach it to others.

One of the saddest situations which can exist in a congregation is for the elders to be ignorant of God's word. Even sadder is for them to be ignorant of God's word and yet have a "know-it-all" attitude which hinders their ever growing in knowledge by personal study and by sitting at the feet of those capable preachers and teachers who come into the area for meetings and lectureships.

right about the Holy Spirit and spirituality.

We must give due credit to infamous W. Carl Ketcherside for his part in the Pentecostal problem. After some 40 years as a militant legalist, he changed horses and penetrated our ranks with the false notion that one could believe most anything and fellowship most anyone and still be a faithful Christian. While not a charismatic himself, he ran interference for those who were.

Pat Boone, the brotherhood's Hollywood hero, played a significant role. Although not a spiritual leader, he was a powerful example to many young and weak members. He made Oral Roberts' Pentecostalism look respectable.

Don Finto of Nashville was able to spread his Pentecostal doctrine among many of our Christian College students. Dewayne Evans in New York and Ben Franklin in California helped to light brush fires across the land that threatened the unity of the body.

Those men promoting their new doctrine, spread the message by means of the printed page. The *Mission Messenger*, *Mission Magazine*, *Integrity* and *Ensign Fair* all carried a common stream of error into thousands of homes.

Camp Shiloh in New Jersey became a spawning ground for Pentecostalism. Many of our Christian Schools naively allowed representatives of that camp to recruit student volunteers from their campus. They brought back a corrupted faith.

Men were used on some of our college lectureships who were deeply involved in this heresy. Tragically, these practices continued long after their colors were known.

America thrills over the determination and courage of those who distance the marathon or drive for the three minute mile. Yet, no race is more exhilarating, challenging, rewarding, or demanding than "the race set before us."

CONSIDER THE RACE ITSELF (Heb. 12:1-3)

A note of specificity. It is not "a race" or "race of races" but "the race." Whereas track and field offer options for participation, there are no options in supplement to or substitute for "the race set before us." Context identifies this race. Note the comparison between Heb. 12:1-3 and Heb. 10:32-37. Both make an appeal for endurance (10:36; 12:1), with attention given to Jesus (10:37 - no premillennial overtones; 12:2). Too, both are conjoined by examples of endurance, fidelity, and patience (11:1-40) with the contextual thrust given to a "faith unto the saving of the soul" (10:39). Indeed, the race to be run is the possession, maintenance, and growth of a faith that shrinks not back unto predication.

A note of source. This race did not originate with man but God (Eph. 3:9-11). It was "set before" man. Man does not tell God what man wishes to do, God tells man what man must do! It should be observed that joy was set before Jesus (12:2); whereas, the race is set before man. As it would have been insolence for Jesus to reject the joy of providing the system of faith (cf. John 6:38), even so, it is insolence for man to reject the faith of this system (cf. James 2:14-26).

A note of spectatorship. Participants in this race are "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. are pictured



DAN WINKLER

"Run The Race"

as looking on (via their examples), encouraging all who run to run as did they (cf. Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11).

A note of strength. In track and field, the coach cannot run for his team; however, through tips given and encouragement from the sideline, he does all he can to help. In likemanner, Jesus cannot resist the devil for his brethren; but, he has left an example to follow (I Pet. 1:21) and has entered "into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). His brethren should look to him for strength because: (1) he is the author of their faith; (2) he is the perfecter of their faith; and (3) he endured.

CONSIDER TIPS FOR

RUNNING THE RACE (I Cor. 9:24-26)

Run with fervor. "Even so," affords a comparative emphasis. As one receives the ribbon in track and field, the Christian is to run as if there were but one going to heaven and he were determined to be that one! Zeal is implied. Enthusiasm is the keynote that inspires man to make something of himself and his surroundings. It is the prism that refracts a commonplace existence into a resplendant countenance, confident spirit, and dependable character. There is no room for lagards in the church, loitering about the track of life in the sweat-suit of lukewarmness (Rev. 3:14-19). The race should be run with a fervor for: (1) service (Rom. 12:11); (2) support for gospel preaching (II Cor. 7:7); (3) giving (II Cor. 9:2); (4) good works (Titus 2:14); and (5) love (I Pet. 4:8).

Run with self-control. Everything from wheat germ to ankleweights manifest the track star's self-control. This same virtue is essential to running the race of an obedient faith. Remember how Felix trembled over the thought of self-control? Many in the church react similarly; but, it is fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) which is to be added to one's faith (II Pet. 1:6).

Run with purpose. Whether it be a blue ribbon or

Continued on page 4

The Inspired Scriptures

W. A. HOLLEY

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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 3:15-17).

"They did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven . . ." (I Peter 1:12).

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20-21).

Other passages which directly speak of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures are I Corinthians 2:7-16 and Ephesians 3:1-6. Hence, when you read the Holy Bible, you are not reading the words of mere men, you are reading the word of God. The only way God has chosen to communicate with you is through

his revealed will — the word of God as recorded in the Bible. God's revelation was made known to certain men, and written in a book, so that we might read and understand it. Today, God never communicates with men through dreams, feelings or experiences, and the like.

It should be understood that when the Holy Ghost moved certain men to write the Sacred Scriptures, these men were free to speak through their own familiar background, personality, vocabulary, and style. Verily, inspiration did not involve the suspension or suppression of human faculties; neither did it interfere with the free exercise of the distinctive mental characteristics of the individual.

If a Hebrew was inspired, he spoke Hebrew; if a Greek was inspired, he spoke Greek. If an educated man was inspired, he spoke as a man of culture; if uneducated, he spoke as such a man would ordinarily speak. If his mind was logical, he reasoned, as Paul did; if he were contemplative, he wrote as did John.

For example, we shall offer a few words regarding

the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John:

Matthew was a Jew, and he thus writes from a Jewish background. Mark features the mighty works of Jesus. Luke was a physician and a Gentile. He uses medical terms in his writings, and he tells much about his travels throughout the Roman Empire. John, a man of great compassion and love, records much that the other aforementioned writers did not.

These few thoughts will help you to appreciate how the Holy Ghost inspired certain men, and why there are differences in expression.

Today, the Holy Spirit speaks to you through his word, as recorded in the New Testament. If you wish to be saved, you must believe that God is and that Jesus is his Son, repent of your sins, and be baptized in water, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21). After one's baptism, one must live and worship according to the will of God, being faithful unto death (Titus 2:11-12; II Peter 1:5-11; Revelation 2:10). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Heaven

CHRIST HAS GONE TO HEAVEN. While on earth, he said he was going to the Father (John 20:17). In heaven he is "the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Stephen, being stoned to death, saw "Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). When he comes again he is coming from heaven. Paul said, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16).

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." He knew the cross was before him. As he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane he said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). He was made perfect as he "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

The cross was a part of preparing heaven for the children of God. Paul said to the Ephesians, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4). Also note Matt. 25:34. Heaven is for the righteous. John wrote, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).

All things involved in Christ's preparation of

heaven are not told. Heaven is described as a beautiful place. It is a place where there is no death, sorrow, crying or pain.

The city lies foursquare. The gates are of pearls and the street of the city is pure gold, as it were transparent glass (Rev. 21:21). "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23). There man will again eat of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2).

Paul contrasted the sufferings of this life with the glory of heaven. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). John said, we do not know what he will look like when he comes but we shall be like him (I John 3:2).

DO YOU WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN? We must accept Christ's way to the Father's house. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He is "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). The conditions of salvation are found in the following passages: John 8:24; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 16-18; Gal. 3:26-27.

God does not want any to perish and gives man ample time to repent (II Pet. 3:9).

"Today is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

"Run The Race"

Continued from page 3

an olympic gold, a knock-out or touch down, the contests of life have goals and are thus engaged with a purpose. Quest for an obedient faith is no different. Christians are to run "as not uncertainly" and fight "as not beating the air." Why? There is a goal to achieve (Phil. 3:14).

Some have taken their eyes off this goal and lost sight of the church's purpose. In the words of Albert Einstein, "Perfection of means and confusion of goals seem in my opinion to characterize our age." The church exists to save others (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16) and glorify God (I Cor. 10:31). The result of any who stray from this purpose is a vaunting stride and vain pace in the race upon which all eternity hangs (Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16).

Heb. 12:1-3; I Cor. 9:24-26 — herein is found a "preparation" (lay aside every weight and the sin that easily besets); a "participation" (run with fervor, self-control, and purpose); and a "prize" or "consolation" (the incorruptible crown in contrast to the corruptible Isthmian garland of Nemean parsley, Pythian olive, or Olympian bay).

"Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth" (Gal. 5:7)? The race is before man, challenging his every day. A galaxy of godly are, by example, surrounding. Jesus is above, ready and able to help through his mediatorial role. It is now up to man to run so as not to be hindered! — Rt. 2 Box 240 Woodbury, Tennessee 37190.

At the last pass-over feast before his death on the cross, Jesus talked about his departure from them. He said, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you, ye seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you" (John 13:33). In verse 36 we read, "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." These statements caused them to be disturbed.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Jesus strengthened them and made a promise. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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. I go and prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

CHRIST'S PROMISE RESTED ON FAITH. Since you believe in God, believe in me also. The word *believe* means "to adhere to, to trust, to rely on." John 3:16 is a passage that requires such adherence, trust and reliance. "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."

Our Lord developed such trust so they would not be troubled or disquieted like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. He calmed their fears and anxieties as he calmed the sea. "Peace, be still" (Mk. 4:39).

HEAVEN IS THE FATHER'S HOUSE. In our "Father's house are many mansions." Our Father is where the mansions are located (Matt. 5:48; 6:9; 23:9). We will receive a house only when we shed our fleshly tabernacle.

Paul said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). The goal of living eternally with God in heaven should be the first priority in all humanity.



Words Of

Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1982

NUMBER 22

Values To Teach Your Child

Few periods of history have been harder on the home and young people than the times in which we presently live. Rearing children to be godly is surely one of life's toughest challenges today. Worldliness and immorality have been embraced by the majority of our people while there is a general attitude of disdain for the Bible and spiritual things.



WAYNE COBB

Not too long ago there was a teenage girl who came home after she had just been suspended from school for cheating. When confronted by her parents, she cried out: "So what? Everything's different now. We don't go by your rules." Unfortunately, in too many cases, this is true and parents don't know what to do. Where is the answer? What can we as Christian parents do to help our children meet and overcome the temptations that are so prevalent in their world?

The answer lies within the home. It has been said that a child's first and most important teachers are his parents. How a child develops into an adult depends in part, of course, on heredity; but, in greater part it depends upon the teaching of mother and father. Nothing can be more positive than Pro. 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." To equip children to handle life, parents must teach them certain virtues, precepts, and enduring values.

Teach Them Love

Every child needs to learn how to love. There is a basic need in all of us to be loved and to love someone. William Glasser, in the book *Reality Therapy*, states: "From birth to old age we need to love and be loved. Throughout our lives our health and our happiness will depend upon our ability to do so. To either love or to allow ourselves to be loved is not enough; we must do both." Truly, the absence of love in the life of any human being has

devastating consequences. If children do not experience love as they are growing up, they cannot learn to love others and to become happy adults. No wonder Paul instructed the older women to teach the younger women to love their children (Tit. 2:4). Children need to be touched, embraced, kissed, and held so they will grow up knowing love.

Teach Them Work

Every child needs to be taught that work is necessary and honorable. Unfortunately, the work ethic is under attack today. There are many today like the shiftless fellow the preacher visited one day. The preacher asked the idler, "Have you been sleeping well lately?" In response the lazy fellow replied, "Not the best in the world. I sleep real good nights, pretty good mornings, but in the afternoon I just toss and tumble." The book of Proverbs is filled with admonitions against laziness and slothfulness.

The Jewish people insisted that each child be taught a trade. They had a saying, "He who does not teach his son a trade has taught him to be a thief." This is applicable today. The child who does not learn to work will never make a success in life. Parents have an obligation to teach their children to have a positive attitude toward work.

Teach Them Honesty

In a time when many are untruthful, we need to teach our children to have integrity and honesty. Brother Rex Turner taught us "preacher boys" at Alabama Christian that if we were honest we had a foundation to build our lives upon. Parents need to teach their children the same principle. It means teaching children to tell the truth, pay their debts,

keep their promises, admit mistakes, and be honest in all their obligations to men and God.

Teach Them Independence

A child needs to be taught independence. From the day of birth until the child leaves home, life is a cutting of the apron strings and preparing the child to get along in the world without mother and daddy. Independence builds within a child self-respect, self control, and courage. Parents do a child a severe injustice in cultivating absolute dependence upon themselves. Some boys and girls are smothered by over-protective parents.

Teach Them Faith

Finally, we need to lead our children to a faith in God. If children are to know God and his will parents must be the primary teachers. Every young person needs the godly example of a Christian father and a Christian mother. He needs their encouragement to put God first in life. If a child believes there is a good God in charge of the world, life becomes much clearer. Sadly, there are thousands of parents who have given their children everything but God.

Mothers and fathers are charged with the solemn responsibility of training their children. A child will only be a child once. The fleeting years of childhood will soon be gone and with them will go the opportunity of training. The greatest thing parents can do for their children is to plant meaningful values in their child's life. Are you doing your job of training your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? — P.O. Box 2161 Florence, Ala. 35630.

God's Address To The Careless


JOHN G. SHAVER

"Be troubled, ye careless ones" (Isa. 32:11), originally referred to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, and is associated with fearful predictions concerning the land in general, and Jerusalem in particular (Isa. 32:12-14). The passage, however, may be appropriately applied to all who are in a state of indifference to the concerns of the soul,

religion and eternity. In this sense we shall consider the text.

Let us, then notice, those to whom it is applicable: "Ye careless ones." Carelessness signifies inattention, indifference, unconcern, and heedlessness.

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Kv. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Christian Fellowship

Among the greatest joys of the Christian life is the wonderful fellowship we share in the Lord. Christian fellowship conveys not only rich blessings but definite duties as well. Our word "fellowship" is from the Greek *koinonia* and means association, partnership, and sharing. "Christian fellowship" is the bond which binds Christians to each other, to the Lord Jesus and the Father. Strangely, no aspect of undenominational Christianity has been more difficult for us to clarify or practice than fellowship.



JOHN WADDEY

Christian fellowship begins when a man gets into fellowship with God. "Ye were called into the fellowship of his Son . . ." (I Cor. 1:9). John says "our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son . . ." (I John 1:3).

If one is in fellowship with God, he will of necessity be in fellowship with God's children. The man not in fellowship with God should not be fellowshiped by the Lord's children. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light [that is fellowship with God], we have fellowship one with another [that is fellowship among Christians]" (I John 1:7). Our fellowship is determined by God, rather than man. We recognize as brethren, those whom God has accepted.

A Biblical basis for fellowship. Since it is evident that not all who have become members of the Lord's family have chosen to remain faithful, there must be some criteria to determine who we can fellowship. By the teaching of the New Testament and the fruits of a man's life we can determine if he is in fellowship with the Lord. (1) Is he a child of God? Has he in faith been baptized into Christ? (Gal. 3:26-27). (2) Is

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Not Be Given To Wine

(Tenth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . not given to wine . . ." (I Timothy 3:2,3).

In a study of the Bible it is important that we understand that some words do not have the same meaning in the Bible which we understand them to mean in modern usage. Therefore it is necessary to ascertain the precise idea a word would convey to those people to whom it was originally written, and apply that



BOB DUNCAN

same sense to the word in our interpretation of the Bible. Several words serve to illustrate this principle. The word *conversation* in the Authorized Version means "deportment" or "general behavior" (Galatians 1:13; I Timothy 4:12; I Peter 3:1). Its usual meaning in modern speech is "a talking together." The word *hate* is generally understood to mean "to detest, loathe, abominate." But Jesus said a man must *hate* his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and his own life also (Luke 14:26). It is obvious that Jesus is saying merely that these must not be chosen instead of him. So in cases where a choice is made, that one not chosen is said to be hated (Cf. also Genesis 29:30, 31 and Romans 9:13). The word *baptize* in the Bible never means "to sprinkle or pour water" upon one.

When we think of wine we think of the alcoholic beverage by that name sold in liquor stores. In the Bible, however, the word *wine* is used to refer to the juice of the grape in any form, whether fermented, freshly pressed, or still in the grape. Sometimes it is possible to determine from the context the precise meaning of the word. For example, in the following three passages it is quite obvious that the word *wine* refers to an alcoholic beverage: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again" (Proverbs 23:31-35). "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them" (Isaiah 5:11).

On the other hand, it is just as obvious that the same word, *wine*, in Isaiah 16:10 refers to fresh grape juice: "And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in the presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease."

In still another passage we have a reference

to wine which is still in the grapes: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all" (Isaiah 65:8).

These passages serve to illustrate the fact that the word *wine* is used to refer to the juice of the grape, in whatever form it may be found. While these passages are quite clear as to the respective meanings of the word *wine*, it is not always this easy, nor is it always possible to determine which of these specific meanings is applicable to a passage. In such cases the careful Bible student will not press one definition to the exclusion of others until he has proved satisfactorily that no other definition can apply.

If drinking any amount of alcoholic beverages is wrong, then why didn't Paul say that elders should not drink wine at all? Because such would most certainly have been misunderstood, the word *wine* meaning what it does in the Bible. Paul did not intend to prohibit drinking wine; but remember that wine in the Bible is simply the juice of the grape. Under the law of Moses, the Nazarite could not drink wine (grape juice) at all. In fact, he couldn't eat grapes, even if they were dried (Numbers 6:3). This is not what Paul was enjoining upon elders in the Lord's church. That's why he did not forbid drinking wine, period.

The expression, "not given to wine," in I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 in the King James version translates the Greek word *paroinos*, which means literally "by or beside wine." A marginal note in the AV says, "ready to quarrel, and offer wrong, as one in wine." The American Standard Version renders the word, "no brawler," instead of "not given to wine." The use of this particular Greek word lends absolutely no support to the idea that drinking alcoholic beverages in small amounts is acceptable.

There are two very obvious reasons why an elder cannot be one who is a brawler. In the first place, such an one would hardly furnish a fitting example for others to follow. He likely would not be able to have the respect of the members of the congregation.

In the second place, it is contrary to the very nature of the kingdom of the Lord for its members to be those who are quarrelsome and unable to get along with others. Meetings of the elders cannot be effectively and efficiently carried on if one or more of the elders is a brawler, or is quarrelsome or contentious, as if he had been hitting the bottle.

One does not find happiness in marriage, but takes happiness into marriage.

Probably a man's most profitable words are those spent praising his wife.

So live that your memories will be a part of your happiness.

Christian Fellowship

Continued from page 2

he loyal to the true faith of Jesus? If he brings a different doctrine we are not to receive him into our homes, nor give him encouragement in his work (II John 10-11). (3) Does his conduct reflect the Christian way? John tells us that a man who claims to know God but keeps not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him (I John 2:3-4).

The congregation in Jerusalem was hesitant to accept Saul of Tarsus into its fellowship, until Barnabas was able to convince them of his sincerity (Acts 9:26-27). Paul wrote of "epistles of commendation" for individuals to congregations (II Cor. 3:1-2). He sent such a letter to the saints in Rome for a sister Phoebe (Rom. 16:2-3). A congregation is not obliged to fellowship any and every man who presents himself. They have the right and duty to ascertain that he is in fact a faithful brother before accepting him.

The extent of our fellowship. Christian fellowship is both inclusive and exclusive. Our fellowship must be broad enough to encompass all men of every race and culture as our brethren without Americanizing them (Matt. 28:18). Our fellowship cannot be denied a brother just because he holds strange or different opinions about matters of indifference. We must receive him (Rom. 14:1). Brethren in all stages of spiritual growth must be accepted. The Corinthian brethren were still spiritual babes, yet Paul regarded them as his brethren (I Cor. 3:1). While we must fellowship brethren with their immature views and faulty opinions, we cannot allow them to impose their views upon us as though they were God's laws (Gal. 2:4-5).

There are God-ordained limits to our Christian fellowship. Obviously we cannot fellowship the non-Christian. The disorderly brother cannot be fellowshiped (II Thess. 3:6). False teachers are to be marked and turned away from (Rom. 16:17). Immoral Christians must not be encouraged in their sin by my acceptance (I Cor. 5:1-5). Those who are stubborn and impenitent are to be refused fellowship after proper attempts at correction have been made (Matt. 18:15-18).

Things that frequently hinder Christian fellowship. Observation of brotherhood problems suggests that fellowship is often spoiled by things not necessarily doctrinal or moral. We have frequently had fellowship disturbed by preachers or over preachers. I do not have in mind great issues of the faith; rather whether to retain or dismiss a given preacher; power moves by preachers or personality clashes between preachers and elders. Many of our fellowship problems have related to gospel papers and peculiar points of view advocated therein. Fellowship for some was restricted to those who were loyal to the views of the given editor. Another common problem area of fellowship has had to do with social, cultural differences. We have seen tensions between the wealthy uptown congregation and their poorer rural brethren. Racial differences have played their role in our fellowship problems. Political sympathies played a larger role in the division at the turn of the century than most of us realize. Changing social customs and traditions often have a way of alienating brethren. Many tend to equate the long held practice with the exclusive Scriptural way. Any new thing that varies from that, to them is an unscriptural, sinful innovation which they cannot fellowship. Of course some items are permanent and cannot be modified, such as baptism by immersion. On the other hand the facility for baptism can and has varied considerably. I recently read of an African brother who withdrew fellowship from all brethren in Kenya because they occasionally used a place other than running water for baptizing.

Some marks of Christian fellowship. In Romans

15:1-6, the apostle sets forth some distinguishing marks of Christian fellowship. (1) The strong in faith should bear with the infirmities of the weak (vs. 1). (2) Rather than seeking to please self we should seek to please our brother in ways that will strengthen him (vs. 1b-2). (3) Mutual study of the Scriptures will strengthen fellowship (vs. 4). (4) We must strive to be of the same mind one with another (vs. 5). (5) We must pattern our fellowship after the example of Christ who accepted us when we were far from perfect (vs. 7). (6) We will glorify God with one voice rather than quarrel over our differences (vs. 6).

When our fellowship is threatened by the eccentricities of a weak brother, we must strive to avoid irritation and impatient annoyance. We must never ridicule those who hold peculiar views. It insults a man to laugh at what he holds sacred. We must not be contemptuous toward a brother because his

views are old-fashioned or immature. Paul says we must receive him that is weak in the faith, "yet not for decisions of scruples" (Rom. 14:1). While he may be bound by his opinions, he has no right to bind his opinions on others.

Since we are children of a common father and thus brothers in a common family, and since we are heirs of a common hope in heaven, it behooves us to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Nothing should be made a test of our fellowship which is not likewise a condition of fellowship with God. Our fellowship must be as broad and yet as exclusive as God's. May he grant us divine wisdom to apply his heavenly principles to the difficult question of whom shall we fellowship. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Doing The Lord's Work Deceitfully

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully" (Jer. 48:10). Such may not be done with intention to deceive, but with attempts to make something less than completeness seem complete. Saul went out with the command utterly to slay the Amalekites. He pleaded for the imperfect execution of the command (I Sam. 15:20-21).

The Lord's work is done deceitfully when it is not done thoroughly. When we shirk our work; do no more than we can help; get away from it as fast as we can. Evidently some count it a drudgery rather than a delight. Do we all know that there is a danger in thus working? How varied and questionable often the motive which leads men to engage in the work of the Lord! — custom, ostentation, fear of reproach, sting of conscience, hope of gain, fashion, etc. These and such as these may crowd out the only right and sincere motive — the love of Christ. All others make us more or less hypocrites, and can find no acceptance of the Lord in the great day. But is there no peril from such motives? We know there is, when the Lord's work is not done earnestly, when our heart is not in our work, when it is laid hold of not, as it should be, "with both hands earnestly," but, as it were, with one of the fingers. Some thus work; others as with one hand; others, indeed, with both hands, but slowly, loosely, not earnestly. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Only such as obey that word are sincere workers.

The Lord's work may be done hypocritically. In the days of sore persecution there was but little peril of this; but when and where religion goes, as it is said, in silver slippers, there is real peril of men taking up with the Lord's work in order to further, not the work of the Lord, but their own poor worldly well-being. What they do is all a pretence, a kind of deception. May God keep us all therefrom!

The Lord looks upon his work with severity when it is done deceitfully. "Cursed be he . . ." (Jer. 48:10). Why this severity? It is an insult to God. It is as good as saying to him that his work does not deserve true labor; that it is of so little importance that



HOYT BAILEY

anything will do for it — the parings of your time, your energy, your thought, your means, your strength. What could be a greater affront to God? The work is so great and urgent that it is traitorous thus to engage in it. What do we say of the watchman sleeping at his post (Ezek. 33)? Of all those who betray their trust or neglect it?

Such deceitfulness is contagious. How many a young servant of Christ is checked and chilled by the evil influence of professed servants of Christ like himself, but older, less fervent, and who are guilty of that which is denounced! Such demoralizes many in the army of the Lord. It renders the work itself far more difficult. For the world sees clearly and judges keenly those who say they do the work of the Lord. They know what that work is, what it professes to aim at, what interests are involved in it. But they who do that work deceitfully cause men to laugh at all such work, to disbelieve all its claims, and to decline more stoutly than ever to surrender their hearts to it.

Such deceivers harden their own hearts, and steep themselves in a fatal slumber, from which there is no waking. Never has Satan a firmer hold on a man than when he can get him to do the work of the Lord deceitfully. The man is fully persuaded that he is all right, and dies with a lie in his right hand, and is not undeceived till, to his awful amazement, he hears the Lord say to him and to all such, "I never knew you; depart from me."

That we may avoid such a plight, let us follow safeguards against such sin. One such safeguard is the solemn recollection and pondering of God's severe anger against it. Another is continually seeking and cherishing in our hearts our Creator, "and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:19-21). — 204 S Main, Sylacauga, Ala. 35150.

A wise man never enjoys himself so much, or a fool so little, as when he is alone

The test of any man's character is how he takes praise.

Money won't buy happiness, but it will keep you from being more than moderately sullen and depressed.

God's Address To The Careless

Continued from page 1

Carelessness with respect to religion is the greatest possible madness. But who are the careless? (1) Those who live as without God in the world. They never recognize him, never fear him, never consult with him, and never worship him. Many never attend the services of the church, many very seldom, others more often. Yet how few, comparatively, attend with constancy and regularity. Yet God ought ever to be worshipped and magnified in the assemblies of his saints. (2) Those who are satisfied with the mere externals of religion. He has not believed in Jesus as God's Son, nor repented of his sin, nor confessed the sweet name of Jesus, nor been buried with him in baptism giving his heart to the service of God. (3) It will apply to all who do not give supreme attention to their soul's salvation, who allow anything to have the ascendancy or the pre-eminence over this matter. (4) Those who seek the things of the world, of sensual pleasure, and allow the soul and eternity, and heaven to be matters of secondary importance.

Notice the reasons why such should be troubled. (1) God is exceedingly displeased with such. His

face is against them, and he is angry with them. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Judas, and Herod tasted of the wrath of God. (2) Such are heirs to the threatenings of God's holy word. If the handwriting on the palace wall made Belshazzar tremble, how much more terrific the denunciation against impenitent sinners! How fearful are the threatenings! What awful figures are employed! The whirlwind's blast! The tempest's fury! The desolating storm! The awful abyss! The bottomless pit! The lake of fire! (3) Such are in imminent peril every instant. Only a step between them and death, and death is the entrance of perdition. At home, abroad, everywhere they are under the wrath of God, and under the sentence of everlasting woe without repentance and obedience to God's will. (4) The endless ruin is inevitably certain. No power or influence can evade the infliction of the righteous displeasure of God (Heb. 2:3; Rom. 3:23).

Now, let us show the careless how they may be delivered from the troubles of time and eternity. (1) Proper and serious consideration is necessary. This is the first step to seriousness, to salvation.

Consider what you are careless about — the soul, Jesus, heaven, eternity. Consider your real state of being, your wretchedness, your inevitable ruin. You must see yourself as God sees you, a sinner. (2) Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the appointed refuge, the only shelter. In him God is well pleased, and with all who come to him in Christ. In him you shall have peace, pardon, holiness and eternal life. (3) Earnestly repent, and turn away from sin. (4) Confess the sweetest name ever known, Jesus. (5) Be buried in the watery grave of baptism, for the remission of sins.

Learn the evil, and extreme folly of carelessness. Whether we are careless or not, death will come, judgment will come, eternity will come, and, without repentance and submission to God's will, eternal damnation will come. Present solicitude and carefulness for the soul's welfare will be followed by all the advantages of eternal salvation. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, Fla. 33566.

Desensitization: A Tool Of The Devil

J. R. SULLINS

A very effective technique used by modern social planners for the destroying of traditional (Biblical) beliefs and values, replacing them with humanistic concepts and values is desensitization. Desensitization is simply the "exposing of people to language and conduct until they gradually accept and feel comfortable with that which they formally rejected." Methods used to bring about this desensitizing of morally sound individuals are common to almost every household and individual in America.

One such method used is through the means of *literature*. Many individuals will read and familiarize themselves with every sin known to man through books, magazines, etc., gradually breaking down moral barriers one by one. (This is a commonplace problem in our school libraries today.)

Another area where desensitizing is rampant is in the form of modern *music*, where in many instances ungodly language and conduct are glorified.

Education is another area where in our school systems the "value clarification system" (a system designed to change the values of students) breaks down the student's respect for God, the church, the Bible, etc. A product of this is the growing interest in many school systems for an "open-minded view" (opposed to Biblical teaching) on sex education.

Then by far the most devastating force for the desensitization of our society is that of *television* where every vile conduct is glamorized and familiarized.

Well did the New Testament writers know of this problem of desensitization even in their time. It was Paul who said we were to think on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good repute, and if we practice these things the God of peace will be with us (Philippians 4:8,9). It was Peter who affirmed that if we would make every effort to add to our lives faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, and brotherly kindness, that we would be fruit-bearing, reward-receiving Christians. Lacking these things would prove that we were blind spiritually and forgetful of the great sacrifice Jesus made for us (II Peter 1:5-10).

Beware of such excuses as: "We need to ex-

pose ourselves and our children to the real world so that they can relate to the problems they will encounter in life; it's a picture story, or an expression of life the way it really is." Remember, familiarization brings desensitization which leads to temptation, bringing about lust, which culminates in SIN. Where is the Biblical precedent or principle that even suggests that we are to familiarize our-

selves with the "sins" of the world? THERE IS NONE!

Notice Paul's admonition to the Christians in Thessalonica: "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:21,22). — 801 W. Main St. Dorado, Ar. 71730.

"What Can I Do?"



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

Have you ever felt over-whelmed with a feeling of inadequacy when you observe some of the situations in life? There are scenes on television that depict wars being fought on foreign soils in which not only the soldiers but innocent civilians are killed. News reports fill our minds with facts of thousands of people who are actually starving to death because of an acute shortage of food. You learn of embittered conflicts being waged between citizens of the same country and even of the same city wherein people of all ages are murdered or maimed for life. Practically every day stories are brought to our attention of injustices abounding in our own land.

Then there are the aged who are lonely. Because of inflation, they are deprived of proper food and other necessities of life. The nursing homes are filled with the old and infirmed. All know some who are very sick, many with terminal diseases. Others are plagued with emotional problems. There are those whose hearts are broken due to the untimely death of a loved one. It seems that on every hand, we find the down-trodden, the bereaved, the oppressed, the sad and the broken-hearted.

Thus, we ask ourselves the question, "What can I do?" The problems of this world are so complex and vast, and I am but one person with limited ability and resources, we declare. Many rush to assist in good works which are needful in a society that deals with benevolent and humanitarian deeds. But, is this enough? Is there something else I can do as an individual for my fellowman that will enrich his/her life beyond all physical and material aid? The answer is a simple "yes."

As a Christian, I can teach them of God and his love, of Jesus and his vicarious death for all mankind. With my Bible in my hand and love in my heart, I can teach the lost of salvation in Christ by relating the facts to be believed, the commands to be obeyed, and the assurances and promises given to all who would obey the Christ. There is no greater gift in this world that I could give than to inform others of the redemption in Jesus Christ.

We cannot afford to deprive dying humanity of this knowledge. Every sinner won for Christ is one less for the forces of evil. May I urge you to begin right now, where you are, while you can, to teach others of Jesus Christ. However, before we can teach and lead others, we must ourselves be followers of Christ. Study carefully the great commission given by Jesus and the preaching of the apostles and you will clearly understand that a sinner must believe in Christ as being the Son of God, repent of his sins and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38). — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp., Ala. 36467.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 1982

NUMBER 23

Great Epochs In History

Nothing is more fascinating and intriguing than the study of history. It is impossible to understand the present without acquaintance with the past. Some events in history are more momentous and far-reaching in their impact than others. This study will consider ten great events in history that are world-wide and age lasting in consequences. The foundation upon which we begin is from Psalms 99:1: "Jehovah reigneth." Or as Daniel has it, "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Daniel 4:25). This might be styled the "theocentric" view of history.



JOHN WADDEY

I. *The Creation Event.* Moses tells us, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). In six short days he created a universe of millions of heavenly bodies; so vast that we even yet have not fathomed its limits. No man was there to observe the phenomenon, it has never been repeated. To know anything about it beyond speculation, we need God's record of what happened. "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).

We are amazed at God's *creative power*. "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, . . . For he spoke, and it was done . . ." (Psalms 33:6,9). We rejoice in his great goodness: "every thing that he had made . . . was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Our present environment labors under the curse of sin (Romans 8:20-22), even so, it is a wonderful demonstration of God's providential goodness. How much more glorious was it before the fall. Moses' record of creation explains the mystery of the origin of the universe and mankind. All men in every age have considered the heavens, the sun, moon and stars, and pondered, "What is man?"

(Psalms 8:3-4). Now we know we are the offspring of God (Acts 17:29). We are God's handiwork, living on the earth he designed for us.

II. *The Fall.* When placed in Eden, man received one simple prohibition to make it possible for him to serve God of his own free will. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). The third chapter of Genesis records that fateful story of Satan's subtle seduction of the first parents. He appealed to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life; they ate the fruit and the sentence fell upon them.

In this tragic event we see the origin of all the sin, suffering and death that has plagued the race to this moment (Romans 5:12). All the disorders and disasters of the physical world are explained because even the earth itself was cursed (Genesis 3:17). Lost that day was immortality, and a paradisiacal home. Lost was a life free from suffering, aging and death. Born were all our sorrows. Like the waters of a huge lake when the dam breaks, sin swept over the whole realm of man, leaving destruction on every hand. Now "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

III. *The Flood in Noah's Day.* "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights . . ." (Genesis 6:11-12). We see the great magnitude of the flood. "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains were covered" (7:19). Truly it was a universal flood, for if every high mountain was covered, every low spot between would have been immersed. The destruction of life was extensive. "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing . . . and every man . . . and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark" (Genesis 7:21-23). Never has such devastation been known before or since. This alone adequately explains the world-wide fossil record. Millions of creatures that perished in the flood were soon buried in the mud and gravel laid down by the on-rushing waters. This page in history reminds us of the depths to which sin can bring a people. "The earth was corrupt before God." "The wickedness

of man was great." "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 5:5,11). The judgment demonstrates the wages of sin (Romans 6:23).

IV. *The Law Given at Mt. Sinai.* "And Jehovah . . . called Moses to the top of the mount . . . And God spoke all these words . . ." (Exodus 19:20; 20:1). This was the beginning of our written revelation from God. It formed the constitution of the Hebrew nation. Until the coming of Jesus' gospel there was no system equal to Moses' law, in holiness, elevation and blessedness (Deuteronomy 4:8). The Law revealed the awfulness of sin (Romans 7:13b). It checked and restrained sin in their lives (Galatians 3:19). It demonstrated man's inability to save himself by law keeping and thus drove him to seek a Savior (Galatians 3:16). It was a tutor to bring the Hebrews to the Messiah (Galatians 3:24). We need to remember that not one soul was ever saved by the Law of Moses (Galatians 2:16).

V. *The Advent of Jesus.* The most significant event of all was surely the invasion of planet earth by the God-man from outer space. "When the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of woman . . ." (Galatians 4:4). The mode of his coming was miraculous, in keeping with his nature. A virgin conceived and brought forth a Son (Matthew 1:23). Mighty signs and wonders attended his birth. A remarkable star led the eastern wise men to him (Matthew 2:1-2,9). Angelic hosts appeared to shepherds announcing the nativity (Luke 2:8-14). His birth in poverty, obscurity and seclusion was not at all what the Hebrews expected, yet it was in fulfillment of ancient prophecy. Isaiah had predicted a son born of a virgin who would be God with us (7:14; 9:6-7). Micah announced the village of his birth and the nature of his reign (5:2-3). In sending his Son for our salvation we see divine love beyond our finite comprehension (John 3:16).

VI. *The Crucifixion.* "And they bring him unto the place Golgotha . . . and they crucified him" (Mark 15:22-25). Surely this was the ultimate sin of mankind: to kill their creator; to destroy their Savior; to despise their benefactor. Yet paradoxically, the cross was the supreme victory of God over

Continued on page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church; on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The New Name

Isaiah prophesied, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isaiah 62:2). Some 700 years before Christ, Isaiah pointed to a time when the Gentiles would obey! It would be a day when God would call his people by a new name.

THERE ARE MANY WHO SAY THERE IS NOTHING IN A NAME.

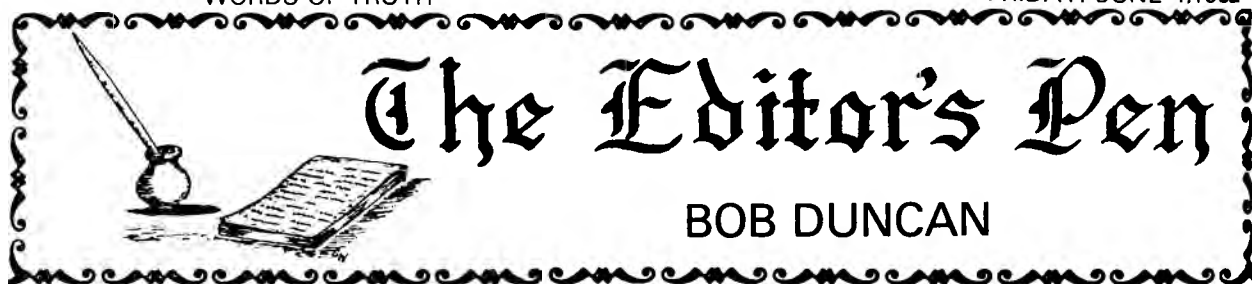
They say, "A rose by another name would smell just as sweet." The truth is the rose would be another rose and to call it by another name would reveal ignorance of flowers. How would Mr. Brown react if Mrs. Brown started wearing the name of Mrs. Smith? We know Mr. Brown would disapprove very strongly. A check written by one without a bank account would not be as good as one written by one who had money in the bank to cover the amount written. God gave a name to the first pair he created. He called their name Adam (Gen. 5:2). The angel said to Hagar, "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; BECAUSE THE LORD HATH HEARD THY AFFLICTION" (Gen. 16:11). An angel spoke to Joseph concerning Mary and the unborn child. He said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS" (Matt. 1:21). God gave names even before their birth.

God changed the names of people. God changed the name of Jacob to Israel, "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). Other examples are Abram to Abraham (Gen. 17:5), and Sarai to Sarah (Gen. 17:15).

TODAY WE NEED TO CALL MEN BACK TO THE USE OF BIBLE NAMES. Isaiah wrote, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according



W. EDWIN KEARLEY



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Not Be A Striker, A Brawler, Or Soon Angry

(Eleventh in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . no striker . . . not a brawler . . ." (I Timothy 3:2,3). "For a bishop must be . . . not soon angry . . . no striker . . ." (Titus 1:7). We are discussing these qualifications together because they are so closely related. Actually they are closely related also to the qualification immediately preceding this one in our discussion, if one considers the meaning of the original language. But since the translators of the King James Version rendered the Greek word *paroinon* "given to wine," we felt it wise to discuss that one separately.

One who is a striker, or a brawler, or who is soon angry is not to be appointed to the eldership. A *striker*, according to Thayer, is a "bruiser," or one who is "ready with a blow." He further adds that he is "a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person."

The words, *not a brawler*, translate a Greek word which is defined by Thayer as meaning "abstaining from fighting." He says also that it is used metaphorically to mean, "not contentious."

The words, *soon angry*, are from a Greek word which means exactly that. "Prone to anger, irascible," are Thayers words of definition.

One who is prone to outbursts of temper, easily angered, contentious, quarrelsome, ready to fight, cannot be an elder.

Perhaps as Paul penned the words, "no striker," he was remembering an incident in his own past during which the high priest gave the order for Paul to be smitten on the mouth (Acts 23:2). No doubt, all who read of that incident today have a decreased appreciation for that high priest, Ananias, and whatever respect we may have had for him earlier is now gone. One who thinks that, as a leader of God's people, he can command respect by brute force is not worthy of, and will not receive, the respect of respectable people. This is one reason, no doubt, that an elder cannot be a striker.

Another reason is that one simply cannot follow the example of our Lord, and be the kind of person who is always ready to engage in a fight. Jesus, "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). Men who think the way to settle differences is to roll up their sleeves and step outside would be poor leaders in any institution, and especially in the church.

One who is quarrelsome and is known to be a "striker" would be a detriment to the cause of Christ. These are the people we try to avoid; we simply do not want to be around them. Their very presence in the congregation would cause some to be reluctant even to attend the services. Their being elders in the church would cause some to question — and rightly so — whether the gospel of Christ had



BOB DUNCAN

really had any influence on their lives.

One who is easily provoked to anger does not possess the spiritual maturity required to be an elder. Anger, within itself, is not sinful. Ephesians 4:26 clearly shows that one might be angry, and yet not be guilty of sin: "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Many Old Testament passages refer to the anger of the Lord. But it is a sin to be "soon angry," and one who tends to be such simply cannot be an elder.

The admonition in James 1:19 should be considered in this connection: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Proverbs 14:17 says, "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly . . ." Verse 29 adds: "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding . . ." Proverbs 15:18 points out that one who is slow to anger "appeaseth strife." Proverbs 19:11 states: "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." The New Berkeley Version translates this verse as follows: "It is prudent for a man to restrain his anger; it is his glory to overlook an offense." Restraining anger is, indeed, the mark of a prudent man. One who has not the ability so to do cannot be an elder in the Lord's church.

How quickly one becomes angry, and the kind of thing it takes to get him angry are indexes to his character. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the elder brother became angry because there was a celebration upon the return of the prodigal. He obviously considered himself to be of superior character, but he demonstrated by his anger on this occasion that he was not the kind of man we would want as an overseer in the church. He considered it a personal affront that this celebration should take place. (Read Luke 15:25-32.)

We have known of situations in which elders and preachers actually came to blows in their business meetings. How foreign to the very nature of the kingdom of the Lord is such action! And how lacking in the characteristics it takes to be an elder in a scriptural sense are those who would participate in such a brawl. We have known also of situations in which elders would become angry, and sullen, and put. Such is a manifestation of immaturity and a demonstration of one's total lack of ability to serve as an overseer in the flock of God. Differences over matters of judgment in a business meeting simply must not be settled by fisticuffs or by seeing who can shout the loudest or the longest. Neither must they be settled by determining which elder's wrath would be the easiest to endure. They must be settled according to the balance of the combined wisdom of mature and godly men whose job it is to "tend the flock of God" (I Peter 5:2, ASV).

It has been the privilege of this writer time and again to see godly elders, though differing sharply in matters of judgment, conduct themselves as mature Christian gentlemen in arriving at a solution to their differences. And though some did not get their way, all left the meetings with warm feelings toward each other. There is no doubt this is the way God intends for elders to act.

Great Epochs In History

Continued from page 1

Satan. While the grin was yet on Satan's evil face, God snatched victory from him and paid the price for our sins with the blood of his Son (Romans 5:6-11). With the blood shed, he purchased his church (Acts 20:28) and ratified the new covenant (Hebrews 9:16-18). Truly this was the pivotal point in all human history.

VII. *The Resurrection of Jesus.* "On the first day of the week . . . they came unto the tomb . . . and they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." Angels appeared and said, "He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:1-6). "He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once . . . then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles and last of all . . ." unto Paul (I Corinthians 15:5-8). They saw him, touched him and heard him repeatedly over a space of forty days. They proclaimed his resurrection in the presence of those who slew him. A desperate enemy could not produce the corpse. Christianity is a living monument to a risen Lord. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection (Romans 1:4). His resurrection is God's pledge to us

that we will also be raised (I Corinthians 15:20). It is God's assurance that all men will eventually stand before him in judgment (Acts 17:30-31).

VIII. *The Ascension.* Having shown himself alive after his passion by many proofs over the space of 40 days, "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:3,9). He took his seat at God's right hand and began his reign as king on David's throne (Acts 2:32-36). "He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet" (I Corinthians 15:25). Since he presently reigns as king over his kingdom, there will be no thousand year reign at his second advent. Then he will deliver up his kingdom to the father (I Corinthians 15:24).

IX. *The Coming of the Holy Spirit.* Jesus promised the apostles that he would send the Spirit of Truth unto them when he departed (John 15:26; 16:7). He would empower them for their great mission (Acts 1:8). On the Pentecost following the resurrection he came upon them and revealed to the Jewish nation the culmination of God's plan for them (Acts 2:33-36). Later he came upon the family of the Roman soldier, Cornelius, to establish the rights of us Gentiles to a

place in the kingdom of heaven (Acts 11:15-18). He guided the chosen apostles and prophets in writing once and for all, the new covenant which would forever serve as the constitution of the new kingdom (John 14:26).

X. *The Second Coming.* All of the other events we have noted are history past. This is yet to be. He will be revealed from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, taking vengeance on his enemies and to be glorified in his saints (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). "All that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and come forth" (John 5:28-29). "The elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). All men shall be called to stand before him in judgment to receive their eternal reward (Matthew 25:31-34, 41).

Looking back we marvel at God's working. Looking at the present we enjoy the benefits that are ours. Looking to the future, we thrill at the prospects of being at home with the Lord. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

The New Name

Continued from page 2

to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Spiritual light comes from the word of God. All must speak the same thing. Paul makes this appeal: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). The church at Corinth was divided over personalities. Paul said to them, "Now this I say, that

every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? . . ." (I Cor. 1:12:13). Though none of these taught contrary doctrines, there were groups who said I want to hear this preacher and no other. Paul rebuked this as carnal (I Cor. 3:3-9).

Peter urges, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Pet. 4:11). This thought has been stated as follows: "Let us speak

where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Let us call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. In matters of faith there must be unity. In opinion liberty. In all things charity.

THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE NAME OF CHRIST
(To be continued) — Rt. 4, Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

Heaven, A Place For Old Friends

The other day during a private devotional, I came across this piece of writing which I thought really hit home for many of us.

In the book *Treasury of Quotations on Religious Subjects* by F. B. Proctor, we find these words from an unknown author: "As a boy, I thought of heaven as a city with domes, spires, and beautiful streets, inhabited by angels. By-and-by my little brother died, and I thought of



GEORGE REED

heaven much as before, but with one inhabitant that I knew. Then another died, and then some of my acquaintances, so in time I began to think of heaven as containing several people that I knew. But it was not until one of my own little children died that I began to think I had treasure in heaven myself. Afterward another went, and yet another. By that time I had so many acquaintances and children in heaven that I no more thought of it as a city merely with streets of gold but as a place full of inhabitants. Now there are so many loved ones there I sometimes think I know more people in heaven than I do on earth" (*Our Daily Bread*, May 10, 1982).

Is it any wonder that Jesus said, "And I say

unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they [the friends you have converted by the use of your money] may receive you into the eternal tabernacles" (Lk. 16:9)? Won't it be great to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 8:11)? As the song writer penned, "When all my labors and trials are o'er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will thru the ages be glory for me." Yes, there's many of my loved ones in heaven, and I, for one, want to go and see them.

The brethren at Thessalonica wanted to know if they would see there loved ones who went on before. This is a question that most of my brethren are asking today. The apostle Paul answered in a very positive way. Listen: "For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:16-18). I ask you, what comfort would there be in these words if we weren't going to recognize each other in heaven? He also emphasizes in verse 17 that both the living and those that have gone before will be together. Death does not change one's identity. Just read the story of the transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8).

Yes, there are many reasons why I want to go to heaven, but one of them is to see some old friends. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Wendell Winkler Into Full-Time Meeting Work

At the end of this present school year on June 11, 1982, Wendell Winkler, who has been the director of the Brown Trail Preacher Training School for the last three years, will enter full-time meeting work. He has been an instructor since 1966.

Winkler has held numerous meetings in many states, being the speaker in several city-wide efforts. He has also done local work in Texas, Louisiana, and Missouri, having served in the pulpits of the

Glengarden and Brown Trail congregations in Fort Worth, Texas for a total of 17 years. He is the author of 9 books and has edited 5 other volumes. He has served as director of the Fort Worth Lectures for 5 years. He has been a staff writer for the GOSPEL ADVOCATE. He and his wife, Betty, have three sons, two of whom are gospel preachers.

He can be contacted at 340 Mayfair Drive, Hurst, (Fort Worth) Texas 76053, Phone 817-282-1075.

Why Conservative Churches Are Growing

This is the title of a book by Dean M. Kelley that was published several years ago (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). At the time of publication he created quite a stir by his conclusion that churches that hold a conservative view of God, the Bible and the church are the fastest growing. Some might have thought that time would prove his conclusion was incorrect. This however is not the case. The esteemed pollster, George Gallup recently has taken a survey



ANCIL JENKINS

and has largely confirmed Kelley's conclusions. According to Gallup, conservative churches are *still* growing. He found that not only are conservative churches growing, but they are still the fastest growing churches in America. In addition, over 65 million people believe there is no error in the Bible.

Why are they growing? Kelley gave six reasons. Along with these six reasons, I have added scriptures to give evidence that these reasons are Biblical.

First is commitment. There is a willingness to sacrifice social status, possessions, even life itself for the good of the church (Acts 2:45; 5:38; 4:34; 21:13).

Second is discipline — a willingness to obey the commands of the authorized leadership without question, and a readiness to accept punishment for infraction of the rules rather than leave the fellowship of the group (Acts 8:21-24; I Corinthians 5:5; II Corinthians 2:6-8).

Third is missionary zeal — an eagerness to

tell the good news of one's salvation to as many people as possible (Acts 8:4; Romans 2:16).

Fourth is absolutism in doctrine. The truth of God is available to anyone who will seek and find it (Acts 17:11).

Fifth is conformity of belief and action. There is intolerance of those who deviate from the truth, or practice immorality (Romans 16:17; II Corinthians 6:14-17).

Sixth is "fanaticism." This is a strength of belief so strong that one is unwilling to allow deviation from truth. This is held, even to death (Revelation 2:10).

As is very evident, these are biblical and practical principles. The question we are left with is, how much are we following them? If we are not growing, is it because we have neglected these principles we held in the past? — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

The Paternal Character of God

The words, "Is he not thy father?" are a part of that celebrated and truly interesting song of Moses; a song wherein the wonderful acts of God's goodness to the children of Israel are celebrated. It also contains a sad record of the defections of Israel towards God. The text is a pointed interrogation respecting the return they had made to God for his goodness (Deut. 32:6).

Let us contemplate God as the Father of his people. In one sense God is the Father of all mankind, for we are all his off-



JOHN G. SHAVER

spring, and in him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28). But God is especially the Father of the obedient believers. Unconverted sinners are alienated from God. His image they do not bear; in his family they do not dwell; his authority they do not acknowledge. As the Father of his people, God is the author of their spiritual existence (I Pet. 1:3). Spiritual life is imparted by God. His Spirit quickens and regenerates obedient souls, and makes them new creatures in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 5:17). He makes paternal provision for his children. His children do not want for any good thing. This provision not only includes physical food and raiment, but spiritual food and raiment. The very best, the garment of salvation. He affords parental protection to his children. He watches over them every moment, holding them in his hands, hiding them in his pavilion, and observing them as the apple of his eye. He imparts paternal instruction through his infallible word, instructing them in his will, leading them by

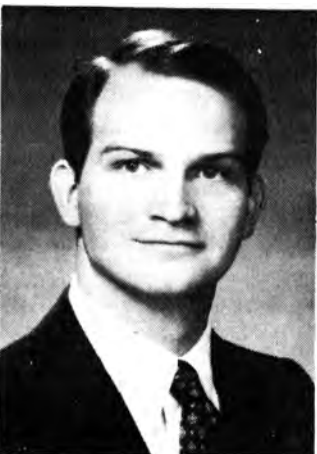
his truth, and making them wise unto salvation. He takes paternal delight in his children. His ears are ever open to their prayers; he delivers them from their troubles, and spares them as only a father spares his son. He administers paternal correction to his children. Children need it, and will suffer without it. Hence, the Lord chastizes, not because he takes pleasure in it, but for their advantage (Jer. 33:11; Heb. 12:6).

Notice the claims he has upon his children. He ought to receive from us the highest reverence. We should cultivate his fear, and be in it all day long, always setting it before us. We should hallow his name, revere him and honor him. He ought to have our supreme affections. He should possess our unwavering confidence, our everlasting trust, and cheerful, loving obedience. He should receive from us our most exalted praises. Be ye followers of God as dear children, blessing him at all times, praising him forevermore. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL. 33566.

Two Gates, Two Ways, Two Destinies

The church and the world exist in two completely different spheres. They serve opposing masters and seek divergent goals. The child of God lives for and longs for the hereafter; Satan's son revels lasciviously in the here and now, blindly ignoring the possibility of life beyond the tomb. The Christian strives to live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" as he looks for "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12,13). Conversely, the man in the world concerns himself with vain "gusto grabbing."

The rich farmer of Luke 12 ignored the spirit, trusted in the flesh, and was thus labeled by God as a



DALTON KEY

fool. His myopic vision reached no further than his over-burdened barns. His maddened quest for material gain blinded him to all things spiritual. Christ prefaced the rich farmer's story with this oft-neglected principle: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). The church strives to live by this divine principle; the world rejects it as so much nonsense.

As the family of God, we live, move, and have our being only to please the Father. His will is sought above our own. Out of deep love for him, we long to keep his commandments (I John 5:3). Our most earnest desire is to live within his glorious presence for an endless eternity in heaven. Yea, our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20, ASV). The world, however, scoffs at such ideas, ridiculing them as foolishness.

The Bible pictures two gates, two ways, and two destinies (Matthew 7:13,14). Likewise, the Sacred Text reveals two masters (Matthew 6:24). One's choice of masters determines his direction, hence, his destiny. We look to God as our Father (Matthew 6:9). Yet, of those in the world, Christ

charged, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44).

No wonder we find ourselves traveling a different route from the world. We serve opposing masters — or at least we should. Give it some thought. — Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

Encouragement is like premium gasoline. It helps to take the knock out of living.

Money never did buy happiness, and credit cards aren't doing much better.

An overdose of praise is like ten lumps of sugar in coffee; only a few people can swallow it.

Try praising your wife occasionally. It may surprise her at first, but she'll appreciate it. On the other hand, she may burst out crying — thinking you're drunk again.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

forth

26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 1982

NUMBER 24

Let's Look At Paul, The Preacher

W. A. HOLLEY

"Whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" (II Timothy 1:11).

Aside from Jesus Christ, Paul is easily the most unusual preacher the world has ever known. As far as sacred history goes, no other preacher, even including Peter or any of the other apostles, ever exercised a greater influence for Christ and apostolic Christianity than Paul. He claims not to have been behind the chiefest apostles, and to have "labored more abundantly than they all" (II Corinthians 11:5,23; I Corinthians 15:10). Thus his indefatigable labors carried him from Damascus to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to the cities of Asia Minor, and from Caesarea to Rome, bringing with him the glorious gospel of Christ which was and is able to transform the sinful lives of men (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16-17).

We shall consider the early life of Paul. He was born in the ancient city of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia (Acts 9:11; 21:39). He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and a free born citizen of the Roman Empire (Acts 22:24-28). Because Tarsus was known for its philosophers and schools, its pagan immoralities, and its relationship to the mighty Roman Empire, Paul used a litotes, a weaker for a stronger expression, to indicate the importance of his native city.

Paul traced his lineage back through more than 1600 years of proud Jewish history. In Philippians 3:4-6, Paul writes of himself: "If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcized the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Even with these marks of distinction, as set forth in the foregoing quotation, Paul fully realized that such distinguished achievements were powerless to assure his salvation. He adds, "Howbeit, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I might gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Ibid. 7-9).

Apparently, while but a boy, perhaps at the age of

twelve, he was brought to Jerusalem, where he was educated. His teacher was Gamaliel, a teacher of great renown (Acts 22:3; 5:34). Paul's mind soon became saturated with the law of Moses, as is evidenced by the many quotations from Moses and the prophets which fill his epistles. It is not long before he is seen as a zealous persecutor of the fledgling church of Christ. The first time we meet Paul is at the tragic stoning of Stephen, and there the Scripture says: "And Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts 7:58-59; 8:1). Later, after his conversion to Jesus Christ, Paul became the persecuted rather than the persecutor (II Corinthians 6:3-10; 11:23-33).

What about Paul's Character? From his youth, he must have been deeply religious. He was never an immoral reprobate, as is sometimes asserted. Speaking of his life prior to his conversion to Christ, he said: "I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1; Cf. 26:9-11; I Timothy 1:13). Quite frequently we hear some denominational preacher saying: "I was just like Paul before I was saved. I was a drunkard, a thief, a liar, an adulterer, but, thank God, I have been saved at an old fashioned mourners' bench." The foregoing quotation misrepresents both Paul and the Holy Scriptures!! There was never a time in Paul's life when he was an immoral derelict! On the contrary, his zeal, moral excellence, and his character were so blameless and irreproachable, the high priest entrusted him with high positions of influence, giving him authority to punish those who had embraced the new faith. Hence, Paul was honest, sincere, and conscientious in his frenzied opposition to Christ and his way; but he was honestly, sincerely, and conscientiously wrong!! But when he learned that he was in error, he turned away from his former ways, and embraced, wholeheartedly, the way of the Lord Jesus. For many years thereafter, he distinguished himself as a brave, courageous, and steadfast soldier of Christ, despite the most desperate opposition which assailed him. Paul found a way to use temporary set-backs as stepping-stones to success (Philippians 1:12-19; 4:9-13; I Timothy 1:12-15).

What about Paul's conversion? It is asserted that he was converted on the Damascus road. But, if this contention were true, Paul, himself, did not know about it, for he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" thus indicating that he did not know that he


had been saved (Acts 9:6; 22:10). Moreover, Jesus did not know that Paul had been saved on the Damascus road, for, when Paul asked: "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus answered: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but arise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:5-6). Furthermore, Ananias did not know that Paul had been saved on the Damascus road, for, when he came to him, having been sent there by the Lord, he (Ananias) addressed Paul on this wise: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). We ask: Is it possible for one to be saved before one's sins are washed away??

With regard to Paul's conversion, we may be certain of the following points: (1) He was not saved by observing the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9); he was not converted by the delusive promises of "philosophy and vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8); he was not saved at an altar of prayer (Acts 22:16, Cf. Acts 9:8-9); nor was he saved by doing nothing (Matthew 7:21). (2) But Paul was saved by faith which includes repentance, confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Romans 5:1-2; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10; 6:1-4; I Peter 3:21). (3) Moreover, Paul taught that the child of God must fight the good fight of faith, finish the course, and keep the faith, if he expects to inherit life eternal (Mark 10:30; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 4:6-8; I Corinthians 9:27; I John 2:25).

What about Paul's activities as a Christian worker? Almost immediately following his conversion, Paul began to preach Jesus, "that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). Paul learned a bitter lesson before he could be accepted as a trusted and effective Christian leader. He discovered that people do not forget easily; a man's mistakes can haunt him for a long time, even after he has forsaken them (Acts 9:23; Galatians 1:18).

We do not know how many years Paul lived, but from his writings, we know that he spent them busily engaged in the work of the Lord. He wrote fourteen books of the New Testament, a tremendous and marvelous achievement by any measurement. Paul was missionary minded, making three great

Continued on page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 750)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Light Speaks

Light has spoken to all men that have lived on this earth in all ages. It continues to do so today, each day. We wake up with the light of the sun, we work under the light of the office, we go to stores which are lighted, we drive at night by our headlights, and to go to sleep we turn off the bedroom light.

Our whole life revolves around light because without it we would simply grope around in darkness. The Bible, too, realizes the importance of light in our spiritual lives. God, being the just, omnipotent being of the universe, looked down on man and, seeing his wickedness, saw his need for salvation. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

What was the light that God sent us to save us from an eternity of groping around in the darkness of sin? "The Lord is my light . . ." David stated (Psalms 27:1). Jesus himself said, "I am the light of the world. Whosoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). So for one to walk out of the darkness of sin he needs to find the true, pure teaching of Christ in the New Testament. Once walking in this light there is no way for a person to get lost, unless he so chooses. This is the only way for a person to get lost because "there is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5) in God.

Of course a light does not do anyone any good if it is not used. How can a candle light a room if it is not lit? How could man be saved from Satan until he is enlightened about God's only Son? Isaiah pleaded with the Israelites to, "walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5). The Bible pleads with us today also to leave denominational ideas and creeds and walk in the light of the Lord. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105). What other light is needed except the one God has given us?

One learns from the Bible what is necessary to walk



BARRY FIKE



An Elder Must Not Be Covetous Or Greedy Of Filthy Lucre

(Twelfth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . not greedy of filthy lucre . . . not covetous . . ." (I Timothy 3:2,3). Instead of the phrase, "not greedy of filthy lucre," the letter to Titus states that the bishop must not be "given to filthy lucre" (Titus 1:7). But both phrases translate the same Greek word, *aiskrokerdes*, which is compounded from *aiskros* 'base, dishonorable' and *kerdos* 'gain, advantage.' So the apostle is addressing the idea of one who might be inclined to have an unhealthy desire for material possessions — an inordinate desire for money. The words *not covetous* in I Timothy 3:3 is from a Greek word which means literally not to be fond of silver. This Greek word occurs in the text only in this passage and in Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conversation be *without covetousness*; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

If there is a sin more severely condemned in the New Testament and passed over with less notice in the church in our age than the sin of covetousness, this writer does not know what it might be. Colossians 3:5 says that covetousness is idolatry. In I Corinthians 5:10 the apostle Paul lists the covetous with fornicators, extortioners, and idolaters. In verse 11 he adds railers and drunkards to the list, and commands that they be excluded from the fellowship of the saints — "with such an one no not to eat." Exodus 18:21 clearly shows that men of truth, who fear God, hate covetousness. Yet in our society and in the church of our generation, covetousness is little regarded and seldom condemned. Have you ever heard of a situation in which a candidate for the eldership was rejected by the congregation because he was guilty of covetousness? Is this because there is so little covetousness, or is it because covetousness is so little noticed and so lightly regarded? The latter, we are convinced.

The unholy desire for gain or covetousness may manifest itself in one or more of a number of different ways. It may manifest itself in trickery or deception deliberately practiced in order to secure unfair or unlawful gain. Such may be excused by saying it is simply hard-nosed business dealings; but such is opposed to the spirit of Christianity and demonstrates greed for base gain, and shows that one is not qualified for the eldership. Some workers seem to think there is nothing wrong with stealing small items from large companies for whom they work. Others obviously think cheating on one's income tax return is pleasing to God. But both of these demonstrate that one is "greedy of filthy lucre."

This greed may manifest itself in the disposition to



BOB DUNCAN

attach too much importance to material things. Remember the literal meaning of the Greek word translated *not covetous* in I Timothy 3:3 — "not fond of silver." Some are so fond of money and the things it will buy that they allow their pursuit of it to take priority over matters much more important. It may be that all they do to gain material things is legitimate and honorable, except for the fact they do these things to the neglect of spiritual matters. Work is honorable, and for a man to provide well for his family is commendable. But there is a difference between the work which provides for the welfare of one's family and the work prompted by an obsession with the value and importance of material things. Any estimate of value placed upon material things which would cause one to be less interested in spiritual things is an indication of unholy greed. Men of this nature cannot be elders in the church.

One other way, and perhaps the most common, that this greed manifests itself is in connection with the matter of one's contributions to the church. It is unfortunate that more teaching is not done with reference to the matter of giving. But since it is not, one might be looked upon as a faithful and devoted child of God who simply has a bad attitude toward giving, and who refuses to give as he has been prospered. In other words, he is covetous — "greedy of filthy lucre." And yet with as little being said about scriptural giving as is being said, and with covetousness being regarded as lightly as it is, it is not so very rare to find those who are covetous and yet who have made their way into the eldership without so much as a single protest because of their covetousness.

God knows that elders who are greedy of filthy lucre cannot lead the flock into faithful service. Their very example would cause people to be materially oriented and very little interested in spiritual matters. If elders are guilty of fraudulent practices, and yet are still elders, then the membership can be expected to be guilty of the same. If elders are those who have not properly arranged their priorities, and who have an inordinate desire for the things of this world, the membership will soon follow suit. If elders are not liberal givers, sacrificing for the cause of the Lord, then the membership will become stingy and covetous also.

Perhaps no characteristic is more indicative of a lack of faith than covetousness. Look again at Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Notice the logic in this verse: If one believes what the Lord said, then he will have reason to be free of covetousness. How can one be covetous if he really believes the promise of the Lord not to leave us nor forsake us? Only one who has little or no faith in the word of the Lord could ever be covetous. Elders must be men of great faith; one cannot be an elder and be covetous. Men of great faith cannot be covetous.

Let's Look At Paul, The Preacher

Continued from page 1

missionary journeys, meeting both success and failure, and covering an estimated fourteen thousand miles, in an era when any kind of transportation was difficult and time-consuming. Indefatigable, tireless, weariless, unflagging are synonyms which seem to describe Paul's restless energy in behalf of Jesus Christ.

We pose a question: Why was Paul's work so influential? so powerful? (1) Because he had been genuinely converted to Christ. He had persecuted Christ relentlessly, but after his conversion "straightway he preached Christ . . . that he is the Son of God," thus becoming ever after the persecuted (Acts 9:20; II Corinthians 11:22-33). (2) He lived what he preached (I Corinthians 11:1). (3) He was dedicated to doctrinal purity (John 8:30-32; Galatians 1:6-9). (4) He was enthusiastic as an evangelist (Acts 20:17-38). (5) He made a total investment in the Cause of Christ . . . body, soul and spirit (II Timothy 4:1-8). Hence, Paul did not preach one thing but practice another (I Corinthians 9:27).

Although Paul was a preacher of great ability, there

are some things which he did not preach. For example, he never preached that the gospel of Christ is but a fairy tale; that God is a figment of the imagination; that Jesus was just another Jew; that miracles never occurred; that the resurrection of Christ was a hoax; that one church is as good as another, and that one should join the church of one's choice; that baptism is a non-essential, and that one should be baptized because one is already saved; that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon the heart, separate and apart from the word of God or the gospel of Christ, in conviction and conversion.

Well, then, what did Paul preach? He preached the gospel of Christ without addition or subtraction or substitution (Galatians 1:6-9); he preached the gospel of Christ as God's power to save sinners (Romans 1:16); he preached the truth regarding the fact that the kingdom of God exists now (Acts 20:25; 28:31; Colossians 1:13-14); he preached the word of God, obedience to which procures remission of sins (Acts 13:5,38; 14:25); he preached "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18; I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Realizing the supreme importance of complete submission to Christ's will, Paul constantly urged all mankind to build their hopes upon things eternal, to practice modesty and sobriety, to be law-abiding citizens, to live pure and holy lives, to love one another, and to encourage one another in righteousness. He preached peace and unity among brethren (Philippians 1:27; I Corinthians 1:10-13; Romans 12:18; 14:19). Paul also urged brethren to provide funds for the less fortunate (I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 8:1ff; 9:1-7,13; Romans 15:25-31). Moreover, he warned all people of the judgment to come, urging them to obey the Gospel before it was/is too late (Hebrews 9:27; II Corinthians 5:10-11; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Even today, Paul's challenging words come ringing down through almost twenty centuries, to us, saying, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1, ASV). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Light Speaks

Continued From Page 2

the narrow path to eternal glory. But even Christ said although light had come into the world "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). All that are lost have been so because they wanted to be. The Bible plainly states that, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Thus so to walk makes us children of light (Ephesians 5:8; I Thessalonians 5:5) enabling us to take the armour of light (Romans 13:12) and walk in the path Christ has shown us.

We can be assured that as agents of light we don't walk alone but shine forth as examples to countless others that see us every day (Matthew 5:14-16). When Benjamin Franklin wished to interest the people of Philadelphia in street lighting, he didn't try to persuade them by just talking about it. He hung a beautiful lantern on a long bracket in front of his home. He kept the glass brightly polished, and he carefully lit the wick every evening at the approach of dusk. People saw the light from a distance and when

they walked in its light, found that it helped them to avoid sharp stones on the pavement. Others placed lights at their homes, and soon Philadelphia recognized the need for street lighting.

We can make the world aware of their need for spiritual lighting in their eternal souls. As an agent of light do you realize this need? If so what are you doing about it? — 5 Ludwell Street Charleston, S.C. 29407.

Ancient Humanism

In a humanistic society we would do well to look at at least one illustration of this Godless approach. This is found in Genesis 11:1-9. One can surely see the principles of man trying to fashion his own life according to his own will. There can be no question about man's attempt to lift himself by his own boot straps. It is an attempt for men to try to get rid of God. Many of the modern elements of humanism were present in principle. There is atheism that denies God. This leads to the evolution of matter. Then would follow "situation ethics" that would say nothing is absolute. Next, there is the defying of man. Turn back now and read Genesis 11:1-9 and see if these would not be at home with the Humanist of our day. As surely as you live they would.



WINFRED CLARK

Take a close look and you can see the:

(1) **MOTIVE BEHIND IT.** In building the tower of Babel they were not seeking to honor and glorify God. This project would be an accomplishment of man without God. They didn't consult God about the project at all. This is practical atheism. As far as these are concerned there need not be a God. They think they can get along without him.

Isn't this what humanism says today? Isn't every project proposed by them one that does not need God, per their way of thinking? It surely is. The same motive that lay behind this project is in the Humanism of our own day.

(2) **MENTALITY THAT CONTROLLED THEM.**

They didn't get any higher than themselves. You will note that "they said one to another." Not one time do you find where they ever consulted God about the matter. These have no faith in nor request for God's plan and purpose.

Is this not true of the Humanists? Who do they consult when answers are needed? God? No, they consult man and his inventions. They have their own philosophy and you can be sure it does not include God.

(3) **MATERIALISTIC NATURE OF IT.** One has but to read Genesis 11:3 to find that this is a materialistic project. Note that they had bricks for stone and slime for mortar. These are substitutes for the real thing. But, isn't that the way materialism always works? It has to offer a cheap substitute of its own creation for the real thing.

These people thought that with material things they could solve their problems. But, these were no more successful than the materialist you find in Luke 12:13-21. This fellow would be right at home with the Humanists of our day.

(4) **MORAL DEGENERATION CONNECTED TO IT.** The danger also involved in this project would be that man would degenerate more so morally. This is surely one of the things expressed in Genesis 11:6. There God said, "and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." One thing is certain: they are not going to get any better. If they could succeed without God they would reach the point to where they would see no need of him. Once this occurs they would do as they pleased because they would see nobody but themselves that they are answerable to.

Need one ask if this concept fits Humanism of the 20th century? The morning newspaper will answer that question.

(5) **MISERABLE DOOM OF IT.** This movement

Money can't buy happiness, but it helps you to be unhappy in comfort.

Remember, whenever you're praised to the sky, it's best to keep your feet on the ground.

When you see a fellow turn his back on praise, he's doing it to make it easier to pat.

A song that never gets an encore is when you sing your own praises.

Be the first to praise and the first to deserve praise.

Money won't buy real friends, but it does help you if you want to lease a few nice acquaintances.

Continued on page 4

The New Name

(No. 2)

The use of different names to designate religious movements indicates following different authority. It shows a disregard or a lack of faith in Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20-23). We must "hold fast to the form of sound words" (II Tim. 1:13). There has always been the need for pure language. The prophet wrote, "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9). God commanded the Jews not to marry their children with the heathen nations. Nehemiah observes the results of those who disobeyed. "In those days saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

each people" (Neh. 13:23-24). They were a mixed up people.

THE NEW NAME WAS IN PROPHECY. It would be given of God. Isaiah wrote, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isa. 62:2). They were to leave the old name. Isaiah prophesies for God, "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name" (Isa. 65:15). We must look for another name.

The Lord said it would be given in his house. "Even unto them will I give in mine HOUSE and within my walls a place and a NAME better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them AN EVER LASTING NAME, that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:5). What is the house of God? Paul tells us. He said to Timothy, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). There should be no doubt where the new name was to be given.

The new name was to be given after the Gentiles

were converted (Isa. 62:2).

THE NEW NAME IS CHRISTIAN. The Lord said to Ananias, who was afraid of Saul, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, TO BEAR MY NAME before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Saul, who from Acts 13 on was called Paul, became the apostle to the Gentiles. The first Gentile converts were made at Caesarea. They were the household of Cornelius. Peter had taken six Jewish brethren with him to Caesarea to witness the conversion of the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit came on the Gentiles as it had on the Jews on Pentecost. The occurrence caused Peter to remember what happened on Pentecost. He commented, "For as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God; when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:17-18). Here we see the Gentiles becoming Christians, though the name had not yet been given. (to be continued) — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Mother

This past Mother's Day was the first time in forty-seven years that I could not express my love to my mother on this special day set aside to honor mothers, because my mother passed away on April 11, 1982.

My mother was very happy when I told her in 1963 that I was going to be a gospel preacher. She preferred that I preach than do anything else. She always encouraged me to preach only the Bible with no additions or subtractions. It has been very gratifying through the years to know that I had a mother who prayed and backed me in proclaiming the truth. Through her death I have learned the following lessons.

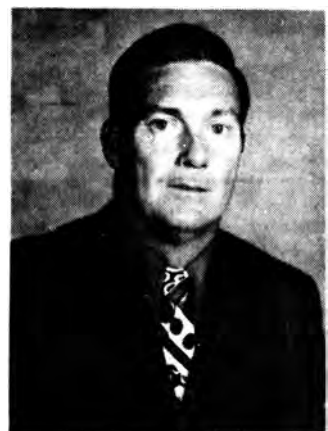
1. One is never completely ready to give up one's mother in death.
2. We do not appreciate enough what we have until we lose it.
3. Try to live just one day at a time.
4. What it means to have a loved one who dies in the Lord.
5. How many friends we have to help us in time of death.
6. Try to do the very best you can each day that you live.
7. The great importance that prayer and meditating upon God's Word can mean to one in the death of a loved one.
8. I want to try harder to live a Christian life.

The following two poems, which I shall cherish for life, were written by my mother, Mrs. Victor Bramlett:

THE MODERN PREACHER

Get back to the Bible is the great plea
There is the plan of Salvation for you and for me.
All the lost sheep we are told
Can find shelter in the Good Shepherd's fold.

There are so many preachers of this modern day



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

Who are afraid to get up and tell what the Apostles say.

They talk loud and long the world they try to please,
And only the Devil are they putting to ease.

They won't tell about the Faith that comes from God's word,

But of some fairy tale that you've so often heard.
They don't tell of repentance or to be baptized,
For fear by many they'll be criticized.

They want to be popular and seek great fame;
They are not even worthy to wear Christ's name.
They claim what they preach is all right,
Even if you can't read it in God's great light.

If they would use a "Thus saith the Lord" for all that they teach

They wouldn't be so popular when they stand up to preach.

But God would be pleased, for the truth would be told,
And all the lost sheep would look for the Good Shepherd's fold.

Now this is what I'm trying to say:
Go back to the Bible and there to stay,
And preach only what God would have you to say.
It will profit a lot in the Great Judgment Day.

A PLEA TO SINNERS

Sinner friend, hear today,
And the Gospel call obey.
It's God's power to save all,
If we only heed his call.

Jesus died on Calvary's tree,
Gave his life for you and me.
Can't you see the price He paid
That through the church we can be saved?

Sinner friend, you know your plight;
Turn from the darkness into light.
To-morrow may be a day too late.
Sinner friend, why do you wait?

Sinner friend, you're on the wrong road;
You're travelling down the way called broad.

Oh won't you please turn back,
For many will go in thereat.

Sinner friend, now don't you wait;
Travel up the road called strait.
There are a few things you must do;
They are simple, plain and true.

Sinner friend, you must repent
Of the wicked life you've spent.
Your evil ways don't ever cherish.
You must repent or perish

Sinner friend, you must confess
Like the eunuch, the jailer and the rest.
Jesus is the one who paid the price;
You must confess He is the Christ.

Sinner friend, you must be baptized,
And by some you'll be criticized.
Now your past sins are washed away,
And God can hear you when you pray. — P.O. Box 97
Nettleton, MS 38858.

Ancient Humanism

Continued from page 3

was an effort to dethrone God and deify man. This is man's effort to solve man's problems apart from God. It was doomed from the start. God didn't overlook it; he outlawed it. His decree was that it stop, and stop it did. The name of their project was Babel or confusion. That is the way any project undertaken without God is bound to end; Humanism is no exception. Men make a mistake, a grave mistake, when they get caught up in anything that leaves God out. — P.O. Box 1025
Athens, Ala. 35611.

Praise is like garlic in a good salad — a little goes a long way.

It is usually best to be generous with praise,
but cautious with criticism.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-76)

ik forth

s 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 1982

NUMBER 25

The Crumbling Walls

Often in the course of the preaching and teaching of God's word, we neglect the books of the Old Testament. This of course, is a mistake. The Old Testament is replete with lessons and illustrations that are as applicable today as they were in the period of time in which they occurred (Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11). Such is the valuable lesson we may learn from the crumbling walls of Jericho. We understand, of course, that the walls fell by the power of God, but do we really understand the great power that was wrought and the profound lessons taught?



JOHN G. SHAVER

Picture, if you will, a well fortified city with thousands of men of war stationed around the walls ready to repulse any attack upon the city. These men are well armed and trained, the city is well provisioned for repelling an attack, and any attacking force would pay dearly for an attack on this city. The walls are not just logs or stacked stones. They are formidable, for houses were built upon them (Josh. 2:15). Picture now the attacking force in the formulating of battle plans. Instructions must be given to the men of war, and plans are to be followed if victory is to be theirs.

How would you have approached this fortified city? What would be your plan of battle? Holy Writ divulges the formulation of the battle plan (Josh. 6:3-5). This battle plan is unlike any other battle plan that we have ever examined, for it is from God; it is divine. It must be followed in all points, for the record says, "And the Lord said . . ." (Josh. 6:2). What more could one ask? Here we have a plan drawn by the finger of God — no mistakes, no room for error, perfect in every detail. The city of Jericho is under siege; none can go in and none can come out. The battle plan is related to Joshua, he who must initiate the plan and motivate the army of God to accomplish that which has been commanded. But there is one

point in this plan that is out of the ordinary. "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho . . ." (Josh. 6:2). The city of Jericho has already been given into the hands of the children of Israel! In the thinking of some people of today, that was all there was to it. Why carry out the battle plan if the city has already been given? In their minds Jericho was an unconditional gift. Many of our own brethren seem to feel that the grace of God is unconditional, and that relieves us of any responsibility toward God. Of all the unholy, vile, and evil doctrines that have infiltrated the church of our Lord, this is one of the most ridiculous. If this city is to be given unconditionally, why the battle plan? Why did Joshua relate the plan to the people? Why did they carry it out to the minutest detail? Because they knew that God meant what he said, and said what he meant! Wouldn't it be wonderful if some among us would come to this realization, and return from their adherence to the sin-filled denominational doctrines to the pure and undefiled word of God!

Joshua has received the plan of battle; he has at his disposal the weapons of warfare that would be needed to take the city. This battle plan is not one that he, a mere man, would have implemented. He would have used catapults, battering rams, and other implements of war. But in all this Joshua didn't question God's plan one time. Why? Because he knew several things about the God he faithfully served. He was the merciful, loving, and majestic God of heaven. He was also the God that demanded and expected complete obedience from his subjects. Obedience such as that of Abraham (Gen. 22:1-19), Noah (Gen. 6-9), and Moses (Heb. 8:5). The all-important factor that would place this city in their hands was complete obedience to the will of God (Eccl. 12:13).

The divine plan is carried out (Josh. 6:6-19). Joshua instructs the priests and the people in their respective duties. None questioned the plan of God as people question his plan of salvation today. None refused to obey as they refuse today. The great march started with seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the covenant. They marched around the city once a day for six days, seven times on the seventh day. There was not one deviation from the divine plan. During the seven days of marching we see two types of people involved. Inside the city, were

heathen, idolators, and unbelievers who would jeer, ridicule and deride those who were marching. Those outside of the city were marching onward despite the jeers, ridicule, taunts and derision, carrying out the plan of God.

Observe the results of the complete obedience to God's plan of battle (Josh. 6:20-27). The plan has been carried out to the letter — no deviation, no disregard, no addition or subtraction, not one instance of disobedience. The people had done their part; they had obeyed God explicitly. Then the great shout! The laughing, jeering, ridicule and taunting from within the walls suddenly turned to screams of terror as the walls fell. They utterly destroyed the city. It was theirs. Why? Because they understood that God demanded obedience, and they obeyed (Eccl. 12:13). It was also understood by them, that if they obeyed God, he would be faithful to his promise (Heb. 6:18).


Let us examine some things that we may understand from this important period of Israel's history. The walls fell, but not from natural causes. The Israelites made no attempt to take the walls themselves. The marching, the rams horns, or the shouts didn't make the walls fall. They fell as a result of God's power. It was their confidence and faith in God that led them to obey him, and therefore, God rewarded them by being faithful and true to his promise (Heb. 11:6). Israel, led by Joshua, obeyed God. Spiritual Israel, the church, led by Jesus Christ, must obey God (Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8-9). — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL. 33566.

How to be happy: Keep your heart free from hate, your mind from worry, live simply, expect little, give much, sing often, pray always, forget self, think of others and their feelings, fill your heart with love, scatter sunshine. These are tried links in the golden chain of contentment.

Some people are so intelligent they can speak on any subject — others don't seem to need a subject.

Happiness is the conviction that we are loved in spite of ourselves.

Harding Graduate School
of Religion Library



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501


FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church, on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Be Patient And Temperate

(Thirteenth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . patient . . ." (I Timothy 3:2,3). "For a bishop must be . . . temperate . . ." (Titus 1:7,8). Patience and temperance are not the same, but they are so closely related we believe they should be discussed together. In fact, we believe these two characteristics, though differing, are inseparable, i.e., they depend upon each other for their existence.



BOB DUNCAN

The word *epieikes* 'patient' occurs five times in the Greek New Testament, and is rendered "patient" only in this passage. The word *gentle* translates the word in Titus 3:2, James 3:17, and I Peter 2:18. In Philippians 4:5 the word is translated "moderation." Kittel's *Theological Dictionary* says this word refers to "the reasonable man who stays within the limits of what is moderate and orderly" (II, 588). Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon* defines the word as meaning, "seemly, suitable . . . equitable, fair, mild, gentle."

The Greek word *enkrates* 'temperate' (Titus 1:8) means, according to Thayer, "strong, robust . . . having power over, possessed of . . . mastering, controlling, curbing, restraining . . . controlling one's self, temperate, continent." Kittel says the word means "to be inwardly strong." He points out also that "the opposite is *akrates*, 'one who has no inner strength, who is undisciplined.'" (II, 340).

In order, then, for one to be appointed to the eldership he must be equitable, fair, mild, and gentle. He must be reasonable, orderly, moderate, and patient. But one cannot possibly be all this without also being inwardly strong. He must master, control, curb, and restrain himself. He cannot be one who has no inner strength or who is undisciplined.

It is tragic for one lacking in these qualities to be appointed to the eldership. The eldership itself is bound to be hindered in its work by his roughness, his impatience, his lack of moderation and order, his unfairness, and his unreasonable nature. His inability to master, curb, control, and restrain himself will be the source of much grief for the eldership.

The church itself will suffer greatly with such persons in their oversight. How can such an one command the respect of a congregation of the saints? How can Christians be expected to follow in the faith of one lacking in patience and temperance? Hebrews 13:7 makes it plain that elders are to be men whose faith is worthy of imitation; but who would be inclined to want to imitate the faith of one who is lacking in these two virtues? And what kind of congregation would it be if it should imitate such?

It needs to be said also that one lacking in these two characteristics would do himself and his family a grave injustice to accept an appointment to the eldership. The burdens, the hardships, the disappointments, the heartaches, the criticisms, etc.,

that come to those serving as elders are enough to try the patience of the most patient, and the temperance of the most temperate. Those lacking in these qualities would never measure up to their task.

These two characteristics, one of them in the letter to Timothy, and the other in the letter to Titus, serve to illustrate a point we made in the early part of our discussions as we were dealing with the false position that it is not necessary for one to possess all of the characteristics listed in both letters. The argument goes like this: Paul gave to both Timothy and Titus all the information they needed to appoint elders. But Paul did not specifically include in the list of qualifications for elders given to Titus everything he mentioned in I Timothy, and vice versa. And so, it is reasoned, Titus might take his letter and appoint men to the eldership who did not possess every qualification mentioned in the letter to Timothy. And by the same token, Timothy might appoint men to the eldership who are in possession of all the qualifications in his list, but who might be lacking in some of those in the list sent to Titus. In our discussion of this matter we pointed out, as you will perhaps remember, that it seems highly unlikely that one would find the man described in I Timothy 3 who did not also possess the characteristics listed in Titus 1, and vice versa. In other words, the man described in the letter to Timothy is the man described in the letter to Titus.

As we said, patience and temperance serve to illustrate this point. Patience is in the list of qualifications written to Timothy, but not to Titus. Temperance is in the list sent to Titus, but not to Timothy. But we have already shown that these two characteristics are inseparable. One cannot have one of these characteristics without the other, and one cannot be without either of them and be qualified as an elder.

We would not want to be misunderstood: we firmly believe that one must possess to a significant degree every characteristic Paul lists in order to be scripturally qualified as an elder. But it is unfortunate that, in selecting men for the eldership, we have largely limited our scrutiny to the number of faithful children a man has, and whether or not all his children must be Christians. And we have passed over, as being a minor detail hardly worth considering, some of these matters that have to do with a man's real character. And while it is certainly necessary for a man to have all the domestic qualifications, in the final analysis, whether he is temperate and patient, just and holy, vigilant and sober will much more materially affect his usefulness and effectiveness as an elder than the number of children he has.

The sunlight of love will kill all the germs of jealousy and hate.

Happiness adds and multiplies as we divide it with others.

There are many roads to hate, but envy is one of the shortest of them all.

If ignorance was bliss, we'd all be a whole lot happier.

No Ordinary Book

The Bible is no ordinary book. It has been aptly described as the Book of books. As a product of the divine mind, it naturally shines with divine splendor. John Ruskin called the book of Job the world's greatest poem. Daniel Webster named the Sermon on the Mount as the greatest legal digest. Charles Dickens referred to the Lord's parable of the prodigal son as the greatest short story ever written. Truly this book, the Bible, stands as the masterpiece of the ages.



DALTON KEY

John Sheldon, one of England's leading historians during the 1650's, owned a library of over 8000 volumes and was regarded as one of his country's most learned men. When this renowned man of letters lay dying, he called for his friend, Archbishop Usher, to whom he confessed, "I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men, and my study is filled with books and manuscripts on various subjects. But at present, I cannot recollect any passages out of all my books and papers whereon I can rest my soul, save this from the sacred Scriptures: 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men' " (Titus 2:11). The Bible is no ordinary book.

And is not the Bible's longevity a glowing tribute to its rare and invaluable worth? Issac Taylor spoke of the Bible as a deathless book, having survived three great dangers: the negligence of its friends; the false systems built upon it; and the warfare of those who hated it. And hate it men have. Many a maddened mortal has sought the destruction of this Book of books, yet all such attempts have been feeble at best and failures at last. Voltaire once disparagingly declared the Bible to be an exploded book and predicted its extinction within 25 years. And yet more Bibles were published during those next 25 years

Continued on page 3

The New Name

(No. 3)

The first Gentile church was at Antioch of Syria. The martyrdom of Stephen at Jerusalem unleashed a great persecution upon the church. Instead of seeking to hide their identity, "they went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). They traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11:20). When the church at Jerusalem heard that a great number "believed and turned unto the Lord," they sent Barnabas to Antioch. "Who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23).



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

He then went to Tarsus to find Saul. Barnabas brought him to Antioch, "and it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). In this verse we read the name *Christian* for the first time. It had been prophesied for centuries and the prophecy was fulfilled in the church at Antioch.

The Greek word translated "call" is *chrematize*. It means to answer or speak as an oracle. An oracle is "a word, narrative, statement, denotes a divine response or utterance, an oracle; it is used of (a) the contents of the Mosaic Law, Acts 7:38; (b) all written utterances of God through O.T. writers, Rom. 3:2; (c) the substance of Christian doctrine, Heb. 5:12; (d) the utterances of God through Christian teachers, I Pet. 4:11" (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, W. E. Vine, pp. 143-144). *Chrematize* is translated "warns us from heaven" (Heb. 12:25), "revealed to him" (Lk. 2:26); "warned of God" (Matt. 2:12); "called" (Christians) (Acts 11:26). The name Christian was not given in derision, as some say. It is a divinely given name.

WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT WEARING THE NAME "CHRISTIAN?" Paul was in prison because of the hatred of the Jews at Jerusalem. He was given opportunity to make his defense before king Agrippa. His defense consisted of his telling how he had persecuted the church, his conversion, and the spread of the gospel to include the Gentiles. He affirmed the coming of Christ was

the fulfillment of the prophecies of the prophets and Moses. "That Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). Paul said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN." Paul would have Agrippa to be as he, except his bonds. Agrippa wanted to be a Christian, but not enough.

Peter stated, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed" (I Pet. 4:16). James likely had the name Christian in mind when he said, "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (Jas. 2:7). Paul said the Romans "became dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye

should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead . . ." (Rom. 7:4). The bride should wear the name of the groom. In reference to Adam and Eve, we are told God "called their name Adam" (Gen. 5:2). Those married to Christ should wear his name.

Human names are carnal when applied to the bride of Christ, the church (I Cor. 1:12-13; 3:3-4). "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:13). The use of hyphenated names for Christians is not in keeping with the will of God. We are not to be some adjective Christian but Christians.

Why not be just a Christian? — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

The Church

Must Not Fellowship Denominations

The Lord's church is not a denomination. The bride of Christ does not have a worldly head or headquarters. She does not call her preachers by unscriptural titles (Reverend [Ps. 111:9], Father [Mt. 23:9], Pastor [Eph. 4:11]). The church the Lord purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28) has no written creed book. Her doctrine is found in the Bible. Let all those who would add to the pages of the New Testament beware of Matthew



GEORGE REED

15:13. "But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up."

The church is the exclusive body of saved people. A few years ago, a friend of mine was attending a so-called Christian college on the West Coast. The president of the college (this was during a youth lectureship) was welcoming all the young people into their midst. He asked if there were any Baptists in the audience, and asked for a sign of hands. A number of hands went up. He did the same with the Lutherans, Methodists, etc. Then he told all those who were members of the church of Christ to clap for their Christian brothers. This was truly a sad scene. If sinners are saved outside the Lord's church, they are saved without his blood (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; Rev. 1:5,6). If one is saved outside the Lord's body, then he is saved in a sinful condition. Baptism puts us into the Lord's body (I Cor. 12:13). Yet, baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Therefore, if one is saved without the church, he is saved without baptism. And if he's saved without baptism, he's saved without the Lord's church. If not, why not? If one is saved outside the Lord's church, then Christ died in vain. It was Christ's purpose to die and establish the church (Mt. 16:16-19; Mk. 9:1; Acts 2; I Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). There can be no doubt about it: salvation is in the body (Eph. 5:23), and all those outside the body (church, Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18), are lost (I Jn. 5:19).

What do we mean when we say, "the church cannot fellowship denominations?" We mean that the Lord's church cannot, in any way, shape, or form help them in spreading their false doctrine. But members of the church must not only abstain from helping them, but

reprove them. Paul told the Christians in the first century to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Brethren that partake in denominational cake sales, garage sales, car washes, etc., promote the doctrines of demons.

A big question among us today is, "Can the church support denominations via James Dobson?" How in the world my preaching brethren and elders can open their pulpits up to a member of the Nazarene church is beyond my comprehension. There is no way under heaven that the New Testament sanctions the Nazarene church. So why would we allow a child of the Devil to teach from our pulpits? Do not we have men capable of teaching on the structure of the home? And yet brethren will take the Lord's money and hire a child of the Devil to do the Lord's work. When will some of my brethren wake up?

Would we ever think of having Billy Graham or Oral Roberts in as a guest speaker? If not, why can we sponsor a denominational film? The world sees it this way: "If they can show his movies, they can support his preaching. If not, why not?" It looks like they have a pretty sound argument. My Bible still tells me not to be "unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity?" (II Cor. 6:14). John warned the brethren that "whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (II Jn. 9-11). Brethren, we not only open up our houses, we give them the entire church building! It's a shame! It's sad to say, but I think we will eventually see James Dobson, and other denominational preachers in our pulpits. After all, some of our very own brethren are appearing on denominational church growth seminars.

God has given the church the responsibility to preach the truth (I Tim. 3:15), edify one another (Heb. 10:24,25), and to care for each other (I Cor. 16:1,2; Gal. 6:10). The Lord's church is the *only* one that worships in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24). The church sings (Eph. 5:19), prays (Acts 2:42), gives (I Cor. 16:1,2), observes the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:23-29), and preaches the gospel (Acts 20:7) as is taught in the New Testament (I Pet. 4:11). Since we cannot go beyond the things that are written (I Cor. 4:6), don't you think it's time we clean up our act? — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

No Ordinary Book

Continued from page 2

than in any such period before them. In fact, the very room from which Voltaire issued this prophecy was soon after filled from floor to ceiling with Bibles enroute to Switzerland. Robert Ingersoll once remarked that within ten years the Bible would not be read, and yet Ingersoll has been dead for almost a century and the Bible remains the world's best seller. As the poet has penned, "Hammer away, ye hostile hands; Your hammers break: God's anvil stands."

We concur with David, who wrote, "My heart standeth in awe of thy word" (Psalms 119:161). Of a truth, the Bible is no ordinary book. — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

“Where There Is No Vision”

“Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; But he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18).

The usual connotation of the term “vision” in this verse coincides with a definition given by Webster: “The ability to perceive something not actually visible, as through mental acuteness or keen foresight (a project made possible by one man’s vision); force or power of imagination (a statesman of great vision).” The understanding of the word “vision” colors one’s interpretation of this verse. Thus many suggest that when the leaders of a congregation have vision, projects and programs will be introduced into the work; otherwise, where there is a lack of such, the church will suffer greatly. This may in fact be true in principle; however, this is not the correct meaning of the passage under consideration. Let us examine carefully the scriptural understanding of this verse.

The New International Version renders the first part of Proverbs 29:18 thus: “Where there is no revelation” The Revised Standard Version: “Where there is no prophecy” The Douay Version: “When prophecy shall fail” The Hebrew word for vision as used in this verse is *haza*. It is defined in the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (I, 634) as follows: “The revelatory vision granted by God to chosen messengers, i.e. prophets. Such apparently was the experience of Balaam the son of Beor (Numbers 24:4,16). This vision of the prophet took place sometimes in the waking state, but also in ‘the spirit’ (Num. 24:2). Sometimes the experience of seeing a revelatory dream is designated by *haza* and *hazen* (Aram). (See Dan. 2:26,4; 5:9).” Thus, a vision was one of the ways by which God revealed his will to the prophets. We learn this fact in Hebrews 1:1: “God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners” The source of their messages was the Spirit of God: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:21).

“The revelation of ancient prophecy was not continuous and uninterrupted, but came in flashes; between them were intervals of darkness. Sometimes those intervals were long and most distressing to a people that had learnt to draw its chief lessons from Divine oracles.” The following passages bear out this fact. I Samuel 3:1: “And the word of Jehovah was precious [rare] in those days; there was no frequent [Heb., widely spread] vision.” II Chronicles 15:3: “Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.” Lamentations 2:9: “Yea, her prophets find no vision from Jehovah.” Ezekiel 7:26: “Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; and they shall seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders.” There were 400 years of silence from the closing of the Old Testament until the opening of the New Testament when God did not give any revelatory messages to his people. The absence of such was like the vanishing of the cloud and pillar of fire from the children of Israel. They were lost without divine guidance.

In the absence of divine revelation, false prophets often deceived the people. “Then Jehovah said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake I unto them: they prophesy unto you a lying



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their own heart” (Jeremiah 14:14; see also Jeremiah 23:16).

Today, God has not left us without a guide, to grope about in darkness; rather divine light has fallen from heaven to men in the form of the Holy Scriptures. God speaks to us in this era through his Son Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1,2). We are to “hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). When Christ left earth to ascend back to the Father, Jehovah God sent another Comforter to guide the apostles into all the truth (John 14:26; 16:13). Paul declared that what he received, he received by revelation (Ephesians 3:3-5). The Spirit revealed all the truth to the apostles and inspired men, enabling them to speak that “which the Spirit teacheth” (I Corinthians 2:10-13). These inspired Holy Scriptures once delivered, guide us unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16,17; Jude 3). It is the duty therefore of Christians to study the Sacred Writings, to circulate them throughout the world, and to teach them to their children and the unlearned.

Let us also observe the end result when there is no revelation from God, or when men refuse to follow his revealed word: “The people perisheth,” or “The people cast off restraint.” It was said of Ahaz that “he had dealt wantonly [or cast away restraint] in Judah, and trespassed sore against Jehovah,” wherefore God brought Judah low (II Chronicles 28:19). The

prophet Hosea informs us that the people of God in his days were destroyed because of the lack of knowledge of God; that they committed various sins because they hearkened not to the commands of the Lord (Hosea 4:1-6). In Paul’s time, the heathen world “refused to have God in their knowledge.” As a consequence, “God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting” (Romans 1:28-32). The fatal effect of the absence of divine revelation is confusion, disorder, rebellion; the people are uncontrolled, and they fall into grievous excesses, which nothing but high principles can restrain. This explains the reason why so much violence, immorality, divorce, strife, and all manner of sin exists today; the vast majority of people desire not to be guided by the Holy Scriptures. They could care less as to what God might have to say on such matters.

“But he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” The man who is truly blessed is one whose “delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalms 1:1,2). “He that giveth heed unto the word shall find good: And whosoever trusteth in Jehovah, happy is he” (Proverbs 16:20). The doer of the word shall truly be blessed (James 1:25). Those who keep the law of the Lord shall be blessed eternally (Revelation 22:7,14). — 809 Perry Store Road Opp, Alabama 36467.

Standard Of Unity?

In the past few years, men have tried different approaches to establish unity between those who accept Jesus as the Christ. In this article I want to examine four of these.

TRADITIONS

Some believe we may have unity if we accept the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. The tradition stretches from the second century down to our present time. Catholics believe this sacred tradition has been handed down by the church fathers. These traditions are held to be binding upon men. Have they brought unity, even among Catholics?

What was bound by the church fathers in Catholicism several hundred years ago is no longer accepted as law. Traditions change as the whims of men modify. Unity under this system is not based upon traditions, *per se*, but on what the hierarchy thinks is best at the time. This is exemplified in the Mormon Church when the United States passed a law against polygamy. A revelation was suddenly received by the hierarchy that Mormons were to stop practicing this tradition. These changes and a discarding of long accepted traditions, supposedly handed down by God, creates malcontent and division rather than producing unity.

EMOTIONALISM

The claim was made in the late 60s that the Holy Spirit was baptizing people in different beliefs in Christianity and thereby breaking down denominational walls and creating unity. For a short period it appeared that this claim was based upon truth. People from different denominations, even from the churches of Christ, were meeting and worshipping together. They all had one thing in common: the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

However, as time passed, the true nature of this



RAY HAWK

movement began to show its divisive head. Instead of creating unity, this movement produced more confusion. Some groups claimed that they had the true baptism whereas others did not. Since each man could claim to be God’s spokesman, division was created rather than unity’s being formed. Every single leader among these many Pentecostal or charismatic movements preached and practiced something that was contrary to the Bible.

Again, what this approach did was no different from the traditional one. It is based upon the whims of men and has as a base of authority what men desire.

ATHEISM

It may seem strange to bring in atheism as an approach to bring together those who believe that Jesus is the Christ. There is an element of atheism among those who say they believe Jesus is the Christ. One major denomination, a few years ago, called it “Christian Atheism.”

“Christian Atheism” is a result of traditionalism and emotionalism. When men throw off God’s authority and base their religion upon man’s authority, the end result is skepticism, humanism, and atheism. When men finally quit pretending that they are following God and recognize they are following what is right in their own eyes, there is a kind of unity among them. They are united in following their own ways. But, this unity does not produce peace, for one man can never sit still for another man’s authority. He must exercise his own, for atheism is built, not upon love (I Cor. 13:4-8), but upon self-centeredness!

SCRIPTURES

The only real unity that can bring peace to its adherents is the word of God. Why have the scriptures not brought unity among churches of Christ? Perhaps our approach in the past few years has not been correct as we came to the scriptures. Our failure to have unity is not the fault of God’s word, but due to our own short comings. Our attitudes have not always been right, but the scriptures are always right. We need to come to the word of God, not to prove something, but to allow it to prove us. We have the right standard for unity, we are just having a difficult time applying it! — 1461 East Chester Jackson, Tennessee 38301.



Words Of th

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

— Acts 26:25

The Pattern Of Placing Membership

One of the problems in the church today is what might be called "the member at large syndrome." The symptoms of this malady include brethren who, like spiritual butterflies, flit from one congregation to the other, never placing membership with a local body. Then there are brethren who attend regularly but do not place membership or let it be known that they are Christians available for service for fear that they will be called upon. The tragic result of this disease is a loss of manpower to the local church and a weakening of the ones who so conduct themselves.

While the exact phrase "placing membership" is not found in the New Testament, the idea is certainly there. Furthermore, the New Testament pattern of brethren identifying themselves as Christians when moving from one place to another is quite clear.

Every Christian is a member of Christ's body and therefore a member of the local church body (I Corinthians 6:15; 12:27). When moving to another location, the Christian should identify himself to the local brethren and, in a sense, "join the membership" of the local congregation. Consider these New Testament examples:

1. After Saul's conversion in Damascus, he went to Jerusalem. When he tried to join himself to the disciples, they were reluctant to accept him since he was unknown by face to them. However, Barnabas stepped in and introduced him to the apostles. Saul was thus accepted as a member of Jerusalem (Cf. Acts 9:26,27; Galatians 1:21,22).

2. Letters of commendation were often used to introduce brethren to the local church. When Apollos went from Ephesus to Achaia, the Ephesian brethren wrote a letter to the disciples to receive him (Acts 18:27).

3. Paul used his letter to the church at Colosse to commend Aristarchus saying, "if he come unto you, receive him" (Colossians 4:10).

4. Paul mentioned letters of commendation in II



DAN FLOURNOY

Corinthians 3:1,2. His argument is that since he was not a newcomer at Corinth, he needed no letter of commendation as others did.

From these examples it is clear that newcomers should in some way be identified as faithful brethren and thus be "joined" to the brethren. Just as a soldier in the army "reports for duty" when he arrives at his new assignment, the soldier in the Lord's army should also "report for duty" when relocating. By so doing, the Christian is enabled to take up his responsibilities in the local church, enjoy the fellowship of the saints, and derive the benefits of the

local congregation (Ephesians 4:11-16). Further, as a member of the local body, the Christian, not only submits to, but is blessed by, the watchful oversight of the elders (Hebrews 13:17).

If Christians everywhere would simply follow the New Testament pattern there would be no such thing as "the member at large syndrome." There would be a greater feeling of responsibility to the local work and the church could move forward in a greater way. Without doubt, the pattern of placing membership needs to be restored among God's people (II Timothy 1:13). — P.O. Box 29163 Denver, CO 80229.

Jesus Is King

JIM E. WALDRON

The great prophet, Isaiah, said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Again Gabriel said to Jesus' mother, "And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:31-32).

The exaltation of Christ "upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel" (I Chronicles 28:5) i.e., "the throne of Jehovah" (I Chronicles 29:23), or "the throne of David over Israel" (II Samuel 3:10), has already taken place, for we read in Revelation 3:21, "I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne."

Yet, one may say, it says Christ "sat" but when did he begin to sit "upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel" i.e., "the throne of David?"

The answer is the ancient feast day Pentecost, just fifty days after the resurrection and ten days after his ascension some 1950 years ago. We know this beyond a shadow of a doubt, because the Holy Spirit on that

Pentecost, by the mouth of Peter, quoted from both Psalm 132 about David's son on his throne and Psalm 110 about Christ ruling from God's right hand (Acts 2:30-36). Peter said on that day, "Let all Israel know assuredly" that God had raised up Jesus to place him on David's throne and to be David's Lord at God's right hand.

The Hebrew writer tells us "when he had made purification of sins, [Christ] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrew 1:3), and that the Father, who is God, said of the son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8).


Thus, Jesus Christ is now ruling over the kingdom of God, spiritual Israel (Philippians 3:3; Galatians

Continued on page 3

John D. Duncan

Our editor's father, John D. Duncan of Jacksonville, Al. died unexpectedly this week. Services were held Thursday. Readers of The Words Of Truth will share the sorrow of Brother Bob Duncan's family in their loss, while we rejoice with them in Christian hope.

Flavil Nichols
Associate Editor



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Rule His Own House Well

(Fourteenth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)



BOB DUNCAN

"A bishop then must be . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (I Timothy 3:2-5). A related statement in Titus 1:6 tells us the bishop must have "faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."

There is more controversy surrounding these two statements than surrounds everything else in these two chapters dealing with the qualifications of elders. Several questions arise when we begin discussing these matters. Do these verses teach that an elder must be a man who has children, or do they just tell us what kind of children he must have if he does have children? If he must have children, must he have a plurality of children, or may he have only one? Must his children be faithful Christians, or does this just mean his children must be faithful and loyal in their subjection to their father? We do not anticipate anything like universal agreement upon the answers we shall give to these questions in this study. We will set forth what we believe to be the truth, and why we believe it. We would urge every person to study the matter for himself and satisfy his own mind.

Must an elder have children, or are these statements designed only to let us know that, if he has children, they must be in subjection to him? We believe this passage teaches that an elder must be one who has children. By properly disciplining and training his own children he demonstrates some ability to "take care of the church of God." If he has no children, there is no way of knowing whether he has the ability so to govern and rule the congregation. Also the experience gained in rearing and training his own children will be invaluable to him as he seeks to lead the people of the Lord in the way of truth and righteousness. These things seem to be implied in the statement, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

Another reason — one not stated or implied in the text — why we believe elders should be men with children of their own is to help them to be men who understand and can sympathize with those who might be having certain heartaches and difficulties in the rearing of their children. We all know that those with the most expertise in rearing children are those who have no children! It is easy to criticize others and say what one's children would or would not do if one does not have any children. (On the Sunday immediately following the birth of our first child I announced to the congregation at Adamsville, Alabama where I was preaching that I had resigned my position as an authority on rearing children.)

The language itself — "having faithful children"

— strongly suggests that an elder must be one who has children.

Must he have a plurality of children, or will one child suffice? The language itself, in our judgment, does not demand a plurality of children. We agree that the man who has two children has had more experience in rearing children than the man who has only one; but by the same token the man who has three has had more experience at rearing children than the man with only two. But we believe one child fulfills the demands of the language of our text.

We use the word *children* in a general sense to include just one child. For example, you may ask a man if he has any children, and if he has one child, the answer is, "yes." Of if this does not sound convincing, ask some lady whose first grandchild has just been born if she has any grandchildren?

But it is argued that an elder is to be one "having faithful children," and the word *children* is plural. We have already pointed out that we use the plural noun to include both the singular and plural. Notice a Bible example or two of this same kind of usage. In Matthew 22:24 there is a reference to what is called levirate marriage: "Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother." The word *children* is plural, but it actually has reference to one who does not have a child. Deuteronomy 25:5, from which this passage is quoted, actually says, "and have no child." If having no children means not having a single child, then having a single child would be "having children."

Another passage that illustrates our point is Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Here the plural word *children* is used, but what about one who has just forsaken one child? If it is thought that the plural word is used because he is talking about a plurality of people who are doing the forsaking, then please notice that the words *father*, *mother*, and *wife* are singular. In both of these passages the word *children* is translated from the same plural Greek noun from which the word *children* is translated in Titus 1:6.

Must an elder's children be faithful Christians, or does our text mean merely that they must be faithful and loyal in their subjection to their father? We believe the former to be the case. While it is true that the word *faithful* may be used in other senses, there seems to be little reason to believe it refers here to anything other than faithfulness to Christ. There seems to be some difficulty involved in judging an elder's children to be faithful to him if they are not indeed faithful to Christ. It is doubtful that a child not yet old enough to be a Christian would be old enough to be judged as unfaithful or disloyal to his father. If he is old enough to be a Christian, and remains in disobedience to Christ, how could he be considered as loyal to his father, who aspires to the eldership? Titus 1:6 in the American Standard Version says the elder

Continued On Page 3

The Candle Under The Bed

"Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand?" (Mark 4:21).

Jesus is teaching us the folly of a wasted life. In the poorly lit houses of his day, the candle or lamp was often the major source of illumination. The oil was valuable and not to be wasted.

How foolish for one to light a lamp and then put it under the bed or couch. It would not give off its intended light. It also might catch the bed on fire.

This, however, is no more foolish than the lives of some. The Lord has put within us the possibilities and potential for greatness in his service. He has given us natural talents and abilities that can be put to his service. This ability is different in different people. Some possess more talent than others. However, none are lacking in some capability to serve the Lord.

Let us examine ourselves. Let's not have the spirit of Moses, who thought he could not lead the Children of Israel. Be honest with yourself. Do not fear asking a good friend to help you evaluate your potential for the Lord's service.

Be eager to work. Be as Isaiah: "Here am I, send Me!" (Isaiah 6:8). Many do not find opportunities to work for the Lord the same way a thief does not find a policeman — he doesn't look for one.

What about your light? Is it shining for God? Are people clearly seeing your good works and praising God, or is it under a bed? Move it! There is danger of its going out. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS

All we are guaranteed is the pursuit of happiness. You have to catch up with it yourself.

An Elder Must Rule His Own House Well

Continued From Page 2

must be one "having children that believe." It is our judgment that this is precisely what the inspired writer had in mind.

For what it's worth, it is the considered opinion of this writer that the children of a man should be well on their way through the teen-age years before he is appointed to the eldership. It is ordinarily not so very difficult to baptize into Christ a twelve or thirteen year old boy or girl whose parents have brought him to church all his life. But what about the years from twelve to twenty, when pressures to conform become so strong, and when there are temptations to dance, drink, wear immodest apparel, curse, use illegal drugs, etc.? We have known of some — even gospel

preachers — who were very firm in their stand against such things as dancing and mixed swimming, until their own children reached their teens, and then they changed their minds and decided there is not very much wrong with these things after all. Let a man's children get well on their way through the teen-age years, and you can then tell something about the kind of man he is at rearing children.

If an elder's children are "accused of riot or unruly," one can see how ineffective he would be in trying to get people to live right. They would say to him, and logically so, "Why don't you clean up your own house before you try to tell me how to clean up mine?"

We believe also that this particular qualification has too often been treated as a mere technicality. A man may have seven children, and only two of them are members of the church, and they may not be very faithful. The other five are living in total disregard for spiritual matters. This man has "children that believe" (ASV), and so he is considered to be in possession of this qualification. We doubt that he is! We would not take the position that one is not qualified unless every one of his seven children were faithful Christians. But we do believe his record should show more cases of success than failure in rearing his own children.

Counting The Cost

W. A. HOLLEY

The cost of true discipleship is no little thing. Perhaps one reason why many children of God do not remain faithful to their profession is because they never sincerely take into consideration what following Christ will cost them. One cannot be a Christian without paying the price! "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple," said Jesus (Luke 14:27).

One's discipleship to Christ must not be merely apparent or illusory; rather, Christ demands that those who follow him must be ready to sacrifice all, even our lives, if need be. "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; communicating to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Set your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits," suggests some of the costs of true discipleship, according to Paul (Romans 12:9-16).

"For which of you," said Jesus, "desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:28-33, ASV).

If we are children of God, we must follow the marvelous example of the great apostle Paul. In his amazing sermon addressed to the Ephesian elders, he declared, "How I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:20-24, ASV).

Jesus illustrated the costliness of Christian

discipleship by the tower builder and the king with an inferior number trying to overcome another king with superior forces. As disciples, we are all building towers or meeting what we may consider opposition too strong to be overcome. We should be encouraged to fight the good fight of faith with backbone and fortitude; we should never attempt to follow Jesus with frivolity of spirit and want of real determination; such guarantees total failure.

To illustrate, in a practical way, what it means to count the cost, we suggest a careful reading of the following story:

"I will tell you," said a man who was talking to a friend about temperance, "how much it cost me to open my eyes on this subject. When my wife and I were first married, we began keeping house with a beautiful supply of liquor, wine, and beer; we continued after this fashion until I, my wife, and our two sons, were all drunkards. Finally, my eyes were

opened, but then it was too late."

What an awful cost! What a price to pay!

Fathers and mothers, if you set a poor example; if you refuse to believe and obey Christ; if you will not attend the Lord's assembly; if you show by your attitude that the Bible, and God, Jesus Christ, and the church mean nothing to you, do not expect your children to do better!

But, just a word of caution! Counting the cost should begin with becoming a disciple of the Lord. How does one become a disciple, a Christian? One becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, a Christian, when one hears what Jesus teaches, believes and obeys it, and makes a concerted effort to be faithful to his teaching throughout life (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38,41-42,47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21; Revelation 2:10). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Let Daddy Fix It

EARLENE ROSE

A wise son heareth his father's instruction . . . Prov. 13:1

So tiny and cuddly he lay in his crib,
A precious new life now begun;
Dad straightens the blanket and whispers to him
"Let Daddy fix it, my son."

"Let Daddy fix it." Those magical words —
Dearer they grow every day —
A wagon wheel off, a broken swing set,
A scratch on the knee while at play.

Whatever it needed, be it nail or a kiss,

Or maybe tightening a screw,
It all was made right when Dad spoke those words,
"Here, let Daddy fix it for you."

When life becomes shattered and needs much repair,
I know that the task can be done;
For if Dad were still here, I know he would say,
"Let Daddy fix it, my son."

So working with love, I follow his pattern —
The lesson he taught patiently,
And when life is mended, I can say in my heart,
"Thanks, Dad, you have fixed it for me." — 1701 20th Ave. Northport, Ala. 35476.

Jesus Is King

Continued from page 1

3:29; 6:16), and "he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be conquered is death" (I Corinthians 15:24-25).

The kingdom of Heaven upon this earth, the church of Christ, is under the rule of the monarch "who is

King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Timothy 6:15), and rules heaven and earth from "the right hand of power" (Luke 22:69). — 33 Seymour Road, 7/F, Hong Kong.

Hatred is like a rifle with a plugged barrel.
The backfire can be much more dangerous
than the shot.

It's extremely difficult to endure hatred without resentment and a desire to reciprocate.

The Light Must Shine To All The World

J. R. SULLINS

Our Lord said, "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). Jesus instructed Paul to go to the Gentiles and "open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified" (Acts 26:18-ASV). Paul referred to this light as the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (II Corinthians 4:4).

The same need that existed in the first century exists today. The light of the gospel needs to shine forth to every creature on the face of the earth. But, brethren, we must be honest with ourselves and know that we are not getting the job done. Consider with me some thoughts on this matter.

In the first place, except for a few exceptional congregations in America, most congregations have no immediate plans for *going* out into their own communities, much less the world, to proclaim the gospel of Christ. We, for some reason, have thought that when Jesus said "go into all the world and preach," he meant to build a church building in a certain community, set up worship services and have one or two gospel meetings per year to invite people to "come" hear the truth proclaimed. On the contrary, the reason the early church multiplied in members is because they went daily from house to house, ceasing not to teach and preach Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42). Within sight of many of our church buildings, there are those who have never heard of simple New Testament Christianity. No one, including the elders, preacher(s), teachers, or members have made the effort to *go* shed the light of the gospel of Christ to those individuals. The *Light* will never shine to every creature unless we begin to learn what it means to *go* with the gospel.

Secondly, what are you doing to see that every creature has the opportunity to see the light of Jesus through the gospel? How many neighbors have you taught in the past year — how many friends — how many relatives — how many business associates? Is it not your responsibility to teach them? Many Christians do not realize that possibly they will be the only ones who will be able to convert a certain individual because of their relationship with that individual. Jesus taught us that it is our responsibility (Matthew 5:13-17). Peter said we are to "show forth the excellencies of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Unless the church realizes the need of personal soul-saving, we'll never accomplish the task of taking the light of the gospel to every creature.

In the third place, for the most part the churches of Christ in America have greatly declined in their interest in world evangelism. In the past ten years, according to a reputable mission survey, our missionaries in foreign fields decreased an alarming one-fourth in number. We now have five percent of our preaching brethren preaching to ninety-five percent of the world's population. The real cause of this is not known, but really, couldn't we say that the basis of the problem rests in the fact that the church as a whole has declined in its belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ? If the church as a whole really had a strong abiding faith in the Master, would it be necessary for missionaries to go around begging for funds so that ninety-five percent of the population of the world outside of the continental U.S. might be taught the gospel of Christ? If the church were filled with faith-filled Christians, wouldn't there be more who would be willing to make the move necessary that this world be evangelized?

Every loving, compassionate Christian sees the plight of lost mankind. Thank God for those who, at home and abroad, are involving themselves directly and indirectly in spreading the light of the gospel of Christ. May God have mercy on those in the church who have done nothing, who are not doing anything

now, and who are not planning to do anything in the future toward leading those near and far to a

knowledge of the truth of the gospel of light. — 801 W. Main, El Dorado, Ark. 71730.

Reflections Upon An Auction Sale

Several years ago I spent a day keeping records of the auction sale of a family who was selling the worldly goods of a family member to settle his estate. I learned a lot that day about human nature. What I saw in the people who came to an auction should cause us to stop and think about our own attitude toward this world's goods.

THE CURIOUS CAME to watch the proceedings and to ponder, "I wonder how much he was worth? How much did he leave?" The answer of course is obvious: he left everything (I Timothy 6:7).

THE GREEDY CAME to get a "bargain." Their own greed was their downfall. Some paid more for a "used" item than a "new" one was worth.

THE FRIENDS CAME to make a bid but left with hard feelings toward others who out-bid them for a coveted item.

THE FAMILY CAME to witness the life's possessions of a loved one picked over as if by vultures and carried away to a hundred different places.

THE AUCTIONEER CAME to make a fee, and to wonder which one of these will be the next to go so he can sell their possessions also.



DOUGLAS SIMS

"Speak Less Than Thou Knowest"

It was Shakespeare, in *King Lear*, who wrote, "Have more than thou showest, Speak less than thou knowest." Avon's bard must have been reading the Bible, for it teaches the same truth. "He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (Proverbs 17:27,28).

The council of James, calling for "every man" to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" is especially suited to our current clime, one of near constant chattering producing scarce, if any, profit. Sparse drops of reason find themselves no match for the veritable deluge of words with which they are forced to compete.

Talking has become a national pastime; listening, a lost art. Many of us have much in common with the young man, who in asking Socrates to teach him the art of oratory, rattled on and on. When finally the sage found a fleeting opportunity to get a word in, he said he would have to charge the lad a double fee, for he would have to teach him two sciences: first, how to

hold his tongue, and second, how to use it. Knowing what not to say, and when not to say it, is often more important than knowing the ins and outs of grammar, speech, and conversation combined.

Of course, this may be pressed to the extreme. Calvin Coolidge, our 30th president, is remembered as a man of few words. He was the one who, at the urging of his bed-ridden wife, attended church services alone. Upon returning home, he was asked what the preacher had spoken on. "Sin," was Coolidge's terse reply. His wife, prodding him further, inquired, "Well, what did he say about it?" "He was agin' it," he replied. We also remember Coolidge for commenting, "If you don't say anything, you won't be called on to repeat it." Yes, this may be pressing the matter.

Yet the truth remains. A too busy tongue and a pretentious laugh usually evidence a vacant mind. As Lincoln quipped, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt." Likewise, Prior observed, "And 'tis remarkable that they, Talk most who have least to say."

And yet a much higher wisdom has issued this warning: "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36,37).

May we seek wisdom to distinguish the times to speak from the times to be silent. — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

It matters not how many deeds to property you hold, but how many deeds you have done for your fellow man.

It matters not how many dollars you have saved, but how many souls you have been instrumental in saving.

It matters not what people think you are worth, but what God knows you are worth in the things that are important.

Finally, my fellow pilgrim upon this earth, remember the words of Jesus when he said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37).

One day you will leave this life, and you will leave all these "things" which seem so important now. Are you laying up treasures in heaven? — 330 East Ave., Cedartown, Ga., 30125.



DALTON KEY



Words Of T

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JULY 2, 1982

NUMBER 27

Young People Need Models

RUSS CROSSWHITE

The following statement was made by a very famous college basketball coach: "Young people need models, not critics." This is a very true statement. The Bible plainly teaches that one must be an example to others. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:13-16 that we are the "salt of the earth and the light of the world." In I Timothy 4:12 we read, "but be thou an example."

Example is defined as "a model; pattern." What kind of model or pattern are we setting for our young people? Let's look at some ways that we must be an example or model to our young people.

Students of the Bible. Mothers and fathers must be an example to their children in their study of God's word. How can young people learn to appreciate the Bible, have a desire to learn its pages of truth and apply it to their lives if their parents and Bible class teachers do not do likewise? The person who probably

had the biggest influence on my life so far as wanting to learn the Bible was one of my Bible class teachers. He is not a preacher, but one who really studies and knows the Bible. This made an impression on me so great that I likewise want to know the scriptures. Yes, we must be a model of Bible study before our young people.

Faithful attendance to the services of the church. In Hebrews 10:25 we read, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." We must be a model of attendance to the worship services. I will always be grateful to my parents for taking me to church. We always went to church so far as I can remember. If parents do not attend the services faithfully, they should not expect their children to attend faithfully. Yes, we must set the pattern of being present at every service that we possibly can.

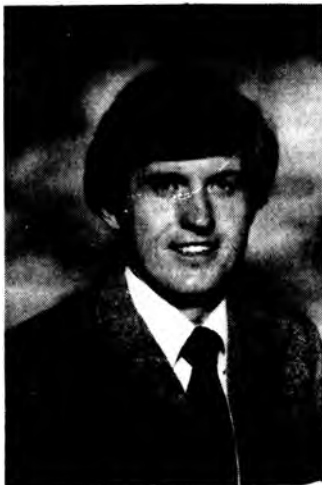
Dedicated lives to Jesus Christ. Parents must

exemplify what Paul says in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." When children see their parents as dedicated Christians, then the chances are greater for them to do the same. When the young people of a congregation see others who are dedicated to Christ, then they will be influenced in a way that will make a lasting impression upon them. Yes, young people need models of dedicated lives to Jesus Christ.

We must let our light shine before others, especially to our young people. Let's be the proper model or pattern before our young people as Jesus expects us to be. — 1501 6th Ave. Jasper, AL 35501.

How Does God Feel?

Throughout the Scriptures we can find examples of God's feelings toward man. In the Old Testament, many times God became angry with the people of Israel because of their disobedience. In Genesis 22, he showed his approval toward Abraham because of his willingness to offer his son Isaac. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, God, represented by the father, showed great joy at regaining the erring.



RICKY PHILLIPS

He has feelings toward man and we should always keep this foremost in our minds. At times, however, we may be guilty of respecting the feelings of other human beings and totally ignoring the feelings of

Almighty God. Remembering that God is our Father (Mt. 6:9), let's see how God feels when his children treat him with less respect than they should.

How does God feel when his children disobey him? Think of how it hurts a father for his child directly and defiantly to reject his wishes. I am sure you know of at least one father who has done all he could for a son or daughter, only to have that child rebel. Well, God has done far more for us than any earthly father could ever do. Yet there are many who would respect their parents and disobey what God says. When a child is disobedient, the father has the responsibility before God to discipline that child (Prov. 22:6). The Heavenly Father disciplines his children through his Word, and eternally, "The wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. 3:6).


How does God feel when his children ignore his teachings? Earthly fathers spend many hours instructing their children as to the importance of hard work, honesty, and fair treatment of others. Every father hurts to see his child disregard these teachings and do whatever he wishes. Think how much more

God is pained to see us forsake the assembly, fail to give liberally, use his name in vain or fail to abide by his Word. We are first to learn his teachings, and then put it into practice. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

How does God feel when his children are ashamed of him? Some children are ashamed of their parents because of their age, physical appearance, or lack of education. Some parents would be deeply hurt if they knew how their children really felt about them. You cannot hide your feelings about God. He knows how you feel about him, and so do others. Paul instructs Timothy, "Be not thou, therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." (II Tim. 1:8). Are you grieving the heart of God by being ashamed of him before others?

How does God feel when his children mistreat one another? Many families are in constant turmoil because children don't get along. Think of the

continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Signs Of Spiritual Decline

W. A. HOLLEY

Revelation 3:14-22 contains a letter which Jesus Christ sent to the church in Laodicea. Jesus was unhappy with the spiritual condition of the church there. "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 cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I reprove and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent" (Verses 15-19, ASV).

What is your spiritual temperature? Are you cold? Are you hot? Are you lukewarm? We shall offer a few thoughts which may help you to determine your declining spiritual temperature.

(1) Do you dislike to engage in wholesome religious conversations and feel uncomfortable in the company of Christians?

(2) Do you stay away from the Lord's day assembly by your own choice, and yet feel no twinge of conscience?

(3) Do you worry more about a clean environment than you do about a clean heart?

(4) Are you more afraid of ridicule and derision, than you are of honoring Jesus and his church?

(5) Do you trifle with temptation and think lightly of sin?

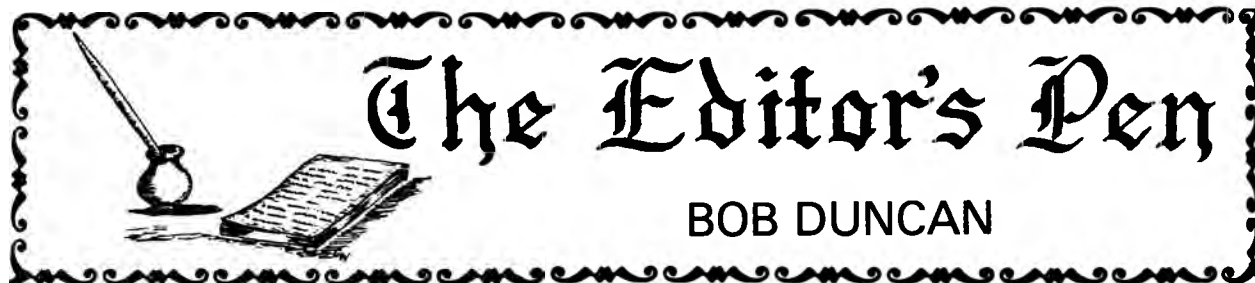
(6) Do you condemn in others that which you tolerate in yourself?

(7) Are you impatient and unforgiving toward sin in others, but seek to gloss over sin in your own life?

(8) Do you feel the need of prayer only when time of distress and suffering come upon you?

(9) Do you freely admit that you are not living up to Christ's demands, but steadfastly refuse to acknowledge and correct your own negligence?

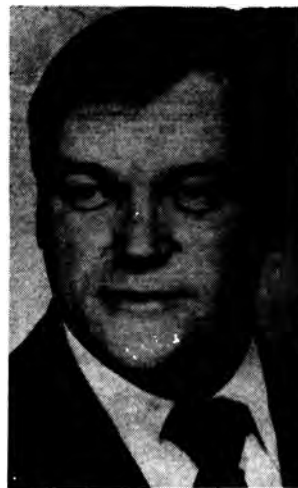
(10) Do you have plenty of time to read current books and newspapers and magazines, but no time to read God's Holy Word — the Bible? (Hebrews 2:1-4; II Corinthians 13:5; I Timothy 4:12,16). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.



An Elder Must Not Be A Novice

(Fifteenth in a Series on the
Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must be . . . not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:2-6). The word *novice* is from a Greek word which means literally, "newly planted." It is the same word from which comes the English word *neophyte*. The margin of the King James Version has, "one newly come to the faith." One who has just recently become a Christian cannot be an elder in the church.



BOB DUNCAN

But how recent is "recently"? This is a matter that falls within the realm of human judgment. But the very fact that this matter is mentioned shows that there is such a thing as being a novice, and that a novice cannot be appointed to the eldership. Two considerations will help us determine how long one must have been a Christian in order not to be considered a novice.

In the first place, consideration should be given to the stated reason why one who is a novice cannot be an elder: "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." To appoint to the eldership one recently converted will place that one in danger of becoming proud ("puffed up," ASV). Thayer says the word *tuphoo* 'pride' means literally "to raise a smoke, or to wrap in a mist." It is used metaphorically to mean: "to make proud, puff up with pride, render insolent . . . to blind with pride or conceit, to render foolish or stupid . . ."

Not only would it be tragic for the church to have in its eldership one of such nature, but it would also be tragic for the individual. Such an one has fallen "into the condemnation of the devil." This means, not that the devil condemns him for his pride, but that the same condemnation rests upon him that rests upon the devil. Some believe, and perhaps correctly so, that this suggests the sin for which Satan was expelled from heaven was the sin of pride. (In this connection see also Luke 10:18.) That "into the condemnation of the devil" does not mean that the devil will condemn him for his pride may be seen from the very fact that it is not the devil who sits in judgment upon our actions. Also, the devil would commend — not condemn — one for being proud and conceited; this is precisely what the devil would want him to be.

It is unfortunate that brethren will sometimes imagine themselves to be wiser than God, and will ignore this requirement. Their reasoning may go something like this: "A certain man has not been a Christian very long, but has experienced phenomenal growth, and is exceedingly dedicated. He knows a great deal more about the Bible than most people who have been members of the church for many years. For this reason we can waive the requirement that one not be a novice, and go ahead and appoint him to the eldership." The only thing wrong with this reasoning

is that it leaves out completely what God said about the matter. God did not say that a novice should not be appointed because he would not be as dedicated or would not know as much about the Bible. He said that a novice should not be appointed, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." If we say, "Well, we don't believe it will be that way with this man," we are pitting our own judgment against the judgment of God.

A second consideration in determining something about how long one should have been a Christian before being appointed to the eldership is the word *elder* itself. The word *bishop* is used in the discussion in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, but bishops are also called *elders* (Acts 20:17; I Peter 5:1). It is true that in the "official" sense the word *elder* denotes a bishop or overseer of the church, without reference to age. But the meaning of this very word selected by the Holy Spirit to denote this particular group of men cannot be ignored. Why were they referred to as elders if, indeed, their age had nothing to do with their office?

We realize, of course, that there are extreme positions that must be avoided. We would discourage the idea that one cannot be appointed to the eldership until he is past retirement age and largely limited in what he can do because of ill health. This is not the idea at all. But putting one into the eldership who is lacking in the maturity which comes *only* with age and years of faithful service is a great mistake.

Earlier in our study we advanced the view that it would be better to wait until a man's children were well on their way through the teen-age years before appointing him to the eldership. We gave our reasons for that view. We would add here that this practice would also serve as a safeguard against appointing him while he is yet a novice. These years while his children are growing up through their teens would serve as years of maturing.

We have emphasized time and again that one who is totally lacking in just one of the qualifications listed is not qualified, and should not, under any circumstances, be appointed to the eldership. "Not a novice," is no exception.

How Does God Feel?

continued from page 1

heartache this brings to well-meaning parents. Then imagine how God must feel when he looks down and sees his children bickering, backbiting and gossiping about one another. Brethren, this is not how it ought to be. The prayer of Jesus Christ is that his disciples be one: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20,21).

God has feelings toward his children as human fathers do. How do we treat those feelings? Are we guilty of treating man better than God? God has blessed us far more than man ever could (Mt. 7:9-11), and there is an eternal blessing waiting for his faithful children. How does God feel about you? — P.O. Box 396 Oakman, Ala. 35579.

The Inspiration Of The Bible

(No. 1)

"Is the Bible inspired? Is it really the word of God?" These are questions often asked. The Bible itself is its best defender. The diggings must be analyzed before the assayer can determine what minerals the content holds. So the Bible must be allowed to testify concerning its inspiration.

What does the word inspire mean? Young's *Analytical Concordance* and W. E. Vine's *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* define the Greek word translated inspire to mean "God breathed." Webster's dictionary says inspire means, "to blow or breathe into or upon."



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

define the Greek word translated inspire to mean "God breathed." Webster's dictionary says inspire means, "to blow or breathe into or upon."

Be An "Exhorter"

JIMMY EDWARDS

Paul's charge to young Timothy is to: "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (II Timothy 4:2 NASV).

Timothy is to be faithful in proclaiming the Word of God. He is to be "ready" (stand by or to be at hand) "in season and out of season" (whether it is convenient or inconvenient, opportune or inopportune, favorable or unfavorable).

He is charged to "reprove" (make the person in sin aware of his sin), "rebuke" (fearlessly censure, warn with the idea of convicting a man of the error of his way and directing him to the right path), and "exhort" (kindly encourage to greater fidelity those who are weak, disheartened, and ready to give up).

Paul concludes the verse by encouraging him to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with "patience" (have the spirit which never grows irritated, never desponds), and "instruction" (teach, command, impart knowledge of the word of God).

Focus your attention on "exhort." Webster defines exhort: "to incite by argument or advice; urge strongly; to give warnings or advice; make urgent appeals." The words "reprove" and "rebuke" are not more important than "exhort." All three words are of equal importance. In preaching the gospel there must be a balance of the three.

The gospel preacher needs to be engaged in untiring exhortation. He must use language in sermons intended to incite and encourage. The preacher must move brethren to action. Stir them up, spur them on, and urge them with the gospel! The preacher must encourage brethren to discharge their Christian duties at every opportunity.

What is the gospel preacher to exhort the brethren to do? Some excellent examples are found in Paul's letters to the church at Thessalonica. In the first epistle Paul exhorts those in the church to: "walk in a manner worthy of God" (2:11,12), "walk and please God" (4:1), "admonish the unruly" (5:14), "encourage the fainthearted" (5:14), "help the weak" (5:14), and "be patient with all men" (5:14). In the second epistle Paul exhorts the Christians to "work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread" (3:12).

Paul's "charge" to Timothy is the same to all faithful gospel preachers today. Those who proclaim the word today are to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort." This is the preacher's responsibility: to plead with brethren, and appeal to them to do what they should do. May God help all who publish the good news be "exhorters!" — 610 LaFayette Street South LaFayette, Alabama 36862

Some say the Bible was inspired as Shakespeare was inspired to write his tragedies and comedies. Shakespeare had a desire which prompted him to exercise his abilities in creating some wonderful works of art, but the Bible writers received messages directly from God. What they wrote was breathed into them by the Spirit of God.

Let the Bible speak for itself about inspiration. The word "inspiration" is found first in Job 32:8. The record reads, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the almighty giveth understanding." This teaches God transmitted his wisdom to man.

THE WRITERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT DECLARED THEY WERE INSPIRED OF GOD. Examples are as follows: "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2). "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (Isa. 1:2). "The word of the Lord came to me" (Jer. 1:4). Amos wrote, "The words . . . which he saw concerning Israel" (Amos 1:1). Many other quotes could be given.

INSPIRATION IS ALSO AFFIRMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). A more pointed statement reads, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21). Peter said the Holy Spirit moved the prophets to write what they wrote. Peter said they prophesied of salvation through Christ but they did not fully understand (I Pet. 1:10).

IS THERE ANY INDICATION NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS WERE INSPIRED AS WERE THE PROPHETS? Yes is the answer. Paul spoke of inspiration. He said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him . . . Which things also we speak, not in the words

which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Cor. 2:9-13). Luke said the apostles spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

Another question is, DID THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS KNOW THEIR WRITINGS WERE SCRIPTURE? The question is clearly answered. Peter, in commenting on Paul's writings, said, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16). Peter classified Paul's epistles with other scripture.

There may be objection to our proving the inspiration of the Bible by the Bible itself! Someone may say, "The Bible cannot bear witness to itself. Its inspiration must be proved by some external evidence." There is external evidence but it is not inclusive enough without the internal evidence of the Bible itself.

Let us illustrate. James D. Willeford gives this illustration. "Suppose you own a farm and one day as you are walking over the hillside you notice an outcropping of quartz. Believing that there is a precious metal on your land you rush down to the assayer and exclaim, 'Say, I believe there is gold on my farm.' To which the assayer simply requests that if you will bring a specimen of the rock he will analyze it and tell you if your assumption is correct. But you exclaim again, 'Why should I bring a specimen of the rock from my land? Just take a brick from the building next door and assay it and tell me if there is gold on my land.' You would be lucky if you did not get thrown out of the man's office." Why should we examine some outside material to prove the Bible is inspired? (to be continued) — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

The Heaping Up Of Riches

The second stanza of a beautiful hymn entitled, "What Shall It Profit?" is as follows: "The heaping up of riches/ To many seems life's goal;/ But in the eager rush for wealth,/ Forgotten is thy soul." The chorus responds with the inquiring question, "What shall it profit a man,/ what shall it profit a man,/ If he gain the whole world,/ And lose His own soul?"

In recent times, a major airline company went out of business, leaving hundreds of its employees without jobs. Scores of individuals in our nation could identify with their dilemma. One of the signs of our troubled times is the high rate of unemployment. During an evening news broadcast on television, the plight of some of the former employees of the airline company was brought to our attention. An auction was being held wherein these people were having to sell some of their belongings in order to meet their bills. We could not help but to have a feeling in our hearts for these individuals. However, our sympathetic feelings began to wane whenever it was learned that the items being auctioned were pleasure boats and recreational vehicles. One man was having to sell one of his very expensive sports cars because he was not able to



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

afford them both at the present. Another evening and another interview with a couple in California who was trying to sell their modest home for \$139,000 in order to purchase a much larger home that would run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars brought to mind some considerations.

These two examples help to bring out the fact that we are indeed living in a very materialistic age, especially in America. There has been the "heaping up of riches" for many years among people in our affluent society. There is a great sadness whenever the possibility arises that we might lose that which we have accumulated. We have become so accustomed to accumulating material things that we cannot be satisfied. The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes mentioned that he increased in whatsoever he desired yet he expressed the truth that he was never really satisfied, regardless of the amount of goods he possessed (Ecclesiastes 2:10,11; 5:10,11). Man's nature has never changed. We desire (or even covet), we obtain but we are never really satisfied; therefore, it becomes an endless cycle, desiring and possessing. The majority of the world's population cannot identify with our problems. The people of other nations have never had as much to eat and things to enjoy as we have.

Somewhere along the line we have forgotten some of the great virtues that made our nation strong. We have become obsessed with possessions. Things have become our ruler. Mammon is our master. We need once again to heed the warning of Jesus when he said, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness! for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp, Ala. 36467.

The Value Of Memorizing God's Word

In addition to possessing the book of God in our homes, we need to deposit it in our hearts. American prisoners of war in Vietnam kept their faith, their sanity and their hope alive by sharing the Scriptures, prayers, and sacred songs they had long ago stored up in their hearts. And thus even though they were deprived of the printed word, the word was yet able to sustain them. Memorization takes effort and time, but the rewards are worth it all.



JOHN WADDEY

There was a time when it was common for youngsters to memorize vast amounts of Scripture, at school, in home devotions and in Bible school. Preachers quoted most of their verses. Some memorized whole chapters, even entire books of Holy Writ. Some with special talents of memory could recite vast portions, if not all of the New Testament. We need to continue to emphasize this important method of learning God's Word for numerous reasons. Some of those reasons we now share.

God taught Israel to memorize his message. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:6-7). How blest is that family where this admonition is followed. How many sins will be driven away before they can take root. How much spiritual strength will be generated! How better could we make certain our heavenly calling?

Spiritual growth depends upon our knowing God's Word. "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Pet. 2:2). Food must be taken into the system and digested before it benefits the body; so must the scriptures to strengthen the soul.

Memorization makes possible the uninterrupted communion of the soul with God. David wrote: "I will bless Jehovah who hath given me counsel; yea my heart instructeth me in the night seasons. I have set Jehovah always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Ps. 16:7-8). Whether at work or travelling, in school or at some social event, the memorized word is there to keep us pure and to guide us aright. No night is so dark as to rob the mind of truth thus committed.

Scripture in the heart contributes to an effectual prayer life. Jesus tells us: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Perhaps this explains why so many modern disciples have barren prayer lives, for the absence of his Word in our hearts will have the opposite effect. Since prayers must be according to the Divine will one can easily see how a heart filled with Scripture would be more able to pray acceptably (Matt. 26:39).

The Word of God stored in the mind provides powerful assistance in soul-winning. From infancy Timothy had "known the sacred scriptures which [were] able to make [him] wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15). When memorized, the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, is instantly available for every need (Rom. 1:16). Whether you meet the prospect on a plane, in the coffeeshop, or at work, you can teach him.

The example of Jesus encourages us to memorize Scripture. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, the Master successfully defended himself by the word of divine truth stored up in his heart (Matt. 4:1-11). The same will strengthen us as we "resist the Devil"

(Jas. 4:7). Can any of us afford to neglect this powerful preventive to sin? To be a Christian means to follow his example (I Pet. 2:21).

Memorization makes possible continued meditation upon the word of God at all times. The psalmist wrote, "Oh how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). Again we read, "Blessed is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah and on his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2).

Scripture laid up in the heart provides comfort and strength in times of trouble. "Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me" (Ps. 119:92-93).

The word in the memory will satisfy our spiritual appetite. Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart." The soul that hungers and thirsts for God's righteousness will cherish the words of truth securely stored in the depths of his being. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Hear the patriarch Job: "I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job. 23:12).

Victory over sin is achieved through the memorized word. "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking hold thereto accord to thy word . . .

Thy word have I laid up in my heart that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:9,11).

It is a vital part of the "whole armor of God" that prepares us for spiritual combat (Eph. 6:11-17). Notice that none of these items of spiritual armor can be separated from God's word. Since so much of the Christian's life is spent in combat, fighting the "good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12) we cannot afford to be without ready access to the truth.

Quietness and contentment accompany the word of God when preserved in the heart. Listen to the Spirit's word: "Great peace have they that love thy law; and they shall have no occasion of stumbling" (Ps. 119:165).

A bountiful harvest always follows when the seed of God's word is diligently planted in the human heart. God's word shall not return unto him void, but it will accomplish that which he pleases and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it (Is. 55:11). One will never be disappointed at the results when he takes the time to memorize the precious words of life. The reward will be manifold, the consequences will be realized even beyond the grave.

Let all of God's children daily feed upon God's word and store it in the memory banks of our minds that it might guide us in all earthly pursuits and protect our travel unto eternity. — Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN.

Parents, Please Don't Let Your Teen Go To The Prom

RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

Dancing is a sin. Wait, don't quit reading. Let me explain. Simply defined, "Dancing consists in the rhythmical movement of any or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme of individual or concerted action which is expressive of emotions or ideas" (Encyclopedia Britanica). Notice, ". . . body movements . . . expressive of emotions . . ." This is the problem of dancing, whether it be embracing or standing apart and moving the body. The real appeal of dancing is the sex appeal. If not, why do men not dance with men and girls with girls? Can a person with normal sexual drives embrace another or see the movements of the modern dance without being sexually excited? If one can, can his partner? If both can, how long could they? If both can, what about their influence? What does sexual excitement lead to?

Not only that, but dancing is scripturally wrong! It is clearly in the class of "lasciviousness" which

means, among other things, ". . . inciting lust or wantonness" (J. H. Thayer). Lasciviousness is condemned as one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). It is condemned in II Cor. 12:21, Eph. 4:19, I Pet. 4:3, and Jude 4. And Gal. 5:21 says that ". . . they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." Does this not mean something to a Christian parent who loves the soul and morals of his child? Does this not mean something to Christian young people who want so much to please God?

Supervising the dance cannot make it right, either. Supervision cannot control the mind of the dancers. All the school teachers, police, and parents in town can't do it. If it's wrong in the night club, it's wrong in the school gym.

Parents, please, please, consider these things and impress its importance on the minds of your children. DON'T LET THEM GO TO THE PROM! — P.O. Box 4171 Pensacola, FL 32507.

What Can I Do For Him

EARLENE ROSE

A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master . . .
Amos 1:6

"If there is something I can do,
Please just let me know,"
These words so often spoken,
But as I watched him go,

I knew his slow and feeble feet
Would cross the miles for me,
And his wrinkled work-worn hands
Would labor endlessly.

The love reflected in his eyes,
With age now growing dim,
Made me whisper to myself,
"What can I do for him?"

"Something I can do."
These words echoed in my heart,
And through the tears that filled my eyes,
I watched my Dad depart. — 1701 20th Ave.
Northport, Ala. 35476.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am
the \

—
speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 1982

NUMBER 28

An Adequate Library

Folks who know the author know that he is a connoisseur of fine books. Some 8,000 volumes fill his shelves. Yet all of these volumes would readily be sacrificed if necessary for the one book that is superior to them all. Sir Walter Scott put it well when he said, "There is but one Book!" referring to the sacred volume. Patrick Henry said, "There is a Book worth all other books in the world!"



JOHN WADDEY

Even if the Bible were the only book in one's possession he would be able to be a knowledgeable man, for it is a multifaceted book that provides wisdom for many fields.

I. The Bible is my *History* book. It alone tells me of the origin of the race and the origin of sin. It relates the beginning of the Jewish nation, that remarkable people who left their mark stamped on the world's record. The Bible records the beginning and development of the Scheme of Redemption and the earthly life of Jesus. It reports the beginning of Christianity and its early trials and triumphs. It is especially valuable in that it tells me God's plan of history. Through it I know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men and setteth over them whomsoever he will (Dan. 4:25). Although I do not know what the future holds, I do know who holds the future, thanks to my Bible.

II. My Bible is my *Law* book. It sets forth the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25). It teaches me the proper code to live by, i.e., "the will of the father who in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Jesus says we will be judged by his word in the last day (John 12:48).

III. My Bible is a book of *Philosophy*. Philosophy is the love of wisdom. It is the science which investigates the facts and principles of reality or truth. Philosophy has to do with practical or moral wisdom. Jesus affirmed that God's word is truth (John 17:17). Isaiah challenged his generation to look to Scripture and if men do not speak according to this word, there is no light in them (Is. 8:20). In the 19th Psalm, David eulogized the Scriptures saying, "the

ordinances of Jehovah are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired are they than fine gold . . ." (vs. 9-10). The man who searches for *truth* will find it in his Bible. Isaac Newton wrote, "I account the Scriptures of God the most sublime philosophy."

IV. The Bible is my *Psychology* book. It tells me about mankind. It explains our origin and nature. We were created by God in his own image (Gen. 1:26-27). It explains the universal problem of sin (Rom. 5:12). It helps us understand the effect of sin on man's soul (Eph. 2:1). Scripture provides answers to the problems and needs of the race. The secret of how to be happy and contented in life is set forth (Phil. 4:12-13). The path to freedom from condemnation is given (Rom. 8:1-2).

V. My Bible is my *Political Science* book. It sets forth my policy toward men of other races and nations. It forbids respect of persons (Jas. 2:9). I must make no distinction between men on the basis of race or wealth. There are only two classes of men: those saved and those lost (Acts 10:34-35). My duty is declared. I must preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16).

VI. The Bible is my *Accounting* book. It informs me that I personally have no assets to offer for my salvation — only liabilities. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:23). All of our righteous deeds are as filthy rags when laid before God (Is. 64:6). But Christ paid the price to balance my books. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus, once for all (Heb. 10:10). When I obey his prescribed will my account is paid in full, since I have remission of my sin (Acts 2:38).

VII. My Bible is my *Management* book. It instructs me how to manage my time, my business, my home and my life. I am to seek God's kingdom and righteousness before the temporal things of life (Matt. 6:33). As a parent I must nurture my children in God's ways (Eph. 6:4). With Christ in charge, all my management problems are over. Christ lives in us and chooses our changes for us (Gal. 2:20).

VIII. The Bible is my *Finance* book. It shows me how to prosper. If I give unto God, it will be given unto me: "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over . . ." (Lk. 6:38). It tells me what place God should occupy in my financial program. He must receive "the first fruits" of my income (Prov. 3:9). When the Macedonian Saints learned this they were blest indeed (II Cor. 9:1-5). It tells me that I must

learn to give purposefully and cheerfully (II Cor. 9:7).

IX. The Bible is my *Insurance* book. It reveals to me the only insurance that will last for eternity. The ordinary kind of life insurance pays off to my survivors when I die. The Bible offers an *eternal* life insurance. The benefits consist of eternal life in the heavenly realms. "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). We have a hope that is like an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast . . . (Heb. 6:19). Our Bible sets forth the conditions for enrollment and the premiums thereof: unflinching trust in the Lord (Heb. 11:6), a renunciation of sin (Acts 17:30-31), and immersion into the one body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). Such will wash away all sins (Acts 22:16) and secure for us all the privileges of divine sonship (Gal. 3:26-29).

"Holy Bible, book divine
Precious treasure thou art mine
Lamp to my feet and light to my way
To guide me safely home." — 6612 Beaver Ridge
Road Knoxville, TN 37921.

Visiting The Sick

MARZEE KING TEW

Miss Susie is eighty-six years old. She has been in a nursing home four years. But before that, she lived alone. She has no relatives. She is a unique lady who has a sharp tongue but can write gentle poetry. It was not until she was near fifty she heard the gospel and responded. Her poem, "The Wasted Years," would touch the hardest of hearts.


Yesterday, I visited Susie and found her in bed. She had fallen and bruised herself badly. "I'm going to die," she said.

"Of course, you are," I agreed. "But maybe not right away."

"I'm tired," she mumbled. "And I have no reason to live."

What could I say? She has disliked the nursing home from the day she entered. And there's not much any of us can do to bring sunshine into her life. I couldn't do anything, but I knew someone who could!

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(ISSUED WEEKLY)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation
Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Footwashing Revisited

RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

In John's gospel, Chapter 13, is recorded a beautiful story of service. It was when the Son of the Almighty, diety in the flesh, donned a towel and knelt in service to his disciples. This practice was never intended to be part of Christian worship.

But we've forgotten the lesson of the incident, if we ever learned it in the first place. It is evident in a number of areas of our society. It is a result of the selfish attitude which controls our society. We all seek to be served; not to serve.

The home, with husband-wife and parent-child relationships, would greatly benefit if we would humble ourselves to "wash a few feet." But we continue to demand "our rights," caring little for the needs and wants of those we should love the most. It would not hurt husbands one bit to wash a few dishes, or vacuum the floor, or dust a few shelves. It would help if more wives would help trim the hedges, or cook his favorite meal occasionally. And, children would bring joy to the parents by doing their chores without being asked, or encouraging Mom and Dad to have a night out on occasion. We parents need to, with joy, accompany our children to a ball game or encourage them to have their friends over to visit.

Too, we need to "wash a few feet" of our brethren. We've become so paranoid towards them; afraid we'll be disfellowshipped by somebody if we even SPEAK to some of our brethren, that we've drawn within a terribly selfish shell. We ought to love the brethren (I Peter 2:17) to the point of wanting to *serve* them. We used to help them build their houses and barns, care for them when they were sick, lend a few dollars when they were down and out, cry with them when they buried their loved ones, and rejoice with them in triumphs. Why don't we any more? **WE ARE TOO SELFISH!**

Jesus Christ, God's Son, on his knees at his disciples' feet continues to speak loud and clear to us, "Ye ought also to wash one another's feet"!!! — P.O. Box 4171 Pensacola, FL 32507.

After we bow our heads seeking divine guidance, we often bow our necks in resistance to His divine will.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Have A Good Report From Without

(Sixteenth in a Series on the Qualifications of Elders)

"A bishop then must . . . have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Timothy 3:2-7). Here is a very unusual requirement, that is, that the bishop's being qualified depends upon what those of the world, outsiders, think of him. It is not enough for one's own brethren to think highly of him; he must be well respected by those who are not Christians as well.



BOB DUNCAN

Members of the church do not really get to know each other as well as they should. In many cases they see each other only at church gatherings where everyone is dressed in his best behavior. Seeing an individual only under such circumstances we might conclude that he is the very epitome of true Christianity. But what kind of reputation does he have among the people with whom he lives and where he works? What do the people with whom he has done business think of him? What kind of reputation does he have among his neighbors? What kind of estimate of the church will these people have when they learn he has been appointed to serve as one of the overseers of the flock?

An incident which occurred when I had not been preaching very long illustrates this point. I had just moved into a certain town to work with the church. As the proprietor of the service station where I had stopped to get gasoline was filling my tank, he learned through our conversation that I was the new preacher at the church of Christ. He made a statement something like the following: "I don't know all the members, but I know one thing: you have one real Christian in that church." He then named one of the elders of the church. Now, the man who said this did not likely have a scriptural concept of what a Christian is, but he passed a great compliment on this elder, and consequently upon the church. This is the kind of situation the Bible refers to when it says that an elder must have a good report of them which are without.

Not mentioned in I Timothy 3, but listed among the qualifications of elders in Titus 1, are the words *just* and *holy*. Perhaps these should have been discussed as we were discussing the quality of blamelessness, or in our discussion of good behavior. But the qualities of *justice* and *holiness* perhaps have as much to do with one's reputation among those on the outside of the church as anything else in the list. *Justice* has to do with treating one's fellow human beings in a fair and equitable manner. *Holiness* has to do with the proper discharge of one's duty toward God. One who will make it his practice over the years to do both of these will cultivate the respect and admiration of all those who know him, even those who

are not Christians.

Having a good report of them that are without is a matter, not so much of what one is at present, but of what kind of reputation he has. Though he may now have turned away from every vice and be living a pure and holy life, he will have to live long enough to outlive any bad reputation of the past before he can be an elder. David Lipscomb, in commenting on the clause, "lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil," says, "The man who has the reputation for dishonesty and untruthfulness and for love of money is not fit for an elder of the church of God." J. W. Shepherd adds the following remarks to Lipscomb's comments: "Those who once knew him among other associations living a very different life would be only too ready to attack the blameless of the congregation through the stained and scarred reputation of such an elder . . . Paul charged Timothy to be very watchful when the elders were chosen to choose only those who in their former days had preserved their good name stainless and their character unscarred" (*Commentary on I Timothy* by Lipscomb and Shepherd).

We would not go so far as to say that one's past must be completely free from any moral stain, but that repentance of such stain should be so evident and far enough in the past that even those on the outside of the body of Christ hold him in high esteem because of his reputation for justice and holiness.

But even so, one whose ever so distant past is stained with immorality will find himself at a disadvantage in trying to do the work of an elder. Unforgiving and uncharitable people will find occasion to bring up his past mistakes, especially when it becomes necessary for him to rebuke or admonish them because of something lacking in their spirituality. Such being true, we should impress upon our young people the importance of maintaining a good name. The wild oats one sows, even while he is young, may be a great hindrance to his usefulness in the service of God many years later.

"It's Not Easy Being Me"

ROGER JACKSON

If you get around very much you will recognize the above statement as one used by the popular comedian Rodney Dangerfield. His popularity has skyrocketed in the past few years by the use of such a philosophy because people who are down on life and themselves identify with it. We need a little sympathy sometimes and the Bible certainly teaches the rest of us to weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15). However, the Bible does not allow us to over indulge in self-pity which cripples our enthusiasm and stifles our growth.

Continued on page 4

Christ, A Divine Teacher

Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God . . ." (Jno. 3:2). Christ came to sustain the three-fold office of prophet, priest and king. Each of these offices he fully and perfectly fulfilled. As a prophet, he made known the will of God. As a priest, he offered the holy and spotless sacrifice of himself. As a king, he gave laws to his church, and remains seated upon his throne, where he shall sit until he hath made his enemies his footstool. As a prophet, he was superior to all who had ever preceded him, greater than Moses himself. As a priest, he was after the order of Melchisedec. As a sovereign, he has written upon his vesture and upon his thigh, "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16). Let us contemplate that part of his prophetic office which more immediately relates to him as a teacher, and thus the propriety and force of the ruler's confession, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God."



JOHN G. SHAVER

First, let us consider Christ as a teacher. Here two things will demand our notice. First, the nature of his instructions. His instructions were diversified in nature. He revealed the character of deity, explained and illustrated the doctrine of providence, exposed the human heart, exhibited the remedy for sin which God provided, stated and enforced the necessity of faith, repentance, confession, baptism and holiness. He published a new code of laws extending to the thoughts of men. He plainly stated the certainty of a resurrection and opened the glorious gates to immortality and eternal life (Matt. 5-7; Jno. 3; Jno. 5:28-29). His instructions were of great importance — the very opposite of the conceits of the Jewish Rabbis, and affording an equally striking contrast to the wild theories of the pagan philosophers. He taught man that which related to his true dignity, permanent happiness, and eternal well being (Lk. 4:18; Jno. 10:10). His instructions were of universal and individual concern. He was the teacher of all classes. All stood in need of his instructions, and all were equally interested in them. He stood in the capacity of a teacher of the whole world. His teachings were intended to enlighten every man that came into the world (Jno. 1:9). His instructions were of eternal consequence. The woes he pronounced to the wilfully ignorant and finally impenitent were eternal, and the rewards he offered were not temporal, but eternal. For this end did he come, to show men the way to everlasting life (Jno. 10:28; Jno. 17:2-3; I Jno. 5:20). Second, consider the manner in which he communicated his instructions — with plainness and simplicity. How beautifully familiar were his discourses. How clearly he illustrated all the subjects that he brought before the people. He referred them to the sower, the fisherman, the woman with the leaven, the three measures of meal, the lost sheep, the lilies, the vine, to houses built upon sand and rock; and the consequence was, the common people, the plain and unlearned, who formed the great majority of his listeners, heard him gladly. His discourses suited their capacities, and thus they received instruction, delight and profit (Mk. 12:37). His teaching was distinguished for condescension and patience. He stooped to the poor, sought out the wretched, and those who were overlooked by the teachers of his day. He addressed publicans and sinners, profligates and harlots. And how patiently he taught his disciples. How he endured their dullness, and with all perseverance gave them lesson upon

lesson, and never did he break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax (Matt. 9:11-13). His teaching was distinguished for tenderness and affection. How deeply he felt for the poor perishing souls he came to instruct. With what graciousness he made his words known to them. How he yearned over them. And when they remained incorrigible he wept over them (Matt. 23:27). His teaching was distinguished for truth and fidelity. Though tender and affectionate, yet he was faithful in all things to the ministry committed to him. He loved the souls of man too well to hold back any part of truth (Matt. 23). His teaching was distinguished for unwearied constancy and perseverance. He went about from place to place in search of ignorant wandering souls, and times, places or circumstances had no weight with him. He cared not whether it was morning, noon or evening, whether the sabbath or any other day. He cared not whether the people were gathered in the synagogue, marketplace, the way-side, the mountain-top, or the sea-shore. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will, and he never allowed himself to be diverted from that will.

Second, Christ was a teacher sent from God. As proof, we appeal to his messenger, John (Jno. 1:23-27). We appeal to the signs at his baptism (Matt. 3:16-17). We appeal to his transfiguration, where Moses and Elijah surrendered all into his hands, and

a solemn injunction is heard, "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). We appeal to his heavenly teachings. Did not his discourses attest, that both the teacher and his teachings were from above? Who could have revealed such truth, if he had not been from God? We appeal to his glorious miracles. He did what no other teacher had ever done. He healed all manner of sicknesses, expelled demons, and raised the dead. We appeal to his resurrection. Surely, God would not have raised an imposter from the dead. But Christ he did raise, and thus he was proved to be the Messiah, the Son of God, with power (Rom. 1:4). We appeal to the influence of his teaching. Has it not made myriads wise to salvation? Did it not chasten the impure, reform the profligate, dignify the abased, make happy the wretched, and inspire the lost sons of men with a joyful hope of immortality? Yes, we know that he was a teacher sent from God.

What is our duty in reference to him? We are to receive his heavenly instructions, that the design of his teaching may be fully answered in us. In order to do this, we must receive his teaching with deep humility, with constant attention, with affectionate application, with unabated constancy, with grateful acknowledgements, and with a practical application of his teaching in our dispositions and lives. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL 33566.

Citizens Of God

There are many passages of scripture that inform us how to receive heaven as our reward (II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10). But in Psalms David tells us what God expects of us if we want to be citizens in his holy hill.

First, let us notice that there is a question raised. Who shall dwell with God in his tabernacle (Ps. 15:1)? David sees God's people as guests. Whether we are accepted as his guests depends on the life we live.

Second, David gives us an outline of those who will dwell with God. This is the answer to the question raised in verse one. Notice ten things that God expects from us. One, that his children "walk uprightly" (Ps. 15:2). That is, we must conduct our lives in a righteous fashion. God's citizens should not bring reproach against him. We are to let our light shine that God will be glorified (Mt. 5:16). We are the salt that will preserve people of this world. We are to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:12).

Two, we should work righteousness (vs. 2). What is righteousness? It is right doing. Our conduct should be just and fair. Dealings with our fellow man should be honest and upright. The Old Testament prophets condemned lives that were corrupt.

Three, we should be truthful (vs. 2). This truthfulness should come from within the heart. Liars and cheaters will not enter heaven (Rev. 21:8). God's citizen will be truthful and honest with his fellow man.

Four, backbiting is condemned (vs. 3), not only here but also in other passages. Saying false things about someone is hated by God (Prov. 6:16-19). In Romans it is listed as being hated by God. Backbiting is worthy of death (Rom. 1:30,32). The Corinthians were guilty of this (II Cor. 12:20). Speaking falsely against someone is hated by God.

Five, doing evil against our neighbors is



MICHAEL BOND

condemned also by God (Ps. 15:3). We have a duty to our neighbors. We should always be willing to help those in any way that we can. Doing evil to our neighbor brings reproach upon our God. Jesus stated that we should love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:39).

Six, Christians should condemn evil. Condemn means to scorn, or to despise. Those whom we cannot convert because they love to do evil need to be scorned. God's word tells us not to associate with these people. It will corrupt our lives as well (I Cor. 15:33).

Eight, God's citizen will honor those who fear him (vs. 4). Let us be thankful for the good friends that we associate with. They at least brighten the world we live in.

Nine, God's citizen, when he makes a promise, keeps it. Let our words be our bond. If we do not plan on keeping a promise then let's not make it.

Ten, God's citizen is not tight with his money (vs. 5). We should give to those in need (Eph. 4:28). We must give cheerfully (II Cor. 9:7). If we are stingy, we cannot give willingly and cheerfully. Let us remember the words of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

God's citizen who does these things will never be moved (vs. 5). In other words, we will have a permanent dwelling place with God. But we have to be faithful to him in this life. We have to be as the Psalmist just described. We must be like Paul; we must fight the good fight, be faithful unto death (II Tim. 4:8). Christianity is our faith in action. May God's people do these things; then we can have heaven as our reward. — 2203 Elisha Ave., Zion, Illinois 60099.

If you would have God hear you when you pray, you must hear Him when He speaks.

Some folks are so proud of themselves they can strut sitting down.

A lot of little prayers as we go along through life would save a lot of long ones in case of emergencies.

Nature never intended for us to pat ourselves on the back. If she had, our hinges would be different.

Visiting The Sick

Continued from page 1

"Would you like me to pray?" I asked.

"If you want to."

I took her long boney hand in mine, held it firmly and began, "Dear Lord, on thy throne of mercy and understanding, we come asking" I asked for forgiveness of our sins (Susie is often contrary). I thanked him for his goodness; then asked that he bless Susie with a quiet spirit.

"Pray without ceasing" (I Thes. 5:17), is a command, yet how often do we neglect the power of prayer? We visit the sick and bereaved, and talk about everything except the goodness of God.

Once a friend told me, "I can't seem to get through.

I'm too upset to think clearly." Maybe this is true of others who are ill, or bereaved. They need us to put their anguish into words, and lay it at the Master's feet. Having someone *know* the ache and sympathize is a help within itself. But beyond that, the power of God is unlimited! We never know what he will grant, just for the asking.

When I left, Susie was smiling. She and I understand each other. It was she who taught me how to visit the sick. Together, we worked out some rules for visiting. Briefly, they are: forget yourself when you visit and keep your mind on the sick; accept the needy person as she is; don't tell her what she ought

to do; don't pry into her business; give the best of yourself because she needs the sunshine; never start a grapevine discussion about those you serve; be sure she knows you are visiting because you love her, not because her name is on a visitation list; offer assistance but do not expect it to be accepted every time; and always pray.

Visiting the sick, and prayer go hand in hand. Anyone can visit, but not everyone is in a position to pray. Christian women are! We have a High Priest who understands. Do you take food and send flowers but neglect to pray? — Route 1, Box 47-T, Titus, Alabama 36080.

"It's Not Easy Being Me"

Continued From Page 2

Wishing to be somebody else or wanting to be where someone else is without zeal and industry is futile. It is, in effect, wanting to take the short cut and obtain the goal without all the pain and hard work.

God wants us to be ourselves and make something of ourselves that will glorify him (Eph. 3:21). God is our Maker and our Designer. Can you imagine his making such a marvelous creation as man and building into him the design of failure. He made us a little lower than the angels (Psa. 8:5). When we are happy and successful we glorify God (I Pet. 3:10). The very nature of God is reflected in the attitude of a happy Christian. There are happy and successful people outside of the church, but they do not glorify God in their happiness. God built into you everything you need to be happy and successful and you do not need to be anybody else. You may return that goodness by serving him.

Remember that it is not easy being anybody. Every person whom we would like to immitate or replace has had his mountain to climb (Job 14:1; Ecc. 7:20). If you want to sit at the top of the mountain with the champ you will have to climb it the way he did. Mothers do not give birth to doctors, lawyers, champions or preachers. They give birth to girls and boys, and that is all. You could not tell that there was any difference at all between the three men of Matthew 25:14-30 until the Lord gave them their talents, which is money. Caleb said, "Now therefore give me this mountain . . ." (Joshua 14:12). The Anakims still lived in Caleb's mountain, but he intended to have it. It wasn't easy being Caleb. Why don't you demand the mountain God has given you?

In Ecclesiastes 9:10 Solomon said that we should do what he commands us with our might. You can tell some people they can't do a thing and they will do it or burst. Tell them they don't have the talent or the money and they will do it anyway. God seems to like honest grit like you find in a man like Paul (Phil. 4:13). It wasn't easy being Paul.

Furthermore, remember that it is not easy being anybody else. You have more experience being who you are than you do being somebody else. It is good to follow the footprints of great men, but another thing when we start living in their shadow. Paul said to immitate him inasmuch as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1). If you would like to be someone else because you think he is worry free and care free you are mistaken. Every station in life has its peculiar challenges which some call problems. If you can't handle where you are you would just be worse off if you were on a higher plane. This is apparently our Lord's point recorded in Luke 12:48 in which we are reminded that much is given to the man who uses it.

When success and happiness is defined one finds that it really means being content at whatever is the current level of attainment coupled with a determination to keep climbing. That means that we can be successful and happy now, any time we decide to. Being too anxious for tomorrow and always reaching for something we see only in the future is

futility gone to seed. Lay all that excess baggage aside and rest in the love of a God who will in no wise forsake you, but will in every way see to it that zealous Christians are fed and clothed (Matt. 6:33).

Just one parting thought needs to be suggested,

The Art Of Resisting Temptation

W. A. HOLLEY

"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:8-9).

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

His Satanic Majesty is not dead!! If we will but open our eyes we can see that his program for the human race is growing in influence and prospering in numbers. How does Satan tempt mankind? Well, he seeks to debase our thoughts, corrupt our speech, pervert our character, and debauch our actions. He tempts the children of God to compromise their convictions, to neglect their sacred duties, to live unholy lives, and to attempt to divide their loyalty between God and Satan himself. To draw the people of God back into the world, he still uses his ever-popular devices: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (I John 2:15-17).

We are aware of the fact that no set of rules or suggestions can help one resist Satan unless one exerts the will and determination to thrust him aside! We trust that all who read these lines shall not allow Satan to gain an advantage over them (John 7:17; Revelation 22:17; II Corinthians 2:11).

Herewith, we submit some rules which can help you to resist Satan's temptations:

(1) Do not underestimate Satan's power of inducement, enticement, and persuasion, to yield to his will and way. He has mislead countless millions long before you came into the world.

(2) Never overrate your own strength to resist temptation. Peter made this great mistake! He, (along with the other apostles) thought that he would never forsake the Lord, but, ironically, he denied Jesus three times (Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-34).

(3) Remember that there is always a way of escape which is revealed in the Sacred Scriptures; but that you must use the Scriptures in order to find that way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13; Psalms 119:11; Luke 2:19,51; I John 3:9). God does not provide for any one a miraculous way of escape from temptation.

(4) Avoid evil companionships (I Corinthians 15:33).

(5) Never, never forsake the Lord's assembly (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 1:10). The lack of assembling together with the saints of God diminishes one's strength and enthusiasm for the Lord.

(6) Do not lose contact with God. When an electrical

circuit is broken, the light goes out! "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

(7) Keep on studying the Holy Bible year after year. When you stop reading God's word regularly, you will begin to lose spiritual strength. God's word is food for your soul (Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2; II Timothy 2:15; II Peter 3:18).

(8) "Be sure your sins will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). How can our sins find us out? Our sins may never be publicly exposed, but we will know, and God knows. Smitten consciences, sleepless nights, impaired health, and bitter tears of sorrow and regret represent some of the ways our sins can find us out. "The wages of sin is death," whether ever disclosed or not (Romans 6:23; I Timothy 5:24-25).

(9) Always be aware that God Almighty is looking down upon you, wherever you are, and whatever you do (Job 26:6; Proverbs 15:11; Psalms 139:1-12; Hebrews 4:12-13). To him you must give an account in the Great Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27-28).

(10) Practice thought control (II Corinthians 10:4-5). As one thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7). One can think on things which are not lustful and degrading (Philippians 4:8). One can keep his mind free from licentiousness and wantonness. Clean up your mind! Empty it of all thoughts of moral and spiritual corruption (II Corinthians 7:1; Romans 12:1-2; 13:10-14; Colossians 3:5-15).

(11) You should recognize that sin is just as bad now as it ever has been. Sin is sin, whether "big" or "little," as you may judge sin. From the Biblical point of view, there are no "big" sins and "little" sins. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

(12) Make certain that you do not put yourself in a situation where you will be sorely tried and severely tested by moral and physical temptations. King David was in the wrong place and Bathsheba was in the wrong place; hence, an atrocious sin was committed, the consequence of which was unforeseen (II Samuel 11:2-27; 12:1-23). "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13), is a Hebraism, by which God is said to do a thing which he only permits or suffers to be done. God tries but never tempts any one to do evil (James 1:13-15). Why should you expose yourself to temptations which you may not be able to resist?? — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 36580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am no philosopher, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1982

NUMBER 29

"A Beloved Brother, A Faithful Minister, And Fellow-Servant In The Lord"

FRANKLIN CAMP

This is the language used by Paul in reference to Tychicus in Colossians 4:7. I can think of no words more appropriate to describe brother John D. Duncan. Brother Duncan died June 16, 1982, at the age of seventy-nine. I realize that we may think of the words in Colossians 4:7 as applying to a preacher (minister), but I am not sure that this is what Paul meant. The reference may be to one who worked with Paul as a fellow-servant. Whatever may have been the specific thought, these words aptly fit brother John Duncan.

It was my privilege to know brother Duncan for nearly forty years. I was living at Munford, Alabama, about twenty miles from Jacksonville, Alabama, when he obeyed the gospel. Brother Joe Hyde taught him and baptized him. The building at Jacksonville did not have a baptistry, and they went to Sansom Avenue in Alabama City to baptize him. From that day, he never looked back. His heart was in the cause for which his Savior died.

One of the reasons I selected the words of Colossians 4:7 to head this article is the love brother Duncan had for the Bible and for the truth. I did not think it would be appropriate to use anything but Bible words in penning this article about brother Duncan. He was a Bible-believing man. He lived by it. He wanted it preached. He encouraged all who preached to teach the truth. He had little patience with any compromise of truth. He knew only the truth freed from sin.

Brother Duncan was a faithful and devoted husband. His wife, Mattie Duncan, died October 27, 1980. She was sick for some time before her death, and he, along with the children, tenderly cared for her.

Brother Duncan was a simple, unpretentious person. He was genuine to the core. He never sought the lime-light. He is an example of one who may live

in obscurity, brotherhood-wise, and yet may have an influence which is felt far and wide. Consider the following: his children — Billy Lee Smith, elder at Jacksonville; Clifford Smith, preacher at Columbus, Georgia; Bobby Duncan, preacher at Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama; Johnia Holder, a faithful Christian at Adamsville, Alabama; one son, Jack Smith, deceased. It takes a devoted Christian to have this kind of influence. It begins at home where one is seen as he really is. His influence is reflected in his family. Two sons are preaching, and another serves as an elder at the home congregation.

His influence reaches out to his grand-children. He has one grandson and three grandsons-in-law who preach full-time. He has a grandson-in-law who is an elder and preaches some also.

Brother Duncan loved the church and wanted to see it grow. He attended meetings far and wide. He supported all the meetings in the area, with his presence and words of encouragement for the preacher. He was always a source of encouragement to me. While I was living in Munford, I preached in tent meetings throughout the area. Brother Duncan, with his family, always supported these meetings.

He was never satisfied for the church just to "keep house." After I moved to East Gadsden, I remember an occasion when he came to talk with me about the lack of interest in the church at Jacksonville. He said, "I have done everything I can to try to get the church active. I've not been able to accomplish a thing. I can no longer stay where the church refuses to work. I'm thinking about driving to East Gadsden to worship." I discouraged his leaving Jacksonville and offered to come for a meeting if he could persuade the church to invite me. I was invited and went for the meeting. I tried to wake the church of its opportunities and responsibilities. The church accepted the challenge,

and it began a new day in the church at Jacksonville. Brother Duncan deserves much credit for the church at Jacksonville's being where it is today, though he would not want the credit.

It was this kind of life that made him a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow-servant in the Lord. He was at Adamsville just a week or two before his death. I spoke to him and asked how he was. As always, he said, "I'm doing fine." Though he had had a stroke several years back and had to use a walker, there were a light in his eyes and a joy in his voice that reflected the impact of the gospel in his life.


Brother Duncan will be missed by his family, by the church, by all who knew him, but his influence will live on. His love for the Lord and his devotion and service will continue on.

The *Words of Truth*, edited by Bobby, will be an extension of the faith and devotion of his father.

I extend my sympathy to the family. The fleshly ties that bind feel the tinge of sorrow, but the eye of faith sees a faithful soldier of Christ, laying aside his battle-scarred armor to rest in peace where the wicked cease from troubling and where the weary are at rest. — 309 Clermont Ave., Birmingham, Ala. 35209.

(Editor's note — Thanks to brother Camp for this article, and for his friendship to our family. My father felt there was no greater preacher on earth than brother Camp. I share this view, and would add there is no better man on earth than brother Camp.)

Thanks also to so many of our readers who, upon seeing the announcement placed in Words of Truth by Flavil Nichols, have already expressed your sympathy.)



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Review Of The Merideth- Hogland Debate

WENDELL H. GANN

Noel Merideth met Ward Hogland in Grenada, Mississippi on June 25 and 26th to debate the "saints only" benevolent practice of many churches. The first night the proposition read: "The Scriptures teach that a congregation may not from its treasury provide benevolent aid to a sinner or one who is safe." Ward Hogland was in the affirmative and Noel Merideth the negative. The second night the word "not" was omitted from the proposition and Noel Merideth affirmed and Ward Hogland was in the negative.

It should be said that the debate was conducted with fairness and consideration on the part of each opponent. There were no sneers, innuendoes, or mud slinging, that detracted from the subject itself. The spirit of the entire debate was one of honest searching for the truth. I think such reflected the brotherly love of the Elliott and Van Doan churches in their arrangement for the debate.

Originally Brother Bill Jackson had signed the proposition to represent the Elliott brethren but Bill suffered a heart attack and Noel Merideth was asked to take his place. (Bill is recovering and it is hoped he will soon be able to return to his local preaching in Austin, Texas.)

Both parties in the debate believe in individual Christians doing good unto saints "and all men," but the difference was whether from the church treasury the church could practice the teaching of Gal. 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Noel Merideth was in the affirmative on the second night, and put forth the following arguments:

The Principle of Love

It is clear that the church is to show love to all men; I Thess. 3:12 says, "abound in love one toward another, and toward all men." Love means helping; it is not enough to love in word only but love is to be demonstrated in deeds (I John 3:16-18). Love means helping more than brethren; Jesus said, "And if ye

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Not Be Self-Willed

(Seventeenth in a Series on the Qualifications
of Elders)

"For a bishop must be . . . not self-willed" (Titus 1:7). We have been using the list of qualifications in I Timothy 3 as our outline in this study, and have incorporated into the discussion the entire list of qualifications recorded in Titus 1, except two: "not self-willed," and "a lover of good men." The first of these will be the subject of the present discussion.

The Greek word *authades* 'self-willed' is used twice in the New Testament — here and in II Peter 2:10. It "denotes one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will" (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine). In further defining this word, Vine quotes from *Trench's New Testament Synonyms* as follows: "one so far overvaluing any determination at which he has himself once arrived that he will not be removed from it." Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* uses the following words in defining *authades*: *self-satisfied, arbitrary, unconsidered, morose, gruff, blatant, shameless*. The following comment is also made in this volume and in this connection: "In the two passages in which *authades* occurs in the NT the reference is to human impulse violating obedience to the divine command."

Let us notice some of the implications of a few of the elements of the definitions of this Greek word which is translated *self-willed*.

One who is self-willed is dominated by self-interest. Such in the eldership is certain to be a constant source of problems. If there is one characteristic an elder must be without to perform his duty effectively it is selfishness. One who cannot put the interest of the Lord's kingdom ahead of his own personal whims and fancies cannot be an elder. One who just has to have his own way is dominated by self-interest.

Also, according to the definitions we have seen, one who is self-willed is inconsiderate of others. When we consider that the work of elders has to do with watching out for the welfare of others it becomes quite obvious that one who is inconsiderate of others could not possibly function effectively as an elder. One of this nature certainly is not the kind of person any of us would want to select to watch for our souls (Hebrews 13:17). Only those who are caring, considerate men can serve as elders in the church of God.

We note also that, by definition, one who is self-willed is one who is arrogant. One who is overly convinced of his own importance cannot be an elder. The self-willed person demands more power or consideration than is rightly his. He considers himself to be the center, the object, and the norm of all experience. Certainly one must have a reasonable degree of confidence in his own judgment; but to be



BOB DUNCAN

the kind of person who believes his personal judgment is superior to the combined judgment of all the other elders, is to be haughty and self-willed.

The definition of *self-willed* implies the idea of one's asserting his own will as being the right course to follow, and then refusing to be removed from it. He places a magnified estimate of value upon his own chosen way, and is determined that others must yield to him. One who just must have his own way cannot be an elder in the church.

God intended that each congregation be overseen by a plurality of elders (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). Most members of the church of Christ would agree that it would be a sin for a congregation to have only one elder. Yet there are a number of congregations which, for all practical purposes, are governed by one elder. Though several men may be listed on the stationery as elders of the church, all decisions of any magnitude are made by one man. If this one man happens to be absent from an elder's meeting, then any decision which might have been made in his absence has to be re-hashed once he is present again. Sometimes the other elders reach the point that they postpone all important decisions until this one man can be present. What would make an arrangement like this scriptural, while an eldership composed of only one man is unscriptural?

III John 9, 10 mentions a self-willed person: "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 therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." Diotrephes rejected the apostle John, evidently because of jealousy. The language here seems to indicate that a letter written to the church by John was withheld from the church by this selfish individual. He would allow nothing which would in any way detract from his own importance, not even the exercising of hospitality toward brethren who were travelling in the interest of the kingdom of the Lord. No doubt he feigned deep interest in the welfare of the church, but John, by inspiration, marks him as a self-serving individual motivated by the love of preeminence. Unfortunately there are those in the church in our own time who are of this same disposition. Every effort should be taken to see that none who are such ever get into the eldership.

In order to avoid being self-willed, it would be good if every elder and every person who aspires to the eldership would read often the admonition in Philippians 2:3: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." One simply could not obey the admonition of this passage and go into an elders' meeting with the disposition to "rule or ruin." He could not obey this and insist that his own judgment is better than all others. One who esteems others better than himself simply cannot over estimate the value of his own judgment, be inconsiderate of others, or arrogantly assert his own

Continued on page 3

Review Of The Merideth-Hogland Debate

Continued from page 2

salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matt. 5:47).

In The Footsteps of Jesus

If the church as a local body of believers cannot help needy strangers then it is not following in the footsteps of Jesus. Our Lord healed the daughter of a Syrophenician woman in Mark 7:24ff. If the church can't help children who are not Christians it is not following in Jesus' steps for he fed children and women in addition to 5,000 men (Matt. 14:21). Jesus went about doing much good (Acts 10:38). After the Jews took up stones to kill him in John 10:32, he asked, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?" Who would cast a stone at Christ's church for following in his footsteps?

TOTALITY Of The Scriptures

When studying the plan of salvation or any Biblical subject we realize that we must observe all the Bible has to say. In learning about the Lord's supper we study Matt. 26 to learn *what*, we study I Cor. 11 to learn *how*, and we study Acts 20:7 to learn *when*. So in studying the benevolent practice of the early church we must consider all the passages. We have such passages as Gal. 6:10, James 1:27, Acts 11 and others.

In regard to the collection taken in the churches of Macedonia and Achaia we read it was for the "poor saints at Jerusalem." In giving the church at Corinth instructions about the collection he mentions the "want of the saints" (II Cor. 9:11), and says in the

next verse that liberal distribution will be made "unto them, and unto all men." After the collection had been made we have a statement of its dispersement in Acts 24:17 when Paul says to Felix that he came to Jerusalem "to bring alms to my nation." Felix had "been of many years a judge unto this nation." Was Felix judge of only the "saints"? The truth is, in this subject as in all others, we must accept the Totality of the Scriptures.

Fleshly Israel versus Spiritual Israel

Under the Mosaic law individuals were to help the poor, the fatherless, the widows, and the "strangers" by leaving the corners of their fields for them to glean. But they also collected *tithes* to give to the Levites, strangers, fatherless and widows (Deut. 14:28,29). The book of Hebrews assures us that the new covenant is "better" than the old, but the "saints only" practice makes fleshly Israel superior to spiritual Israel in benevolence.

Other Arguments

Brother Merideth had a barrage of some 23 points that overwhelmed Hogland. He was never able to reply to half of them. One needs to hear the tapes to get the total of these arguments.

Hogland's Arguments

Ward Hogland invented a new vocabulary as a smoke screen to confuse the audience. He attempted to give three definitions to "church": the Church Universal, the Church Distributively and the Church Collectively. He then talked about the benevolence the church could do, that the church could aid sinners

and children. What he simply meant by Church Distributively was "individuals." There was no disagreement over individuals doing this, but whether the local church could out of its treasury.

Bro. Hogland had a chart of the *Two Treasuries*: the Individual and the Local church. But in practice he had three for he told a story how a church in Mississippi collected \$300 and gave it to a woman who delivered it to a sick girl. When Bro. Merideth asked where was this "Third Treasury" with the "woman treasurer" on his chart, he saw he had fallen into his own trap.

Bro. Hogland insisted that Paul was a deceiver if he took a collection for "poor saints at Jerusalem" and then delivered it to more than just the saints. Bro. Merideth pointed out to him that II Corinthians was written before the fact of the collection, and thus in II Cor. 9:13 Paul tells them who it will be for. Paul was no deceiver.

Ward Hogland repudiated W. E. Bingham's statement made in the *Highers-Bingham Debate*, p. 219: "But if they were left destitute, I'd let money be taken out of the church treasury before I'd let them starve." With Hogland's disagreement with Bingham, Hogland's position would let starving children die before taking aid out of the church treasury.

Cassettes and reel tapes are available and I will be happy to forward your order. — 5328 First Ave. No. Birmingham, Ala. 35212.

God's Attitude Toward Sinners

While serving their time in Babylonian captivity, the children of Israel were saying: "Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them, how then can we live?" God's word to Ezekiel was, "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn away from his way and live . . . turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die . . ." (Ezek. 33:10-11).



JOHN WADDEY

Great and wonderful lessons can be learned from the Old Testament. The above scripture beautifully illustrates God's attitude toward sinners in every age.

This illustrates the despair of men without God. "Our sins are upon us . . . we pine away in them; how then can we live?" Sinners must learn that iniquity bears its penalty with it. It injures the mind and weakens the body. It shortens the life and degrades the spirit. It robs us of our dignity and God's approval. There is no peace to the wicked (Is. 57:21). Sin becomes an increasingly heavy burden to bear. It tends to harden and sear the conscience if left in the life. Many sinners do not even recognize the danger of their condition. The god of this world has blinded them (II Cor. 4:4). Sin always ends in hopelessness and despair. Like Saul before his salvation, we cry out, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:4).

The death penalty of sin generally does not come as lightning, from heaven, rather it works as a slow poison (Jas. 1:15).

Our text demonstrates the divine disposition toward sinners. "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." The pagans of that generation and ours,

needed to hear those words. In their false religions, their gods were generally "devil gods" out to harm men. These vindictive gods had to be placated and appeased. Sadly, millions of Jehovah worshipers have been led to believe that God decreed the damnation of specific sinners. (This of course came through the influence of Calvinism.) Some of God's children mistakenly have conceived of God as being anxious to destroy them. Perhaps they mistook their own emotions of God's. All with such distorted notions need be reminded that our God's nature is one of love for all men (I John 4:16). That holy love is manifested to all men in the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son for sin and salvation (John 3:16). His personal oath is given to confirm this fact: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah." "Since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself . . ." (Heb. 6:16).

Ezekiel shows us the heavenly challenge. "Turn ye from your evil way; For why will ye die?" What a remarkable scene! The great Jehovah is pleading with rebellious sinners to come back to him. Here then is a universal summons to repentance. In every age, repentance has been an absolute necessity for salvation. Jonah preached repentance to the citizens of Ninevah (Jonah 3:10). John the Baptist called upon his contemporaries to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matt. 3:1). Jesus warned all men to repent or perish (Lk. 13:3). The apostles declared that God "commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30). No impenitent

person can hope to be saved!

To repent means to turn back to God. It is not just emotion, nor is it simply a reformed life. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation . . . but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Cor. 7:10). It is a change of heart that grows out of the emotion or conviction and results in a change of life. "A tearless change of heart and life is true conversion, while weeping without change is worthless sentiment."

We hear God's searching question, "Why will ye die?: This pointed question lays the burden of responsibility upon the individual. How foolish for a man to refuse to repent and allow God to save him. A sick man who refuses to take his heart medicine is foolish. A drowning man who stubbornly refuses to grasp a lifeline is considered insane. What of a dying sinner too proud to turn to God and thus escape the hell of fire?"

The reward for obedience is clearly set forth. Turn and *live* is God's offer. Life: how beautiful the word. We take it for granted, we act as though God owed it to us. It often takes a narrow scrape with death properly to focus our view of life. God's people enjoy the abundant life now (John 10:10). No sinner has known the full joy of living until he lives in the light of God's saving love. Then there is life in eternity. To Paul the life beyond the grave was "very far better" (Phil. 1:23). Some foolish souls race madly through

Continued on page 4

An Elder Must Not Be Self-Willed

Continued from page 2

will.

It is sometimes necessary for an eldership to make decisions with reference to matters in which there is no unanimity of judgment. If none of the elders are self-willed, each one can have his say, and a decision can then be made according to the wisdom of the

majority of those present. When the meeting is over, all can leave with good feelings toward their fellow elders, and none can possibly feel that he has been treated unfairly. This is consistent with the very nature of the kingdom of God.

A Worthless Piece Of Cloth

I have just finished reading a newspaper article entitled, "New Studies Indicate Jesus Died Of A Heart Attack." I find this article to be filled with assumption and supposition. The so-called "noted Jesuit review *Civiltà Cattolica*," in setting forth such foolishness, may be noted only for such foolishness. There are no "apparent inconsistencies" in the Gospels, as Dr. Malantrucco falsely stated. The only inconsistencies are in those who fail to "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). This so-called "new evidence" could not help to prove that the Shroud of Turin is the burial cloth of Jesus, because there has never been any irrefutable proof given before this time that such is the case. The only statement of truth in the whole article was made by Vittori Marozzi, "Christ died on the cross, there's no doubt about that."



JOHN G. SHAVER

The Gospel according to John does not state that Christ was stabbed in the chest. The Bible states, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his *side* . . ." (Jno. 19:34). When one quotes the Bible, he should quote it correctly. But with all the other inconsistencies stated by these so-called experts, it is no wonder that they misquoted God's word. The Bible record says nothing about Christ bleeding profusely. It states, ". . . forthwith there came out blood and water" (Jno. 19:34). It is a sorrowful thing to state that Jesus died of a heart attack just to prove that a worthless rag was his burial garment.

Crucifixion was a most horrible form of death. Peloubet's Bible Dictionary states, "A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly — dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds, all intensified up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head and stomach, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and, while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst." According to Webster, the word "surcharge" means, "to overcharge, overload; overburden, to fill to excess or beyond normal capacity." This would explain the flow of blood from the side of Jesus. Dr. Aetano Della Site's findings would be inadmissible as supporting the so-called proof of Dr. Malantrucco, because those people who had died of a heart attack had not undergone the cruel punishment of crucifixion.

This "new theory says that Jesus suffered a heart attack after the Last Supper, in the Garden of Gethsemane." Where is their proof? Dr. Malantrucco's interpretation of Matthew 26:38 is completely false! Jesus, who had been the comforter of those with him in every hour of danger and trouble, now calls on them for the help which their wakeful sympathy would give him in the hour of his agony, and they failed him. That, dear friend, is simply what that passage shows. Dr. Malantrucco says that the statement of Jesus relates to the pain of a heart attack. Ridiculous! Malantrucco then states that the

condition of Jesus worsened, and he died on the cross after shouting out in pain. Let us examine this fallacious position in the light of scripture, and a little common sense. Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23 and John 18-19 relate that Jesus underwent six different trials in a twenty-four hour period, without rest. He also underwent scourging and other physical abuse. He then was forced to bear his cross through the streets of the city until Simon was conscripted to carry it for him. Does this sound like a man who had just suffered a heart attack? I know of no man after surviving a serious heart attack, being able to be subjected to such cruel and inhuman treatment, as was Jesus, surviving to be nailed to a cross of crucifixion. He likely would have died before being crucified. Dr. Malantrucco also relates that ". . . he died . . . after shouting out in pain." The scriptures nowhere state that Jesus cried out in pain. They plainly state, ". . . when he had cried again with a loud voice. . ." (Matt. 27:50). Luke relates what was said after Jesus cried out, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46). Now honestly, does that sound like a man who has just died from a severe heart attack? Ridiculous!

Now we come to the real reason behind these false assumptions and suppositions stated in this article. Dr. Malantrucco "first presented his findings to a

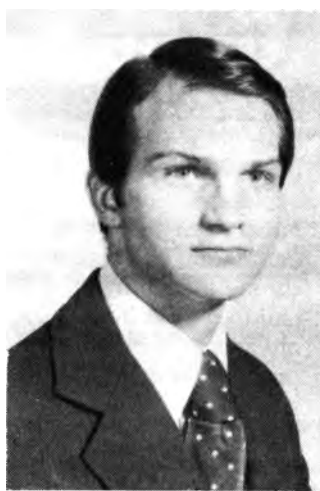
convention on the Shroud of Turin in Bologna last fall." We can now see why it has been stated that Jesus died from a heart attack instead of the horrible pain of crucifixion. To give credence to a worthless piece of cloth! Now watch as we have another assumption and supposition placed before us as if it were fact. "Scientists who examined the cloth in 1978 said evidence *suggests* the image is that of Jesus and that it was 'projected' on the surface wrapped around his body, perhaps by a burst of some kind of radiation emanating from all parts of his body." How do we know that it was the body of Jesus wrapped in this cloth? Where do we find the likeness to compare this image? Where is the proof that this image was not that of one of the thieves crucified with him? Do we actually think that a piece of cloth can exist without special treatment for 2000 years? Examine the language of the experts that you and I are to put stock in. Suggests? Perhaps? Some kind? Dear friend, if you allow me language like that, I can prove that you are a Martian with two heads, six arms, and five legs! In this world of ours, infidelity runs rampant, and this false theory is just one more tool of Satan to instill doubt in the hearts of mankind in relation to God's infallible word. Let us not fall prey to the deceptive ploys of Satan and his disciples. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL. 33566.

A Plea For Peace

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:16-18,21).

The foregoing advice is forever timeless, forever timely. Peace, unity and union are always relevant topics. It is still good — and will always be good — for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalms 133:1). A house divided has no better hope of standing today than it did in the days of Christ's flesh or during the darkened days of our own Civil War (Matthew 12:25).

Peace and unity are built upon a foundation of selflessness. This involves putting your needs, wants, and rights ahead of my own. I will not insist upon always having my own way, for love "seeketh not her own" (I Corinthians 13:5). I will allow myself



DALTON KEY

to be hurt before letting you suffer hurt. As Paul said, "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Corinthians 6:7). I will not sulk, complain, or murmur when things don't go just as I would like them to go. In short, I will do my best to follow the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). Loving my neighbor as myself (Matthew 22:39) demands selflessness and thus contributes to "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

We realize our society has become addicted to self. Taking overshadows giving; "we" has become superseded by "me." The world seems to revolve around strikes, riots and boycotts. Our culture has duped itself into believing that we all have the right to fight for our way about anything and everything. This "me first" philosophy may be understandable in a godless society, but such selfishness is neither understandable nor excusable in the church founded by the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). The world flouts the concerns of others and submits to no one. The body of Christ lives in harmony with the inspired advice which teaches, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 4:21).

Let us throw our "rights" to the wind and concentrate upon the needs of others. This, as nothing else, will aid us in developing a larger measure of Christ's spirit. — Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

God's Attitude Toward Sinners

Continued from page 3

life as though it would never end or as if there were nothing beyond. Like the rich man of Luke 16:23, they will be rudely awakend one day in torment begging for a drop of water for their parched tongue.

God has no pleasure in the death of sinners. His

only wish is that they would turn from their sin and live. Now that you know and understand God's attitude toward you, what will be your response toward him? — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691)

the Words of Truth and soberness."

Speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, JULY 23, 1982

NUMBER 30

Cultism — Could It Arise In The Church?

CURTIS A. CATES

(Editor's note: We do not ordinarily publish articles of this length. But because of the nature of this article we have made an exception. We are in debt to brother Cates for his careful research and documentation of this material.)

One of the greatest dangers facing young people today is cultism. And, it poses a real danger to society. "Exploding like atomic bombs the cults have mushroomed upon the American religious horizon."¹ They "continue to attract young admirers with increasing success."² Professor Herman A. Norton, Vanderbilt Divinity School, stated that cults are growing rapidly, in spite of the fact that they have gotten negative publicity.³ Many authorities feel that the crime level may be linked to the cults, as well as to "other anti-establishment groups."⁴ Since 1970, over "ten million Americans have been involved in the modern breed of 'fringe religious cults.'" Carol Williams, a British researcher, noted, "Cults are now a very, very big business."⁶ They have led many thousands to abandon families, educational pursuits, friends, and careers "to follow the teachings of a leader they will never meet."⁷

The burden of this article will be to define cultism, to assess the causes of cultism, to examine its basic characteristics and tenets, to observe its methods of recruiting, to evaluate its effect upon its adherents, to contrast cultism with New Testament Christianity, to question whether or not cultism could arise in the Lord's Church, and to make recommendations of vigilance.

CULTISM — ITS DEFINITION

"A cult is an organized heresy; its false views capture a person and become a disease in his intellectual and emotional structure," said Dave Breese.⁸ Perry Cotham stated that cults are those religious groups which are not in the mainstream of the major religious groups in society. He further observed that they sometimes "demand blind faith and single-hearted allegiance." They are distinguished by sociologists from major churches

"which serve as custodians of normative values." Dr. Norton said that a cult "takes one passage of scripture or one belief and emphasizes that out of proportion to everything else."¹⁰ It may be "an accepted body of normal religious beliefs that crystallize around a personality like (Jim) Jones."¹¹ Dr. Gordon Lewis concluded, "a cult, then, is any religious movement which claims the backing of Christ or the Bible, but distorts the central message of Christianity by 1) an additional revelation, and 2) by displacing a fundamental tenet of faith with a secondary matter."

CULTISM — ITS CAUSES

A number of factors have contributed to the growth of cultism. First, changes in social and value systems in America have brought about a seeming rootless society.¹³ Second, "Part of the motivation for conversion to currently popular religious movements is the decline of American familism."¹⁴ Relationships in families are more free;¹⁵ parents are too permissive.¹⁶ Third, the mainline churches, Cotham said, have failed to meet the spiritual needs of members.¹⁷ Too many people know what they believe, but they cannot defend their faith.¹⁸ In modern life, religion is too often considered simply a way to use one's leisure but nothing more.¹⁹ Thus, Roszak observed that "secular skepticism leaves the field open to quacks and rascals."²⁰


CULTISM — ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND TENETS

The following cultic behavior characteristics are cited by the scholars, but few groups would fit all the descriptions. One, many of the groups have a leader who is thought to possess "unique powers, divinely imparted grace, or special prophetic abilities." He is considered to be charismatic.²¹ He proposes closely and strictly to regulate the life of each member, who becomes virtually a slave.²² He becomes a powerful father figure, even a "messiah."²³ Two, the cults make a strong play on quoting scriptures, but they are "false prophets" and "ravaging wolves" (Matt. 7:15,16), who bring in "damnable heresies" (II Pet.

2:1). An example of their perversion is changing terminology such as "father" and "family" to mean the leader of the cult and the cult itself.²⁴ Three, "total commitment is essential to a cult's survival," inasmuch as they have problems with a cult's "continuance, cohesion, and control."²⁵ Members must "subordinate their will to that of the leaders in virtually every aspect of life," giving an account of every act of their lives.²⁶ They also "follow strict schedules." They are much overworked.²⁷ Four, "in joining a cult, the recruit surrenders a large measure of personal responsibility and potential growth in exchange for spiritual security."²⁸ Five, many are called upon to withdraw from normal involvements, especially from the family.²⁹ "In the long run, no religious group is likely to be considered normative if it demands total commitment in the form of withdrawal from ordinary career patterns or familiar social networks."³⁰ Parents may even be described as Satan's agents. Some state that they would even go as far as kill their parents, if the leader gave the command.³¹ Six, much emphasis is placed upon fellowship, being a part of the group, worshipping and "witnessing" together, and attending special seminars and classes.³² They say that five or six hours of sleep is quite enough. Members' lives are not their own.³³ Seven, the cult leaders do all the thinking for the members, who are to "believe only what they are told." They are even told, "We will do your thinking for you."³⁴ Thus, the leaders determine whether or not a person marries, whom he dates, whom he marries, how many children he has, who his friends are, and where he works.³⁵ Eight, in order to discourage leaving the cults, some "systematically maintain conditions designed to weaken resistance and induce a state of physiological and psychic depletion."³⁶ "To bind members tighter to the cult, its leaders create the image of an evil outgroup that is supposedly trying to destroy them."³⁷ Though some are not retained by force, they are told that God will punish them or their parents, or that they will contract a serious illness. "Thus, physical restraint is un-

Continued on page 2

Harding Graduate School
of Religion Library



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Cultism —

Could It Arise In The Church?

Continued from page 1

necessary. 'Spiritual' persuasion is a way of keeping subjects in the cult, and it is quite effective."³⁸

CULTISM — ITS METHODS OF RECRUITING

The recruiting methods of cults are based upon deception.³⁹ Some have even used females to do what has been termed "flirty fishing."⁴⁰ The victims are mainly those who are young — college students and those especially vulnerable. Dr. Norton observed, "They are increasing significantly in Nashville, and wherever there is a congregation of young people, particularly in college settings."⁴¹ The ages generally sought range from 18 to 25.⁴² And, timing is important in recruiting. Those having exams, suffering broken romances, trying to find themselves,⁴³ having weak family ties, and unsuccessful in dealing with problems in life are especially vulnerable.⁴⁴

The first step in recruiting is termed by the psychologists as "love bombing." They are hugged by the members, and everything is very pleasurable.⁴⁵ They are invited to dinner and to endless religious discussions.⁴⁶ The real purpose is many times kept secret at this stage — "heavenly deception."⁴⁷

The second step includes guilt, little sleep, and isolation.⁴⁸ "Only the most discerning recruits realize that they are not being allowed to ask probing questions or make close friends."⁴⁹

The third step is the "brainwashing" stage, at which time "techniques of persuasion by means of tight information control" are used.⁵⁰ The courts have thus defended the rights of parents to "haul youths out of communes and have them" deprogrammed until "they renounce their unorthodox beliefs."⁵¹

The fourth step is the development of a new personality. They have been made to feel tremendous guilt about their past lives; they desire to undergo the rebirth of their fellow cult members.⁵² Having been "compelled to sever attachments to friends and to family, to drop out of college, and to give up outside employment,"⁵³ they come more to depend upon the group. The final stage "often included classic psychic or neurotic symptoms, such as schizophrenia, suicide, loss of ego boundaries, and an inability to differentiate between reality and fantasy." "But the development of a new personality is gradual."⁵⁴ The members have been described at times as

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

An Elder Must Be A Lover Of Good Men

(Eighteenth in a Series on
the Qualifications of Elders)

"For a bishop must be . . . a lover of good men" (Titus 1:7,8). The American Standard Version correctly leaves off the word *men*, and states simply that a bishop must be "a lover of good." Certainly one who is a lover of good will be a lover of good men, but he will be more. The Greek word *philagathos* 'a lover of good' (ASV) is defined by Thayer as meaning simply "loving goodness." Moulton and Milligan (*The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*) define the word as meaning "loving what is good."

This Greek word is compounded from two other Greek words: *philos* 'friend' (from *phileo* 'love'), and *agathos* 'good.' There is another Greek word (*kalos*) which means "good," and which occurs as frequently in the New Testament as this one, but this one seems to be the loftier of the two. It suggests that which is intrinsically and inherently good, and not that merely which would be advantageous or valuable from a monetary standpoint. This is the word used in Titus 3:1, where Paul exhorted: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." It is the word used twice by the rich young ruler when he approached the Lord and said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" And it is the word used to describe Barnabas, who was said to be "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24). It is this kind of goodness for which elders must have a fondness. Everything which is intrinsically good and noble should have a friend in every elder and in every man who aspires to the eldership. Albert Barnes, in his *Notes on the New Testament*, says, "There is no more essential qualification of a bishop than this."

Paul knew it would not be possible, in listing the qualifications of bishops, to name specifically every good thing toward which faithful men would be inclined. But he knew also that there are some things universally acknowledged as being good. He intended by this language to assure that only such men as had shown an inclination toward all things good would be selected to oversee the congregation.

Our late beloved brother Gus Nichols was an example of this characteristic. It is doubtful that there is a man on earth who would accuse brother Nichols of ever having an indifferent attitude toward anything he recognized as being good. To him it mattered not whether he started it or was in any way connected with it; if it was good, he encouraged it and supported it as best he could. Every sound and scriptural evangelistic effort, every benevolent work, everything done to edify or teach church members more about the Bible received his hearty endorsement and support. From his busy schedule he



BOB DUNCAN

managed to take time to attend hundreds of gospel meetings and to encourage every faithful gospel preacher. He was, indeed, a lover of all that is good.

This is quite a contrast to an inclination on the part of some to support and encourage their own pet projects, and to treat everything else as if it were a work of the devil. Some there are whose attitude seems to be, "If I didn't think of it, it's no good. If it doesn't put me in the spotlight, I'll have nothing to do with it. If I can't control it, then I'll ignore it." Some are even jealous of the good being accomplished by others in the kingdom of God, and if they had it in their power, would put a stop to it.

There are others who, while not actively opposing any good works, simply are not interested in them. They may drive across the state to attend a circus or a ballgame, but cannot be persuaded to drive across town to attend a gospel meeting or a lectureship. Such practices show what one loves, and we likely would not classify him as a lover of that which is intrinsically and inherently good. This, of course, is not to say that going to the circus or the ballgame is wrong; it is rather to illustrate the fact that some do not have their priorities arranged properly so as to be likely prospects for the eldership.

There are two passages to which consideration should be given in connection with this particular qualification. Neither of the two was written specifically to elders, but both of them would be especially applicable to them as we give thought to the fact that elders must be lovers of that which is good. Colossians 3:1,2 admonishes: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Matthew 6:19-21 says: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Both of these passages have to do with loving that which is good.

Philippians 4:8, while not addressed specifically to elders, is a fitting commentary upon the requirement to love that which is good: "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." In commenting on this beautiful verse, Albert Barnes has written the following:

"In this exhortation the apostle assumes that there were certain things admitted to be true, and pure, and good in the world, which had not been directly revealed, or which were commonly regarded as such by the men of the world, and his object is to show them that such things ought to be exhibited by the Christian. Everything that was honest and just towards God and towards men was to be practiced by

Continued on page 3

Cultism — Could It Arise In The Church?

Continued From Page 2

"zombie-like," "programmed," "glass-eye stare," "fixed facial smile," "robot-like responses." The "memory of his past human interaction with the ordinary world has been remolded into a conception of guilt and self-worthlessness."⁵⁵

CULTISM — ITS CONTRAST TO NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

Contrary to the accusations of some, the New Testament church neither began as a cult nor is it a cult. A number of striking contrasts are observable. One, the church has but one head, and He is the true Messiah — not an impostor. Two, Jesus Christ urges us to count the cost of following Him. No deception is utilized in carrying the gospel to lost souls. Faithful evangelists are careful to set out obligations in advance.⁵⁶ There is no blind loyalty among Christians. Three, no coercion is used in attempts to convert lost souls. "Thus, the practices of few, if any, other societal institutions approach the intensity, sophistication, or completeness of the conditioning process found in some cults."⁵⁷ Certainly the church has no authority to use such means. Four, there is no concentrating upon a certain age group or upon the weak or vulnerable. "The gospel is for all." Five, no attempt is made to cause a person to develop a guilt complex in order to convert him. The Bible speaks of man's dignity, his importance — Christ died for him. Though we have sinned, Christ will abundantly pardon the obedient. Six, Christianity does not make people peculiar in "dress, lack of manners in public places, or general obnoxiousness."⁵⁸ Seven, the New Testament does not teach that its adherents should withdraw from society; saints do not need to go out of the world (I Cor. 5:10). They are to be good leaven and a light to the world (Matt. 5:14-16). Eight, the Bible does not demand what the cults call "total commitment," demanding that one should be so engaged in teaching the lost that one has inadequate time with his family, his job, or his parents. The New Testament still states that "one who provides not for his own . . . household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). One is reminded of the Pharisees who told Christ that they were justified in neglecting their old fathers and mothers because they had given all of their money to God, thus being relieved of their filial responsibilities. Christ replied, "Ye no longer suffer him to do ought for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered." (Mark 7:10-13).

CULTISM — RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VIGILANCE

In a day of cults and of cultic practices the elders of the Lord's church must be constantly vigilant. "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye. . . ." (Acts 20:30,31). The following are recommendations for vigilance.

First, beware of groups who work in isolation, not within the framework of the congregation under the oversight of the elders.

Second, beware of those who talk of the rest of the congregation, or the church universal, being dead; their group is the only one who is carrying out God's commands.

Third, beware of those who work to undermine the eldership and set up leaders and organizations not authorized by holy writ.

Fourth, beware of people who come with sectarian terminology, sectarian doctrines, and sectarian methods of indoctrination.

Fifth, beware of leaders who seek to control every minute of peoples' lives, who set up record keepings and confessionals in order to see that their strict control is affected. Is not the gospel sufficient motivation for those who love the Lord?

Sixth, beware of those who dictate that one who

spends time with children, with parents, in leisure, in college pursuits is neglecting carrying the gospel to the lost. Does not living the Christian life involve more than just endeavoring to teach lost persons?

Seventh, beware those who must rebaptize those who were not originally taught their philosophy.

Eighth, beware of those who indoctrinate through psychological pressures, harrassment, and constant proclaiming of God's wrath, as if He is constantly looking for excuses to strike people down.

CONCLUSION

Cultism is a blight upon our society. And, it can infiltrate the church of Christ. Let no congregation, eldership, parent, or youth think that the problem is non-existent! "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

FOOTNOTES

1. Edmond C. Gruss, *Cults and the Occult in the Age of Aquarius* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), p. 1.
2. William J. Peterson, *Those Curious New C: 'ts* (New Canaan, Conn.: Keats Publishing, Inc., 1973), p. 205.
3. Michael Clark, "Cults Are Proliferating, Church Historian Says," *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis, Tenn. (July 5, 1980): 6.
4. "Violence in America — Getting Worse?" *U.S. News and World Report* (December 11, 1978): 6.
5. "Religious Cults: Is the Wild Fling Over?" *U.S. News and World Report* 84 (March 27, 1978): 44.
6. Fred Bruning, "Europe's Rising Cults," *Newsweek* 93 (May 7, 1979): 100.
7. Melinda Beck, "The World of Cults," *Newsweek* 92 (December 4, 1978): 78.
8. Dave Breese, "How to Witness to a Cultist," *Moody Monthly* 79 (July-August, 1979): 26.
9. Perry C. Cotham, "Cultism and the Bizarre Incident in Guyana I," *Firm Foundation* 95 (January 9, 1979): 3.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Clark, p. 6.
12. Gordon R. Lewis, *Confronting the Cults* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966), p. 3.
13. Victoria Graham, "New Messiahs Are Idolized and Reviled," *Alabama Journal*, Montgomery, Ala. (December 25, 1978): 36.
14. Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony, "New Religions, Families and Brainwashing," *Society* 15 (May/June, 1978): 80.
15. Bruning, p. 100.
16. "Violence," p. 22.

17. Cotham, p. 3.
18. Gruss, pp. 5,6.
19. Barbara Hargrove, "Evil Eyes and Religious Choices," *Society* 17 (March/April, 1980): 23.
20. Theodore Roszak, "Skeptics and True Believers," *The Nation* 228 (February 10, 1979): 139.
21. Cotham, p. 3.
22. George H. Ball, "Jonestown Checklist: One Year Later," *The Christian Century* 96 (November 21, 1979): 1149.
23. Graham, p. 36.
24. Richard Delgado, "Limits to Proselyting," *Society* 17 (March/April, 1980): 29.
25. Cotham, p. 19.
26. Delgado, p. 27.
27. Graham, p. 36.
28. Woodward, p. 77.
29. Robbins, p. 81.
30. Hargrove, p. 17.
31. Delgado, pp. 29,30.
32. Cotham, p. 3.
33. Delgado, p. 27.
34. Kenneth L. Woodward, "How They Bend Minds," *Newsweek* 92 (December 4, 1978): 74.
35. Delgado, p. 29.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
37. Woodward, p. 74.
38. Irvin Doress and Jack Nusan Porter, "Kids in Cults," *Society* 15 (May/June, 1978): 71.
39. Delgado, p. 28.
40. Roy Wallis, "Recruiting Christian Manpower," *Society* 15 (May/June, 1978): 72.
41. Clark, p. 6.
42. Anson D. Shupe, Jr. and David G. Bromley, "Witches, Moonies and Evil," *Society* 15 (May/June, 1978): 75.
43. Woodward, p. 72.
44. "Behind the Cult Craze," *U.S. News and World Report* 85 (December 4, 1978): 23.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Woodward, p. 72.
47. Delgado, p. 28, 31.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
49. Woodward, p. 72.
50. Robbins, p. 82.
51. "Religions," p. 44.
52. Cotham, p. 12.
53. Delgado, p. 26.
54. Woodward, p. 74.
55. Delgado, pp. 27, 26.
56. *Ibid.*, 32.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
58. Perry C. Cotham, "Cultism and the Bizarre Incident in Guyana II," *Firm Foundation* 96 (January 16, 1979): 7.

An Elder Must Be A Lover Of Good Men

Continued from page 2

them, and they were in all things to be examples of the highest kind of morality. They were not to exhibit partial virtues; not to perform one set of duties to the neglect or exclusion of others; not to be faithful in their duties to God, and to neglect their duty to men; not to be punctual in their religious rites, and neglectful of the common laws of morality; but they were to do *everything* that could be regarded as the fair subject of commendation, and that was implied in the highest moral character."

While these comments from the pen of Albert Barnes were written with reference to Paul's

admonition to all the saints of Philippi, it would be difficult to find or to write a paragraph which would more adequately sum up what is involved in the requirement of an elder that he be "a lover of good."

If your troubles are deep-seated and long-standing, try kneeling.

It is good to pray for the repair of mistakes, but praying earlier would likely keep us from making so many.

Some of our greatest bounces result from the fall that pride went before.

Inspiration of The Bible

(No. 2)

If the Bible is the product of mere man, it should not be regarded any higher than other productions of man. If God is its author, no book can be compared with the Bible. May we continue our investigation.

DID GOD INSPIRE THE THOUGHTS OF THE BIBLE WRITERS OR DID HE GIVE THEM THE VERY WORDS THEY UTTERED? The following passages and others state clearly God inspired the words used to convey his message.

David said, "The spirit of the Lord, spake by me and his word was in my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2). To Jeremiah the Lord said, "Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak . . . Behold I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jer. 1:7-9). To Ezekiel the Lord said, "Thou shalt speak my words unto them" (Ezek. 2:7). In the New Testament Paul said, "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth" (I Cor. 2:13). God promised to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Paul in the book of Galatians speaks of God's promise to Abraham. He said, "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). Paul taught inspiration of the Bible was accurate and precise. He said God promised Abraham a seed, not seeds. In the original and autographed copies of the scriptures, God gave the writers the very words they used.

HOW MUCH SCRIPTURE DID GOD INSPIRE THE BIBLE WRITERS TO WRITE? Was it a complete revelation for all time to come or just for the first century? Jesus answered this question when he promised the apostles the Holy Spirit. He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). This promise was kept. Jude was inspired to write exhorting them to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered . . ." (Jude 3). God completed his inspiration to man in the first century! Paul said the inspired word of God 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 Tim. 3:16-17). If our practice is not supported by the scriptures, it is a bad work. The scriptures are a perfect guide to direct man until the end of time.

The all-sufficiency of the word of God revealed in the New Testament is seen in what it did for men like Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John. They had no more scripture than we have today, yet they were spiritual giants. Peter in the first century, said God's "divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3).

Let us ask some questions about the sufficiency of God's inspiration. (1) **DOES THE SCRIPTURE CLEARLY SET FORTH THE LORD'S PLAN FOR SALVATION?** The great commission of Christ instructed the apostles to teach men that they must hear God's word, believe in Jesus as God's son, repent of their sins, and be buried with him in baptism to be saved (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47). From Paul we learn there must be a confession of faith, baptism into the death of Christ and a resurrection to a new life (Rom. 10:10; 6:3-4). Three thousand obeyed these commands of a loving Lord on the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Christ (Acts 2:41).

(2) **IS THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE ALL WE NEED TO GUIDE US IN WORSHIP?** We learn the early church met on the first day of the week to worship. They sang and made melody in their hearts to the Lord, they prayed earnestly, they gave of their prosperity, they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and they communed with Christ and each other in the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19, I Cor. 16:1-2). This is acceptable worship.

(3) **DID GOD INSPIRE ENOUGH SCRIPTURE TO DIRECT OUR STEPS AS CHRISTIANS?** Men and

women in every age who have followed the teaching of Christ have been the greatest people. The gospel of Christ has transformed drunkards, cheats, gamblers, liars, thieves, libertines into respectable and peaceful citizens. Broken hearts have been mended, husbands and wives have been brought into a closer bond, children have been loved, and communities have been changed.

WE PLEAD WITH YOU TO STUDY AND BELIEVE THE BIBLE. — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

The Grasshopper Complex

W. A. HOLLEY

We suggest that Numbers 13 be read. It tells of the 12 spies being sent into the land of Canaan for the purpose of searching out the land. These men spent 40 days there. When they returned and gave Moses their report only two (Joshua and Caleb) voiced confidence in God's ability to give them the land. Ten delivered the majority report saying that the people were too strong, that the cities were too well fortified, and there were giants in their way; and that, therefore, the task was impossible.

To give our readers an insight into the thinking of these weak-kneed and faithless spies, we quote: "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:33).

Do we, today, have that same old grasshopper complex? Have we come to the conclusion that the task assigned by Jesus Christ is too difficult for us to perform? We shall note a few points:

(1) The grasshopper takes no thought of tomorrow; it stores away no food for the winter; it flits and dances in the sunlight; it lives only for the day.

How many of us never think of making preparation to meet God? (Amos 4:12). We cannot live forever here in this world. Death has been appointed (Hebrews 9:27). And yet millions continue traveling the broad way that leads to eternal destruction with never a moment's concern. Surely, if you are a child of God you will want to pray more, read your Bible more, and do a better job of living the Christian life. If you have not obeyed the gospel, why not do it today? (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

(2) The grasshopper is a fearful little creature (Job 39:20). God does not want the hearts of his people filled with doubts and fears. The fearful and the unbelieving are to be lost eternally (Revelation 21:8). "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1-3). As long as we do his will, he will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:1-6). We should make certain that our hearts are filled with great faith and abundant courage (Romans 8:31-39). In spite of hardships and persecutions of all kinds, Paul the apostle, possessed strength and faith to overcome all such like (II Corinthians 11:23-33).

(3) Although grasshoppers be great for multitude, they have but little individual strength. The enemies of God's people, in the time of Gideon, were like grasshoppers for multitude, yet they were unable to stand against the might of the Lord (Judges 6 and 7). We should never become discouraged, though we be few in number: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

(4) Another feature concerning the grasshopper complex is, when they begin attacking the land, they consume everything in sight. These small creatures are extremely destructive: swarming, flying,

crawling, they eat the grass, leaves of the trees, even to the bark. Hence, they are very greedy, ready and willing to devour the area which they assault (Joel 1:4; 2:25ff; Nahum 3:15; Deuteronomy 28:42; II Chronicles 7:13).

Christian people should not be greedy and stingy. Of all people, they should be liberal and benevolent and philanthropic in their giving to God and in their efforts to support those who might be in need (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-7; Acts 11:29-30; Galatians 6:10). Is it right for Christians to "bite and devour one another?" Selfishness is the undoing of any person. If you wish to be a failure, just be a selfish person.

(5) "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands" (Proverbs 30:27). Hence, these creatures are unwilling to submit to authority; they "have no king." They make their own way; they have no one to direct them, no one who guides them!

In this respect, many people are like grasshoppers. They will not submit to divine authority! It matters not what God says nor what the Bible teaches, they resist and refuse to bow to the authority of God! God's chain of authority is: God, Christ, the word of God, the elders of the local church (Luke 10:16; Matthew 10:40; Mark 9:37; John 13:20; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Timothy 3:1-7).

"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). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Patience strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, subdues pride, and bridle the tongue.

Nations and men are much alike. They seldom appeal to God unless they're getting licked.

Most of us pray for more things than we are willing to work for.

People who talk about things they can't afford often forget to include pride, envy, and malice.

"Kneeology" will do more for the world than theology.

Live prayerfully — the life you save may be your own.

Most of modern man's troubles come from the fact that he has too much time on his hands and not enough on his knees.



Words Of Truth

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

— Acts 26:25

Postures Toward Leadership In The Church

Attitudes range from worship to complete defiance of leadership. Both extremes are wrong. Peter would not allow Cornelius to worship him. When Cornelius "fell down at his feet, and worshipped him," Peter "raised him up, saying, stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25). The Judaizing teachers at Corinth sought to discredit the apostleship of Paul. He reminded them, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2). Since the day of Cain, the impenitent sinner has hated the righteous and the messengers of righteousness. He has been instrumental in replacing gospel preachers for those who would scratch his itching ears (II Tim. 4:3).

Leadership is deified in some churches. The truth is every person has clay feet. No one has reached the point of perfection. In spite of this fact some look upon certain ones as being unable to do any wrong. If and when the devoted's idol falls, he falls by the wayside. This failure in faithfulness comes about because more faith is placed in man than in Christ. Too often leadership cultivates such a posture. Preaching self molds such idolizing.

We must take the inspired counsel of Paul. He said, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). The good characteristics of our leaders we must follow. The Christian must refuse to conform to evil. Some of our greatest leaders have shown their clay feet at least at one point in life. All have exhibited some human failing in moral strength. However, we must not lose faith in God or become disgruntled regarding the state of men.

Today, there are many efforts to divest leadership of all respect and honor. Power-hungry men continually stir unrest and rebellion against the elders. They seek to get the preacher to line up with them. If he refuses, they seek to undermine his influence for good and engineer efforts to remove him from the pulpit. The underlying causes are jealousy and envy. James revealed, "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (Jas. 3:16). Where there is no faithful or stable

leadership, this kind of condition exists more than not.

Women are the most faithful, working and sound force in many churches. They are a great blessing to the cause of Christ. However, as is the case with most issues of society, *the church is influenced to some extent by the "Women's Lib."* We know of congregations without elders because the women will not submit to them, and continually cause unrest.

Many want leadership based on their political leadership. This simply means they want to appoint leaders who appeal to the whims and fancies of the majority of the church. On this basis leadership would change about every three months as the whims change. According to this view of leadership, Jesus was the world's greatest failure in leadership.

What is the position of mind God would have us to hold with reference to leadership in the Lord's body? "Esteem them exceedingly highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thess. 5:13). The above is said in reference to "them that labor among you and are over you." This clearly refers to the elders. In this passage Paul also says the membership of the church is to know the leadership. Some effort is to be made to know them personally. It is impossible to have a personal esteem of those you do not know.

We must recognize the elder's right as well as his responsibility to rule over the flock (Heb. 13:17). We must not let the society's rebellion to authority in the home, school, and civil affairs affect our responsibilities as Christians to submit to God-designated authority.

The man who preaches the gospel should have the right to "lead about a wife that is a believer" (I Cor. 9:5). This certainly means he has the right to a family. He has the right to financial support in keeping with the position he holds and the responsibilities he has to support his family. His family needs food, clothing, shelter, recreation and education. Paul asked questions concerning the right of the soldier to wages, the husbandman to fruit from his vineyard, the herdsman to eat of his flock. He reminded them of

the law of Moses concerning the right of the ox to eat while treading out the corn (I Cor. 9:7-9). When brethren bargain to see how cheap they can get a preacher, they have not grasped the import of Paul's preaching. They do not have proper esteem of the preacher nor his work.

We need more faith in God and his word and less in the world and its philosophy of life. Let us seek first the church and the righteousness of God (Matt. 6:33). May we love God with all of our heart, soul and mind and our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-38).

(Editor's Note: This fine article has been in our files for a long time. We do not know who wrote it, although we are sure the author did include his name when he sent the article to us. Somehow the name got separated from the article, and we apologize for not being able to give proper credit herewith. If the writer of the article will send us his name, we will be more than happy to pass this information on to our readers.)

If you submit an article for publication, please type your name under the title of the article on the first page. Then type your complete address at the end of the article. This will be of great help to your editor.)

There is more power in the open hand than in the clenched fist.


A sermon should never be preached until it is soaked in prayer.

Power will either burn a man out or light him up.

Selfishness short-circuits prayer.

Power is dangerous unless you have humility.

Don't let your pride become inflated — you may have to swallow it someday.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Elders And Congregational Unity

(While we have finished our discussion of the qualifications of elders, something needs to be said about the duties and responsibilities of every member of the church to the eldership. The following editorial was originally published in the *Words of Truth* of March 31, 1978 under the title, "Unity in Matters of Judgment." Please read it carefully.)



BOB DUNCAN

A great dictum of the Restoration Movement is stated in the following words: "In matters of faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity." We would do well to repeat this from time to time, and be reminded of its implications. Perhaps it is superfluous to point out that matters of faith are those things believed because they are clearly revealed in the Bible, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Matters of opinion are those things concerning which one may have formed a judgment, and yet concerning which the Bible is silent. In such cases, of course, each one is free to have his own opinion. It is a tragic mistake to treat matters of faith as if they were nothing more than mere matters of opinion; and it is also tragic to treat matters of opinion as if they were matters of faith.

And yet there is a sense in which all members of a given congregation must maintain unity, even in matters of judgment or opinion. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). This is not to say we can all think alike in matters of judgment; it is rather admonishing that there be a harmony and unity of action, even in matters of judgment.

It is easy for us to see why there must be unity in matters of judgment in each congregation. If such did not prevail, it would be impossible to have an orderly worship period or an effective program of work. The hour at which the church begins its worship on the Lord's day is a matter of judgment, but each member of the congregation is not at liberty to begin at whatever hour his own personal judgment dictates. The number of songs to be sung, and the number of verses of each song are matters of judgment, and doubtless there are differences of opinion with reference to these in practically every congregation. Even so, there must be unity and harmony of action in singing the songs. Who is to preach in meetings, and how long they are to last are matters of judgment. Whether to build a meetinghouse, what kind to build, how best to use it, whether to have a bus program, what the busses are to be used for, etc., are all matters of judgment. Different ones are bound to have different opinions about these matters. And yet there must be unity with reference to each one.

In matters of faith we can be united when everyone

submits to the word of God. How can we be united in matters of judgment or opinion? We can be united in matters of judgment only if all in a given congregation will submit to the judgment of some in that congregation; and the Bible tells us to whose judgment we are to submit. "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 for you" (Hebrews 13:17). R. C. H. Lenski, commenting on this verse says it refers to the fact that "one yields, gives up, when he has a contrary opinion." Every member of the congregation, even though he may have a contrary opinion, is to yield or give up to the judgments of the eldership. Brother Rex A. Turner, Sr., writing in the 1977-78 *Gospel Advocate Annual Lesson Commentary*, has made the following excellent observation:

"Elders are responsible for church policy. Often murmurings and misunderstandings arise in a congregation over matters of mere policy. The times for meeting on Lord's day and on the weekdays is a matter of policy. The use that outsiders will be allowed to make of the church building — for funerals, weddings, and public or private school systems — are in the realm of policy. The use of an organ in the building for a wedding is a matter of policy . . . The point of emphasis is that the elders should lead the church in the development of a set of rules relative to matters pertaining to policy."

Needless to say, in practically every congregation there would be those whose judgment would differ from that of the eldership. One may differ with the judgment of the eldership because he does not have access to all the facts in the case. He may differ because he has not taken the time to study and investigate the matter as thoroughly as have the elders, or because his knowledge of the scriptures and his experience in making such judgments are limited. Or he may differ with the eldership in a given situation because the elders have used poor judgment, and his judgment is better. In any case, however, every member of the congregation must yield to the eldership in matters of judgment. This is God's plan for unity in matters of judgment. God's plan for unity in matters of faith is for everyone to yield to the scriptures. To reject God's plan for unity in either realm is to set oneself over against God.

The prayer of modern youth seems to be, "Lord, lead us not into temptation. Just tell us where it is and we'll find it."

A little pride is a small thing to lose when compared with losing honor.

The best cure for a short temper is a lengthy prayer.

You can't give a man pride, but you can rob him of it.

Things Have Changed

"Things have changed," is often heard in our time — a fact that even a blind man can see. None of us would deny that things have changed, but it is lamentable that some, even church leaders, have concluded that our message should change with our times to satisfy whims of those who are dissatisfied with the way our Bibles are written.



VIRGIL BRADFORD

When we think of ways things around us have changed we (oldsters) can call to mind a multitude of items that our children know nothing about. Many of them have never cranked a car, ridden on a running board or changed a clincher tire. They have not cranked a handle to make a phone call nor walked three miles to school in rain and snow. Most have not read by lamplight nor drawn water from a well, have not lived in a house without electricity or plumbing. Communications, travel, warfare and many, many other things have changed, but in our constantly changing world some things are unchanged and unchangeable.

1) *God has not changed.* The Father is the same kind, compassionate, loving God that he has always been. Since facts cannot change let us remember that our God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent (cf. Ps. 139:7ff; Rev. 2:2). "Jesus Christ, the same today, yesterday, yea and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

2) *All responsible boys and girls grow up to become sinners* (I Ki. 8:46; Rom. 6:23). There is not a shred of evidence or hope that such will ever be changed. Even Christians sin (cf. I Jno. 1:7-2:2).

3) *One source of power, and only one, can bring redemption to sinful men, that is the gospel* (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 15:1-4).

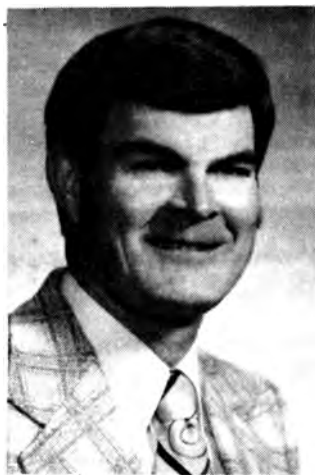
4) *The Lord is still willing, and always will be, to*

Continued on page 3

Behold, I Come Quickly

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

The above passage indicates that only the Father knows the day and hour Jesus will return to judge the world. Not even Jesus knows! Since Jesus himself said he did not know, any passage we find in the New Testament which indicates a time limit would not be a



RAY HAWK

passage talking about his literal coming in the clouds to destroy this world and judge mankind. After all, if Jesus does not know when he is returning, he could not very well say, "Behold, I come quickly," could he? The word "quickly" is an adverb of time. The Greek word, *tachu*, means "shortly, without delay, soon, suddenly, readily, or quickly." It is used in passages that always mean a short time. "Agree with thine adversary quickly" (Matthew 5:25). "And go quickly, and tell his disciples" (Matthew 28:7). "She arose quickly, and came unto him" (John 11:29). "... else I will come unto thee quickly" (Revelation 2:5). "Surely I come quickly; Amen" (Revelation 22:20). The word is never used in the New Testament to indicate a long period of time such as 500 or 2000 years!

If we find a passage in the New Testament which states Jesus will return shortly or quickly, it cannot be talking about a coming in our future which only the Father knows about, but must be talking about a coming which transpired in the first century. Since

Things Have Changed

Continued from page 2

save sinners who trust the blood of Christ as payment for their sins (Rom. 3:25f). The potential is there and if men do not avail themselves of its power the Lord is not at fault. God "is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9).

5) *Baptism of believers in Christ is a trial of faith upon which depends the saving of our souls* (Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:38; 22:16). This is such a simple thing (physically) that it is a stumbling block for some (cf. I Cor. 1:21-25). Not a few suppose that if baptism saves then men are trusting their own works for salvation. Such is not the case, however. Remember that even believing is called a work (Jno. 6:29) by Jesus, but it is not a work of human merit. Rather it is a response to the word of God in which a sinner is manifesting trust in God, not himself. And so with every other act of obedience (cf. Heb. 11:6).

6) *Finally, it is an unchangeable fact that God's word will stand for ever* (Mk. 13:31), *that salvation is in Christ and the church* (Ac. 4:12; Eph. 5:23), *that Jesus Christ will come again, and that heaven will be the eternal abode of the faithful* (Jno. 14:1-6).

Hence, nothing of great importance has changed. Physically, our needs are food, clothing and shelter. Spiritually, our needs can be satisfied only by the pure, unadulterated preaching of the gospel of Christ. And for that gospel let us thank and praise him from whom all blessings flow. — 2206 Hillsboro Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37212-4991.

the Holy Spirit was sent to tell the apostles and prophets things to come, whatever they revealed would be what Jesus spoke (John 14:18; 16:13). But, Jesus did not know the day nor hour. So, when a time is given as being in their lifetime, it cannot be his literal coming in judgment, for we know that has not taken place. Whatever coming it was, it has already happened, because the Holy Spirit said it would and it took place in the first century. That coming was not a literal coming but the coming of Jesus in judgment upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matthew 10:23). This passage is stated by Jesus to the apostles. He said they would not have covered the cities of Israel before he came. This passage cannot refer to a second literal coming, but must refer to the fall of Jerusalem and Jesus' coming through the Roman army.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:27,28). When you compare this passage with Mark 8:38-9:1 and Luke 9:26,27 you can see Jesus is speaking of the completion of his kingdom on earth during the lifetime of his disciples standing before him at that time. Verse 27 may confuse the reader until he compares the language found in Matthew 24:30,31; Mark 13:26,27; and Luke 21:27,28. These are time passages that relate to the destruction of Jerusalem. The kingdom was established on Pentecost and saints were in it before A.D. 70, but it was not perfected (*teleios*, I Corinthians 13:8-10; Ephesians 4:11-13) until this coming of Jesus (Acts 2:1-4; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9).

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5). The phrase, "at hand" is from the Greek word, *eggus*, and means to bend the arm so that the hand is near. It came to mean near, at hand, nigh, ready. This word is found in thirty passages and always translated as nigh, near, ready, or at hand. Once, in Acts 1:12 it is rendered "from" in the KJV but from the context means near. This passage indicated Jesus was at hand or near in his coming. This cannot have reference to a coming in our future. It must refer to a coming in the lifetime of the Philippians. Besides, a time limit is put upon it and since no one knows when Jesus is coming back literally, it has to refer to his coming in A.D. 70 which was known by given signs (Matthew 24:3,30).

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37). The expressions "a little while" and "not tarry" puts this coming in the framework of the first century. It refers to a known coming which cannot be that one spoken by Jesus in Mark.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7,8). Since Jesus did not know when he would come according to Mark, this coming has a time limit and must be accepted as a coming that was nigh or near for those James wrote to. Some might say the expression "nigh" is figurative and 1000 years is but a day to God. But, James isn't speaking to God, he is speaking to men. The word "nigh" is from the Greek word *eggizo* and is never used to indicate 1000 years. In fact, it is the same word used in Matthew 3:2 and 4:17 "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." If it means 1000 years in James it would have to mean 1000 years in Matthew! Are we ready to accept that error?

In Revelation 2:5,16; 3:11 and 22:7, 12, 20 Jesus says he will return quickly! Mark 13:32 says he doesn't know the day nor hour, only the Father. Yet,

in Revelation he tells John, the Ephesians, Pergamos, and the church at Philadelphia that he is coming quickly. The quick return must be his coming in judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple (Matthew 24:1-35). It cannot refer to a literal coming to end the world and judge mankind, for Jesus does not know when that is! To make these passages apply to a future coming is to twist them out of context, make words into things they do not mean, and miss the entire meaning and application of Revelation!

Other passages to consider in this study are Matthew 24:3,27,30,31; 26:64; Mark 8:38-9:1; 13:24-31; Luke 9:26,27; 17:20-37; 19:41-44; 21:7,20,27,28; John 21:21-23; Acts 2:20; 3:19,20; 6:13,14; Romans 13:11; 16:20; I Corinthians 1:7,8; 13:8-10; Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 10:37; 12:22-29; James 5:7,8; I Peter 4:7,13,17; I John 2:18; Revelation 1:1,3; 3:11; 22:6,10.

Notice the ending of Revelation 22:20,21: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Jesus told John he was coming quickly. To that remark, John, understanding the impact of the word "quickly" said, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." John was not asking Jesus to come 2000 years later, but right then! Since Jesus did not know when he would come back in Mark 13:32, this quick coming must refer to one he knows about and recognizes it will be quickly. That is the only interpretation of these words. — 1461 East Chester Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

Rescued From The Fire

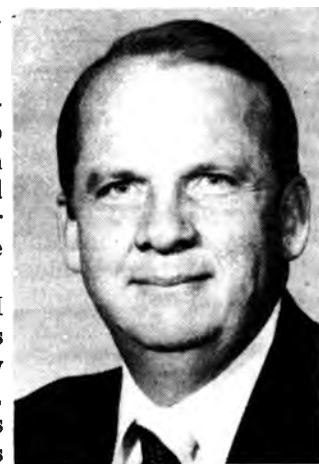
"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire!" (Zechariah 3:2)

Life is serious business. How many take no thought to death or even life until one is here and the other is gone. Our writer here speaks of the seriousness of life.

FIRE IS AN EMBLEM OF SIN. Like fire, sin is subtle. We may not know even of its existence, until destruction has come. Like fire, sin is destructive. Fire will destroy or change almost everything put into it. So sin will alter or corrupt the life of anyone who remains in it.

THE BRAND IS THE EMBLEM OF THE SINNER. A piece of wood is fit for the fire. They are compatible. A piece of wood in the fire is in danger of destruction. It cannot save itself, it must be saved. Only Jesus can and will do this by his atoning death and shed blood.

THE PLUCKING OUT OF THE BRAND IS EMBLEMATIC OF SALVATION. There are two ways of saving a piece of wood in the fire. One may pluck it out, or to put out the fire. Jesus had destroyed the power of sin by his resurrection. He has then given us the ministry of pulling brands out of the fire. Let us be in awe of our great task and ask God's help as we go into this work. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS

Forgetting Those Things

The great Apostle Paul who was no stranger to abuse, mistreatment, persecution, and often the very threat of death is a great source of inspiration to the weary Christian sojourner as he writes: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: 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" (Phil. 3:13-14). Except for Christ himself perhaps no other man has had so much to forgive and forget as the beloved apostle, and yet, it was only by the grace of God and the power of Jesus Christ that he was able to do so. Thank God we have access to that same grace and power today (Rom. 5:2). The problem for so many of us today is the inability to "forget those things which are behind";



ROY FULLER

thus we are greatly hindered in our forward progress.

In the human family it is often the case that mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers are at odds with one another and remain so because of the inability to forgive and forget. The insult or injury may be trivial in nature but it divides and alienates. It festers and grows like a cancerous malignancy until permanent and irreparable harm is done to the relationship. The body of Christ is not spared the devastating effects of this basic human weakness.

Sometimes I wish that we could turn off our memory just as quickly and easily as we turn off our TV sets. Realizing however that we cannot, our only recourse is to pray for the strength that only God can supply. Paul said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phs. 4:13). Now wouldn't it be just wonderful if we could have absolute control over our memory? We could just forget all of our sad and unhappy experience, the unkind words and insults. We could remember all of the precious moments of joy and elation, all of the good and none of the bad. But alas, 'tis not to be so in this life, because this is a basic human characteristic. We will not have this problem in the eternal abode, but here on earth we have to cope with ourselves as we are and with our fellow man as he is.

Since the characteristic of forgiveness is divine in nature, we recognize that we must attain to some degree of the divine nature if we are to forgive at all, and the greater the attainment the better. Peter tells us that we are made "partakers of the divine nature" through faith and obedience to Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:1-5). He also tells us that we can "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior" (II Pet. 3:18). He further tells us that this growth is to be attained by partaking of the sincere milk of the word (I Pet. 2:2).

May God help us all to attain that measure of grace whereby we can say with the Apostle Paul: "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before." Brethren, that which is before us is the great mission of the church to preach the gospel of Christ to every soul on this planet in our generation. Beloved, that is more important than you or I, vastly more important than our present problems or hangups, or anything that has ever happened in the past. Let us all petition the Lord on bended knee to give us the grace and strength to forget the past, forget ourselves, exalt Christ, and get on with the business of evangelizing the world (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20), for therein will we find the true purpose of Christianity and attain for ourselves the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. — Rt. 4 Box 479 Elba, Ala. 36323.

On Laying Up Treasures In Heaven

W. A. HOLLEY

Our Lord Jesus Christ, says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Scholars say that "break through" means, literally, to "dig through." The thought is that a thief could, using a knife or trowel, dig through the dried mud and wattle of those primitive houses, in about a half an hour or less time, and take away whatever treasure there may have been cached therein. Hence, it is essential for children of God to understand that all earthly treasures are always in danger of being lost, either through negligence, or thievery, or calamity. And if by no other means, when one leaves this world, one cannot carry his earthly treasures with him (I Timothy 6:6-10). In a very true sense, we save only what we have given to the Lord!

To lay up treasures in heaven, we must set our affection on spiritual things. The apostle Paul wrote, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

If we wish to lay up treasures in heaven, we must SEEK the kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33). The thought is, we must let the will of God and the kingdom of God occupy the uppermost place in our thoughts and affections. To put the kingdom of God first involves our money, our material wealth. But it involves much more than our earthly treasures; it requires the proper use of our time and talent, as well.

Furthermore, to lay up treasure in heaven comprehends the doing of the will of God — obeying his commandments. From the pen of the beloved John, we read these words: "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4).

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

We must understand that God keeps our record; somehow, he maintains a close scrutiny over every

aspect of our lives, our words and deeds. We may think that the Internal Revenue Service keeps a close check on our financial affairs, but be it remembered that God is an even closer observer. God Almighty is aware of each member of the human family, whether good or bad (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:7-9; 20:11-15). Paul wrote, "Not that I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Philippians 4:17).

It is here suggested that "your account" is ever in the full view of God. It is unlikely that you will ever give too much to the Lord. Let us, therefore, be generous, free-hearted, magnanimous, marked by abundance and ample proportions, in our giving to

the cause of the Lord.

"But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he that 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).

We should not be ashamed for others to know how much we contribute to the Lord, although we should not wish to parade it before the world (Matthew 6:1-4). Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11, were unwilling for others to know what they gave, but the Lord knew just the same. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

No Place Sought For The Summers Slump

"Summer slump" is the term used to refer to the lag in attendance, enthusiasm, work, and contributions during the "vacation months." But it is not imperative that we have one. In fact, we should determine with all of our being not to have one. Even though many will be on vacation, etc., the attendance should be the ONLY thing affected.

There is no logical reason for enthusiasm to wane. Is not the meaning of worship the same? Is not the same work and effort required (and even more) than in other months? Does not that effort bring about the joy of enthusiasm? It is only psychological if we feel "down."

And what about the work? Does work stop when some are out of town? It may be expected to, but it certainly shouldn't! Are there lost people who need teaching in July and August? Are there hungry people to be fed in hot weather? Should not weak



RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

brethren be encouraged in the summer? Why, certainly! So, why should the work go lacking?

One area that suffers the most is the church treasury. Christians either forget to leave their rightful contributions, or else the Lord's money is used for travel expenses, etc. (Surely the latter is not the case.) Remember that the same financial obligations are incurred in summer as in other months. Also, our responsibilities to do our part do not change. Don't short-change the Lord in summer!

There are no vacations from the Lord. Plan your trip so that you will be at worship in the true church somewhere. God forbid that we should drive along not caring to worship with the saints. Call ahead to find out service times and locations. If we do this we'll all balance out our attendance and NONE of us will experience low attendance.

Summer slumps are for the birds, not churches. Have a nice vacation and leave no place for a "summer slump." — P.O. Box 4171 Pensacola, Fla. 32507.

The power of man has grown in every sphere except over himself.

Pride is something we have; vanity is something others have!



Words Of Truth

(USPS)

It speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 1982

NUMBER 32

The Proper Use Of Uninspired Quotations

Those of us who preach publicly and all who teach in a Bible class situation are faced with the problem of how to make the lesson as enriching as possible for the class. The good teacher or preacher will, of course, ponder the value of quotes from other people who may provide some food for thought or who, by their words, may shed light on some scripture passage. The use of poetry, quotations from commentators, selections from religious articles (or otherwise) do have a place when properly utilized.



JERRIMANASCO

Of course, the use of the **INSPIRED WORD** is the essential element in gospel teaching!! One cannot preach the gospel without using the gospel! We **MUST** speak as the oracles of God; we **MUST** "preach the word"; we **MUST** hold fast the form of "sound words" (I Pet. 4:11; II Tim. 4:2; 1:13). This is definitely bound upon anyone who professes to be a teacher of truth. But allow me to offer some suggestions as to the use of uninspired, yet helpful, quotations:

The first rule is very simple: **DO NOT USE AN UNINSPIRED MAN'S WORD TO JUSTIFY A "POSITION" ON SOME "ISSUE."** The words of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and others have value (as any commentator's words) in stimulating our own thinking, but their word should never be considered as constituting the final say on any matter relating to the Lord's church. It is not conducive to the principles of the Restoration Movement in our emphasis upon Bible authority to parrot what some man has had to say on any matter without the benefit of inspiration. It is much too tempting to adopt the attitude, "This is what the early Restorers said, therefore this is what we must teach." The Roman Catholic Church could not be more eloquent in their insistence upon the authority of tradition!! The

point is not who said what, but the real question is, "WHAT IS TRUTH?" What does the Bible say? It may be interesting to know what some other man has said about some point, but his position does not justify my taking that position and defending it. Jude says to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3), not for some man's conception of it.

The second rule for using uninspired quotations is also simple: **DO NOT ABUSE UNINSPIRED QUOTATIONS THROUGH THEIR OVERUSE.** It really does not edify an audience or a class to know all that "Brother so-and-so" says on a subject. Perhaps a few choice quotes well placed have a good purpose. However, it is sheer arrogance to pack one's lesson full of such quotes merely to give the appearance of scholarly research. What people need to hear first and foremost are the words of the living God.

The third rule to apply is this: **MAKE SURE THE QUOTE REALLY HAS A PLACE IN THE LESSON PLANNED.** Paul himself quoted from uninspired sources occasionally. In Athens he quoted a Grecian poet (Acts 17:26). Titus received a letter in which Paul referred to a statement made by a heathen philosopher (Tit. 1:12). He did not quote these men for the purpose of entertaining or filling up space; neither did he rest his case upon their uninspired words. He did, however, call in these pagan writers as witnesses against the follies of their fellow creatures. The heathen could not, therefore, claim to be totally devoid of some sense of responsibility to a Higher Power. Paul's skillful use of these statements drove home his point in a forceful way. Make sure the quote has a direct bearing on the thing being said.

Just when should one borrow uninspired quotations for use in his lessons? Two suggestions are in order:

1. If the person cited has said what you want to say, only he has said it better and more clearly, then one should not feel hesitant to bring that into his discussion. Someone else's brilliant observations may be well worth considering.

2. If another has shed some light on an obscure passage or principle, then obviously it would be advantageous to consider his comment.

What we must seek to avoid is the injecting of human wisdom into the divine scheme of things. Paul

wrote, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom . . ." (I Cor. 2:2,4-5). What a lesson for us!! Rt. 2 Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

God, The Refuge Of His People


The Psalmist declares, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us" (Psa. 62:8). The life of the godly man is one of exposedness to sorrow and peril. He participates in that trouble which is the common portion of all men. He with all others is liable to sickness, adversity, bereavements and death. Job said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble"



JOHN G. SHAVER

(Job 14:1). But in addition to these, he is in an enemy's country. He is passing through a dreary wilderness, a wilderness of storms and dangers, where hostile hosts are in league against him. Strengthless and insufficient of himself, this is his comfort and safety: God is his refuge, a present help

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.00 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

God, The Refuge Of His People

Continued from page 1

in every time of trouble.

We might ask, "When is God a refuge to his people?" In the period of temptation. When Satan comes like a flood, and when he would sift as wheat. When his fiery darts are directed in fearful volleys against the people of God. These seasons are perilous, and would be fearfully fatal were not God a refuge for us. He is a refuge for us in the day of adversity. When earthly good seems to forsake us, and our enjoyments fail. When providence seems adverse to us. When all appears to be against us. He is to us as he has been to Jacob, Job, David, and thousands of others, a help and a refuge. He is a refuge in the night of affliction. When health has been exchanged for sickness, strength for weakness, ease for pain, joy and gladness for weariness and decay, and when wearisome days are upon us, when heart and flesh fail. None but his arm can sustain, his presence cheer, his love console. He is the sick man's refuge, when compelled to retire to his solitary chamber, and lie upon the couch of pain. He is our refuge in the solemnities of death. To whom shall the spirit fly when removed out of her old habitation and abode? When she is no longer surrounded by this earthly tabernacle? It is then that God is our refuge. The house not made with hands is the abode, the heavenly mansion, the dwelling, forever and ever.

When might ask, "What sort of a refuge is God to his people?" He is invulnerable. In God is absolute security as long as we remain faithful to his charge. In him is everlasting strength. He is a refuge ever near. His omnipresence ever surrounds us. Wherever we are, God is near at hand, and not afar off. He has no difficulty coming to our refuge. Indeed, we cannot even flee from him. He is always accessible, not only near to us, but open to receive. He is ready to shelter and to screen us. His eyes are ever upon the righteous, and his ears always open to their cries. In the day of trouble, he hears the prayers of his distressed children, and sends deliverance, and enables them to glorify him. He is unchanging and eternal. A refuge to his people in all countries, and ages and generations. A refuge now, and always, and evermore. A refuge that never fails. A refuge in time and throughout all eternity.

If God be such a refuge, and he is, then we infer

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Demise Of The Era

At midnight on June 30 of this year the so-called Equal Rights Amendment finally, but by no means quietly, breathed out its last foul breath and died. Even though it was given the best support that millions of federal dollars could buy, and a three and one-half years extension of time for ratification was granted, still it never became law. Its proponents — believe it or not — are accusing the opposition of deception and every other vice they can concoct. Already they are vowing never to give up, and are making efforts to resurrect the matter for another bout.



BOB DUNCAN

Several observations are in order as we look back at the battle over the so-called Equal Rights Amendment.

In the first place, the so-called Equal Rights Amendment was not properly named, for it had little to do with equal rights. Its proponents would have us believe its passage would guarantee the elevation of women. Women, they say, would have better jobs and more pay. The truth is that there are already laws which prohibit discrimination against women with respect to jobs and pay. Already there are laws which prohibit discrimination *against* women; the so-called Equal Rights Amendment would have demanded that there be no recognition of the differences *between* men and women. Certainly one should be able to understand that to respect the differences *between* men and women is not the same as discriminating *against* women.

But while the proponents of this evil proposed amendment cried long and loud about women's rights, they tried to conceal the fact that this proposed amendment would actually deprive women of all the rights that are peculiarly theirs as women. They would be deprived of the right not to register for the draft simply because they are women. They would be deprived of the right to expect our laws to protect them against rape. They would be deprived of the right to restroom facilities separate from those of the men in public buildings. They would be deprived of living quarters separate from those of the men in the event they should be in the armed services. They would be deprived of their right to demand that their husbands — the fathers of their children — support them and their children. So far as *rights* are concerned, the so-called Equal Rights Amendment, would have furnished none to women; it would have deprived them of several which they presently have.

The only *rights* which would have been supplied by the so-called Equal Rights Amendment would have been to the wicked and depraved. The proposed amendment stated in simple terms that no person's rights could be denied or abridged on the basis of sex. Had the amendment been ratified by the states, then a wicked man could not be denied entrance to a ladies' restroom or dressing room in any public place. He could argue that to deny him entrance simply because he is a man is to abridge his rights because of his sex; and he would be arguing correctly. Every law which forbids homosexual marriages would be declared un-

constitutional, and correctly so, had the amendment been ratified. This is the reason the lesbians and gays openly and enthusiastically supported the proposed amendment. And those who chose to engage in such marriages could not have been denied the right to adopt children.

But why talk about all this now? Hasn't the proposed amendment already died because the time for its ratification passed without its being ratified by the required number of states? Yes, but already there are those who are doing everything within their power to get the matter through both houses of congress again, so that it can be presented to the states for their ratification. It is hoped that our senators and representatives in Washington will have learned by this time what a mistake was made by their passage of the proposed amendment the first time, and that they will not make that same mistake again. All of us need to let them know how strongly we feel about the importance of their doing everything they can to see that we do not have to fight this battle again in each state.

Our hats are off to those who worked so diligently to keep the most wicked piece of legislation since the repeal of prohibition from being ratified by the states. A number of men were involved in this battle, but it was carried on largely by women. Those who pretend to believe that women are powerless under our present set of laws should note well this fact.

The Rechabites

FRANK CHESSER

Jehoiakim was the second son of righteous Josiah to accede to the throne of Judah. He commenced his reign in subjection to Egypt (II Kings 25:35). Several years later, Babylon crushed the Egyptians at the fortress of Carchemish on the Euphrates. Babylon then came against Judah and began the first of three transportings into captivity (II Kings 24:1). Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar three years and then rebelled when a rejuvenated Egypt defeated Babylon. During the intervening years, until the second carrying away in 597 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar sent bands of his own troops, together with those of Syria, Ammon, and Moab to harass Judah and keep them in remembrance that they were "out of sight, but not out of mind" (II Kings 24:2).

At this point in history, approximately 600 B.C., the Biblical record introduces the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35). The Rechabites were of Kenite descent (I Chronicles 2:55). The Kenites are first mentioned as among those nations inhabiting the land of Canaan (Genesis 15:19). Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses was of the Kenite family (Judges 1:16). Subsequent to departing from Mt. Sinai, Moses approached Hobab, his brother-in-law, hoping to convince him to join Israel in their journey toward Canaan (Numbers 10:29-32). Though Hobab initially rejected Moses' invitation, he evidently experienced a change of heart, for following the conquest of Canaan, the Kenites are mentioned as dwelling among the tribe of Judah (Judges 1:16).

At some point, Heber and his family severed themselves from their brethren and settled in northern Palestine near Kedesh (Judges 4:11). It was Jael, Heber's wife, who culminated Israel's victory

Continued on page 3

The Rechabites

Continued From Page 2

over Jabin by slaying Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army (Judges 4:15-24). Saul spared the Kenites prior to his destruction of the Amalekites due to their having befriended Israel (I Samuel 15:6), and David shared with them the spoils of battle (I Samuel 30:29).

Jonadab, the distinguished Rechabite and thus, Kenite, of Jeremiah 35, is mentioned in connection with Jehu's purging of Ahab's house and the worshippers of Baal from the nation of Israel (II Kings 10). A group of Kenites came under censure in Balaam's parable against the nations. Pride in their fortress would precede their fall by the hand of Assyria (Num. 24:21-22).

Consequently, some of the Kenites maintained a close relationship with Israel and others assumed a more independent role. The branch of Kenites that descended from Jonadab are portrayed as a nomadic group, with a simplistic lifestyle which was the result of their steadfast loyalty to the instructions of their father who had been dead over two centuries.

In harmony with God's instructions, Jeremiah brought the Rechabites into one of the temple chambers, placed wine before them and ordered them to drink (Jeremiah 35:2). The Rechabites refused, citing the instructions of Jonadab, their ancestral father. They were not to drink wine, build houses or engage in agricultural pursuits (Jeremiah 35:6-7). They stressed their faithful compliance with Jonadab's commands and stated further that their presence in Jerusalem was due only to the marauding bands of Chaldeans and Syrians.

It would seem most probable that the ascetic manner of life which Jonadab endeavored to impose upon his descendants was an effort on his part to insulate them from the influence of Baal and the drunken debauchery associated with the worship of the Canaanite idol. Even though he had been dead for over two hundred years, the experienced benefits derived from this manner of life encouraged them in the continual pursuit thereof.

God proceeded to contrast the fidelity of the Rechabites to the human judgments of their earthly father with the persistent rebellion of Judah to the divine precepts of their heavenly father (Jeremiah 35:12-16).

The father of the Rechabites was only a man. His rules for life were merely personal judgments. No prophets accompanied his instructions. There was no guarantees of fulfillment of the promise made and no threat to judgment for refusal to comply with his precepts. And Jonadab had been dead for over two centuries. Yet the Rechabites remained devoted to his regulations, expressing their preference for a life of simplicity and discipline over the transient pleasures of unrighteousness.

The father of Judah was God himself. His rules for life were divine and authoritative. Prophets were sent continually to encourage obedience. There was a divine guarantee of fulfillment of the promises made

and severe judgment was assured for disobedience. God was alive, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Yet Judah held his word in contempt while manifesting preference for lifeless wooden stocks and the fleeting pleasures of sin.

The Rechabites were a light to Israel, the very thing that God intended for Israel to be to the pagan world. How ironic that God should hold forth these non-Jews as an example of the basic spirit that should have been characteristic of the nation of Israel itself. From the Rechabites let us learn the value of:

OBEDIENCE — Though his voice had long been silenced, the spirit of Jonadab continued to course through the veins of his descendants. The spirit of obedience sums up all that God requires of man. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Obedience is the key that unlocks the windows of heaven and allows participation in the indescribable spiritual provisions of God's marvelous grace (Revelation

22:14).

TOTAL ABSTINENCE — Can there be any doubt that upon viewing the ineffable evil fruits of alcohol in the perverted lives of both Israel and the pagan nations about them, that the wisdom of Jonadab's words was re-confirmed in the minds of each succeeding generation of Rechabites? Oh, that such were true in the minds of man today (Proverbs 23:29-32).

SIMPLE LIVING — 'There is much to be said for the simple life. Though there is nothing inherently evil in "houses, vineyards and fields," there are innate spiritual dangers in the multiplicity of material things. The cancer of materialism has corroded the spirituality of many a soul (Proverbs 30:8-9). — Route 5 Thomson, Georgia 30824.

The Trial Of Abraham

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. 22:1-2). The word "tempt" properly signifies, to try or prove: and the scene before us was intended to try the greatness of Abraham's love to, and faith in, God. He had displayed great trust in the Lord on previous occasions, but he was now to be tried, by being subjected to one of the severest sacrifices that God ever demanded from man.



JOHN G. SHAVER

The passage before us presents, first, the command of God. "Take now thy son . . ." Observe the object referred to — "thy son." Not his bullocks or rams, not a servant, but his son. "Thine only son Isaac." Not Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman; but Isaac, the only son of Sarah, the child of his old age. Note the duty enjoined. "And offer him for a burnt offering." It would have been hard for him to have devoted him to a life of solitude; but how much more severe to take away his life; and that, too, with his own hand! He was not allowed to depute another to perform this work of blood. And to offer him as a burnt-offering by which he would be reduced to ashes by the consuming flames. Examine the almost insuperable difficulties connected with this command. What might Abraham plead against the performance of this solemn command? First, it was strange and unprecedented. Nothing like it had ever proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord. Sacrifices of beasts had been enjoined; but of presenting a human sacrifice there was no example. Second, it was directly opposed to the feelings of our common humanity. And have not these feelings been implanted within us by God? And are they not worthy of him who has implanted them? But here is a command at perfect variance with them, a command that is to do the greatest violence to them, by shedding the blood of man, and that man was an only son. Third, it was a violation of divine law (Gen. 9:5). Fourth, it would annihilate all his hopes in reference to the long-promised seed. It was counter to all God's promises and solemn declarations on this subject;

and thus, when the long-expected and prayed-for dawn had appeared, to throw around him the most palpable and utter darkness. Fifth, it would destroy all his domestic comfort. How would Sarah bear the tidings? From that hour, desolation, mourning, and woe would be written on the walls of his dwelling. Sixth, it would render him odious to all around him. How could he clear his character, and wash out from his hands the stains of blood? Would he not be received, however he might attempt his conduct, as a murderer of the most barbarous description? These were but some of the difficulties connected with the duties enjoined upon Abraham.

The passage then presents, secondly, the obedience of Abraham. "And Abraham rose up early . . ." (Gen. 22:3). His obedience was prompt. He hesitates not, seeks no delay, requires no time for consideration; but as it is likely he received the solemn command during the darkness of the night, so he rises early in the morning, and makes preparation for its execution. His obedience was deliberate. Whatever anguish might be felt within, there was no confusion in his manner. His servants are engaged, the wood prepared, the ass saddled, and the journey commenced. His obedience was persevering. The journey was one of three days length. During the whole of this time Isaac was before his eyes. What time for reflection, for doubt, for abandoning the project! Besides, there was Isaac's distressing question: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb . . ." (Gen. 22:7)? And there would, also, be the thoughts of his past as he bound his son upon the altar. How God had called him from his own country, giving him glorious promises, then their delay; last of all, by miracle, Isaac's conception and birth, as the fulfillment of them, the joy it produced, how it strengthened faith, brightened hope, and increased his joy. And now, the very mysterious, unheard of, and to all human appearance the blighting command, to slay the son of promise! How his heart would heave with emotion, and his eyes be filled with bitterest tears, in the recital of this mysterious history! Isaac is bound and stretched upon the rude altar; and now, the knife is raised to pierce the heart of his child! Then a voice is heard: "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad . . ." (Gen. 22:11-12).

This leads us to, third, the final result. Isaac is spared, given back as from the dead. A sacrifice is provided (Gen. 22:13). Abraham is graciously distinguished for his faith and supreme love to God (Gen. 22:16). The promises are renewed (Gen. 22:17), and God is glorified in and by the whole.

Let us learn, first, the nature of true love and

Continued on page 4

God, The Refuge Of His People

Continued from page 2

first, the security he permeates to his people. Amidst all the changes and revolutions around them, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the seas, God is their refuge. Second, the confidence they should feel towards God. Trust in him at all times and forever. Commit all to his care and keeping. Third, the course they should pursue in their troubles. Flee to God, and seek his mighty help and succor. Fervently call upon his gracious and matchless name. Fourth, let the sinner flee by an active, obedient faith to this refuge, that he may escape the wrath that will be meted out on the last day. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL 33566.

The Trivial, The Important, And The All-Important

Oh, how we need to learn to distinguish between the trivial, the important, and the all-important! Too often we find ourselves sidetracked, majoring in minors and minoring in majors. Someone has well observed that we worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship. How confused and misdirected many of us have become!

Take a good, hard look at yourself. Trivial matters are often allowed

to dominate, and are viewed as important; important matters are misjudged as being all-important; and all the while, the all-important matters are squeezed out by the trivial and the important, and are neglected entirely.

Just what are we talking about? A stain on my tie is trivial; a secure financial future is important; faithfulness to my Lord is all-important. Or to put it another way, small everyday matters of living are trivial; the fact and quality of life itself are important; and the spirit, belonging to the eternal realm, transcending life in the flesh, is all-important.

It seems our day is made or broken, good or bad, depending upon how our hair stays in place, whether or not our favorite shirt is clean, or what the weather is like. Many an ulcer has grown from an obsessive, worried preoccupation with the trivial matters of living. Strokes have resulted from nothing more than one too many red lights on the way to work. Many of us are exchanging our lives for mere pettiness.

But even worse than this is the fact that we are coming dangerously close to exchanging our souls for what we consider to be the important matters of life. Flesh is given prominence over spirit, living is allowed to supercede spiritual life, and time is considered in place of eternity. We must come to see faithfulness to God as more important than life itself, for as James Montgomery wrote, "Tis not the whole of life to live, nor all of death to die." Inspiration admonishes, "Be thou faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10).

Life in the flesh is important, but it is not all-

The Trial Of Abraham

acceptable obedience — to do whatsoever God commands (Eccl. 12:13-14). Second, the principle of true obedience, faith in God (Heb. 11:6) — the power of saving faith in the sacrifices it freely makes. Fourth, the reward of true obedience. Fifth, the subject directs us to Jesus Christ — to him who was delivered up of his Father for our sins; who shed his blood for our redemption; for whom no substitute was found; against whom, as the good Shepherd, the sword of justice did awake, and pierce through and through, that he might give eternal life unto his sheep. He ascended the mount, bore his cross, and was truly offered as a propitiatory offering for the world (I Jno. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:8-9). — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL. 33566.



DALTON KEY

important. Self-preservation is a powerful instinct, but it is not the most important thing on earth. The Christian martyrs of the first century, who counted not their very lives as dear unto themselves, proved

that there exists something more important than life, than survival. May we come to realize the same truth. — Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Highly Speculative "Evidence" Points To God

The Memphis *Commercial Appeal* for June 27, 1982, had a fanciful article in the magazine section under the heading, "Our Mysterious World." The author, George Cunningham-Tee states, "most reputable biologists have no doubts about the concept of natural selection (survival of the fittest) and gradual evolutionary change."

This author, like so many others, assumes that the survival of fit specimens, such as man, indicates how we arrived. But *survival does not explain arrival!*

However, Mr. Cunningham-Tee is wise enough to know there has not been time enough in the earth's history to develop accidentally something so intricate as the human brain. Therefore, he asks this amazing question: "if we have developed too quickly . . . could it be because man's brain is an import?" (quoted from Max H. Flindt, in *On Tiptoe Beyond Darwin*).

Man's brain, he acknowledges, has ten billion neurons, ten times as many as the ape. Since, he



MARTEL PACE

confesses, it "took nature 500,000,000 years to develop one million neurons . . . the maximum capacity of an anthropoid brain" there just wasn't enough time to develop a human brain which is much bigger. How then do Mr. Cunningham-Tee and Mr. Flindt account for this in harmony with their theory of evolution? Here it is:

Obviously, nature did not create man's brain. The skymen did in an ancient breeding experiment, or a series of them. These gentlemen know God did not make us and would rather believe "the Sky People put us here . . ."! It is easier for them to believe in such fanciful myths than to accept the "Sky Person" (God) made and put us here. This, they would have us believe, was done by them in rapid experiments so as to speed up the process of evolution.

Is this not an admission that it takes intelligence to develop a brain as intelligent as man's? It appears to be so. Thus, the very reasoning(?) they use is an argument against their assumptions and tends rather to point to a greater being than man which we call "God." They don't want it this way and have invented the "Sky People." We never cease to be amazed at the assumptions of those who do not want to submit to the will of God. — (address after August 16, 1982) 3414 Elaine Drive Montgomery, Alabama 36109.

It Doesn't Take As Long As You Think

How long does it take to read through the Bible?

Some people are afraid to start reading the Bible because it seems such a formidable task. But there are only four books in the New Testament, for example, that take over an hour to read: Matthew, Luke, John and Acts. There are several books that can be read in less than three minutes by even the average reader: Titus, Philemon, II John, III John, and Jude. In the Old Testament, Obadiah consists of only one short chapter. So though the Bible is a library of 66 books, some of them are briefer than a chapter in the latest novel.

The New Testament has been read aloud publicly in 15 hours and 25 minutes. And the Old Testament can be read by a moderately rapid reader in as short a

time as 30 hours.

Following is the time required by a fairly rapid reader to read each book of the New Testament. Check yourself by this.

Matthew 1 hr. 23 min., Mark 46 min., Luke 1 hr. 25 min., John 1 hour, Acts 1 hr. 20 min., Romans 35 min., I Corinthians 28 min., II Corinthians 23 min., Galatians 13 min., Ephesians 13 min., Philippians 8 min., Colossians 8 Min., I Thessalonians 7 min., II Thessalonians 4 min., I Timothy 10 min., II Timothy 7 min., Titus 3 min., Philemon 1 min., Hebrews 26 min., James 8 min., I Peter 10 min., II Peter 7 min., I John 8 min., II John 1 min., III John 1 min., Jude 2 min., Revelation 41 min.

Though this would not allow for contemplation as you read, it should permit you to do a fairly careful reading. A slower reader will require more time, especially for books that are more theological than narrative in nature. Try reading the longer books in one setting to get the most out of them. Remember, this is the book by which you will one day be judged. Don't you think you should know what is in it?? — 1701 Gold Avenue S. E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS



Words Of Truth

(USPS 69)

"I am not ashamed
to speak of the Words of Truth and
of the power of God which is with me."

— speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 1982

NUMBER 33

Problems Of Prayer

(No. 1)

JAMES MEADOWS

PRAYER HAS PROBLEMS

Regardless of how much one believes in prayer one must confess there are perplexing questions and intricate problems. Many never get beyond the infant stage of development because of unwillingness to wrestle with these problems. There are some who think prayer is simple and they know all the answers. "Those who are convinced that they know all the answers either lack perception or do not see the problems or are remarkably naive." (Harold Lindsell, *When You Pray*, Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1969, p. 7.)

Problems of prayer do not miraculously vanish into thin air. One may minimize them, avoid them, or just pretend that they do not exist, but they are still there. One may give them the silent treatment but silence does not solve all problems. One may try to answer all unanswered questions by asserting that "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28), but "the assumption 'that all things work together for good' was designed by God to prevent questions is without the support of logic of Scripture" (Harold Lindsell, *When You Pray*, p. 7).

SOME CAUSES OF PROBLEMS IN PRAYER

First, some problems arise because of a failure to recognize God's laws in the physical and spiritual realms. God has laws in all realms of life and his whole creation is governed by these laws. Early in life man learns these laws of nature and conforms to them in order to avoid unfavorable consequences and to make his physical existence livable.

The spiritual world also operates according to God's spiritual laws. They have been made known by divine revelation and they operate in perfect harmony with each other. God has a spiritual law for the sinner (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3,4) and no amount of seeking to be righteous by a good life or praying will change it. God decrees that we give upon the first day of the week as we have been prospered (I Cor. 16:1,2), and churches will not thrive by substituting dances, bingo, plays and bazaars.

God also has spiritual laws that govern prayer. Failure to understand these laws causes some to become disheartened when their prayers are not answered. Ignorance of God's spiritual laws and how they operate in prayer, as well as other parts of the

Christian life, can be just as devastating in its consequences, as a refusal to hear and obey them.

The laws governing our prayers are clearly stated by God. *First*, they must be addressed to God, our Father (Matt. 6:9). *Second*, they must be in the name of Christ (Jn. 14:13,14). *Third*, a forgiving spirit must be in the heart of one that prays (Matt. 6:14,15). *Fourth*, prayer must be in harmony with God's will (I Jn. 5:14,15). *Fifth*, we must pray in faith (Jas. 1:5-8; Matt. 21:22). *Sixth*, humbleness is a definite law in prayer (Lk. 18:9-14). *Seventh*, we must abide in Christ as we pray (Jn. 15:7). *Eighth*, we must practice righteousness (I Pet. 3:12). *Ninth*, we must keep his commandments (I Jn. 3:22). *Tenth*, we must pray fervently and earnestly (Jas. 5:16,17).

Second, some problems arise because of a failure to recognize what prayer is not. *First*, prayer is not some sort of "stump speech" to God — a kind of vehicle to display one's proficient use of descriptive words. *Second*, prayer is not an emergency device. Some pray only when they are in need or some disaster threatens. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). *Third*, some try to substitute prayer for obedience. Prayer without obedience won't work because "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). On the cross Jesus asked God to forgive his murderers (Lk. 23:34), but it was not without obedience (Acts 2:37-41). God will forgive any sin a brother confesses (I Jn. 1:7-10), but we cannot ask God to forgive a brother that refuses to confess (I Jn. 5:16). *Fourth*, some use prayers as a means to inform God and scorn man. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Lk. 18:11,12).


To be continued . . . — P.O. Box 41804, Memphis, TN 38104.

No subject has greater prominence than prayer in the Bible, yet too many Christians are growing indifferent to its privileges and blessings. Prayer is both a privilege and a command: ". . . continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12c) "Praying always with prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (I Tim. 2:1). "Have you ceased to pray, not because you have reached a definite conviction that prayer is futile, but because you have drifted into a prayerless habit by allowing the 'sweet hour of prayer' to be crowded out by duties that seem to be more pressing and more rewarding?" (Delmar Owens, *The Prayers of Paul*, Dallas: Christian Publishing Co., 1965., p. 10.)

PRAYER IS POWERFUL

"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" (Jas. 5:16). James' statement is in a context of several important suggestions about prayer. "Let him pray" suggests *individual prayer* (Jas. 5:13). *United prayer* comes to mind in calling for the elders and letting "them pray over him" (Jas. 5:14). "And the prayer of faith" suggests *believing prayer*. "Pray one for another" suggests *intercessory prayer* (Jas. 5:16). There is to be *fervent prayer* (Jas. 5:16). Elijah "prayed earnestly that it might not rain" suggests *specific prayer* (Jas. 5:17). The phrase "effectual fervent" comes from the Greek word *energia*, from which we get our English word, energy. Our prayers get their energy from God.

Paul believed very strongly in prayer. He believed that the prayers of Christians would deliver him from the hands of wicked men (Rom. 15:30; II Thess. 3:2); that prayers for rulers would make for more favorable living conditions (I Tim. 2:1,2); that prayers would cause his release from prison (Phil. 1:18,19); that doors would be opened (Col. 4:2-5); and that prayers would give strength and courage (Eph. 6:18-20).



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Signs Of The Times

W. A. HOLLEY

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people," declared the writer of Proverbs (Prov. 14:34).

Isaiah, one of God's greatest prophets, described the sinful condition of his city and nation, saying: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. 1:2-4).

The lessons of history should be one of our greatest teachers, but, alas, many millions never learn! If men and nations forsake the Lord, the Lord forsakes them; if men and nations return to the Lord, He will return to them (II Chron. 24:20; Zech. 1:3). Our nation seems to be following a desultory course having no definite plan, regularity, or national purpose. We know not where we are going, but we are in a hurry to get there.

I am concerned about the future of men and nations. Why should I not be? I have read of men and nations that reached the zenith of their power, but, because of their abandonment of the principles of right passed into obloquy and oblivion. What has happened to others, can also happen to us.

Why should you and I be alarmed about the moral and spiritual condition of our nation and its people? We shall notice some of the signs of the times:

(1) In 1979 the citizens of our nation spent \$40 billion for alcoholic beverages. Just think how much better it would have been if this huge amount of money had been spent for the general welfare of our people! Food, clothing, homes, medical attention, education, could have been provided for countless thousands. There is no shortage of alcoholic beverages, but there is a shortage of truth and righteousness. We ask, Why? Why?

(2) Drugs by the ton are being brought into our

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Dear Jill:

I have wanted to write this letter for some time, but have been reluctant to do so, because I was afraid — afraid it might be embarrassing to you, or that it might in some way cause some difficulty for you. But as you are preparing to go off to college, I realize I have waited as long as I dare about saying these things to you.

I want you to know how much I appreciate your keeping my role as father from being a difficult one. Your mother and I have never had to force you to do what is right; you always did so on your own as best you knew how. Of course, in many cases nobody gave you credit for doing so. They knew you practiced what I preached, and so they mistakenly assumed you followed a certain course because I made you do it.

Oh, we have had our disagreements, and there have been occasions when our tempers flared. But I cannot remember a time when such a conflict arose because we disagreed over some moral or spiritual question; neither do I remember a time when I thought you were indifferent toward the matter of right and wrong.

I never appealed to you to follow a certain course because I am a preacher, and you never blamed any of your trials and difficulties on the fact that I am a preacher. It is unfortunate that well-meaning people sometimes cause the children of preachers to become bitter by reminding them of what is expected of them because they are the children of preachers. I am thankful you never allowed this to happen in your case.

I will never forget that day in August nearly eighteen years ago when you were born. Your mother and I believed then, as we do now, that you, and later your brother, were given us in answer to our prayers. But what an awesome responsibility we both felt — the responsibility of rearing a daughter and of helping her find her way in life. Needless to say, it has not always been easy, either for you or for us. We have come over some rough places together. But we have trusted each other, and you have confided in us, especially in your mother. No doubt, those late night talks the two of you would have after I had already gone to bed were a very important and helpful part of your growing up.

I must admit I was apprehensive as you began to approach the teen-age years. I had been warned time and again how that teen-agers would rebel and do all of the things their parents did not want them to do. I dreaded the time when I would have to lay down the law to you, and tell you that you strictly could not do some certain something that you were determined to do. But that time never came. It turned out that the things your mother and I wanted for you were the things you wanted for yourself.

How difficult it would have been for both of us had it been necessary for me to forbid your going to the dances! Most of your friends were going, and one is a high school student only once. But you had convictions of your own, and the possibility you might



BOB DUNCAN

go was never brought up for discussion. Though most of your friends wore their shorts and went public swimming, you never ever asked if you could do the same. You were not moved from your own convictions even by the fact that some of the other young people in the church participated in these things.

Jill, I know I have fussed at you quite a bit — about taking so long to get ready to go, about not helping more around the house, about showering late at night, about putting things off until the last minute, and about a hundred other things. I probably did not say nearly enough to you about your good points. I never stayed awake at night wondering when you would come in. If you were, for some reason, going to be later than the time we had agreed upon, you always phoned to let me know you would be late. I never looked out over an assembly of the saints to see if you decided to come; I could always depend on your being there. I never had to persuade you to participate in any activity at church; you were always there on your own, ready to do whatever you could to help. My heart has swelled with gratitude many times very late at night when the only light on in the house was the one in your bedroom, and I knew you were reading your Bible, as you always do before you go to sleep.

Now you are getting ready to go off to Freed-Hardeman College. (Where have the years gone?) We have planned for this day from the time you were born. In the environment of a Christian college you can continue to grow spiritually and make new friends. While there will be those, even at a Christian college, who do not share your high ideals, there will be many who do. While there have been many times during your high school days when you have felt "left out" because of your convictions, such will not often be the case at college.

You are now grown, Jill. It's hard for me to say it, and it pains me to realize it. But whatever real help your mother and I are to have given you in life we have already given. Oh, we plan to pay the bills and continue to support you while you are in college. And we would like to think you will still confide in us and ask our advice. But we realize you are now a young woman. The major decisions affecting your life you will be now making for yourself. But your mother and I want you to know that, despite our own failures and shortcomings, you are at this point in life exactly what we had hoped and prayed you would be.

Our prayers and our love will follow you wherever you go. And please don't ever forget: you will always be Daddy's little girl.

With gratitude and much love,
Daddy

Preachers who formerly gave lectures on women's clothes have been compelled to turn to other subjects. There just wasn't enough material.

If the church is ever to get on its feet, it must get on its knees.

Those who are so perturbed over the present divorce rate evidently do not understand the law of supply and demand. There are more lawyers in this country than there are preachers.

Congress is a legislative body whose members make the laws and whose chaplain prays for the country.

The Signs Of The Times

Continued from page 2

country each day, thus corrupting the lives of our citizens. As a result of the consumption of drugs and alcohol lawlessness and crimes of every sort continue to grow. Our jails and penitentiaries are filled to overflowing till we have no place to keep other prisoners, but they continue to come. Nothing seems to stop this trend!

(3) The American home is under attack. Little by little its old foundation is being eaten away. It is now stylish and acceptable in some quarters for couples to live together without benefit of matrimony. Many boast of their new liberation unabashed and unashamed. These do not want to be old fashioned; they want to be modern! As result there are thousands upon thousands of abandoned children, wives and husbands. Many women seem to resent the role which God has assigned them; they rebel against his order. (I Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:9-15; I Pet. 3:1-6.)

Divorce for any cause or no cause has become the norm for millions of Americans. Some have been married and divorced seven or eight times, and think nothing about it. Some boys and girls have had so many daddys and mothers, they have learned to play the game of switch and swap almost yearly. This sort of things is devastating to the home, and is rank disobedience to the God of heaven. The Scripture expressly declares that God "hateth putting away" (Mal. 2:16). When men and women are joined together in bonds of holy wedlock, they become one flesh, and are to remain together "until death do us part." Only adultery or fornication is Scriptural grounds for a second marriage as long as both continue to live (Mat. 5:27-28, 31-32; 19:3-9; Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:22-33). "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

(4) Homosexuality and lesbianism are extolled as the way enlightened and progressive citizens of America should travel, notwithstanding the fact that all such relationships are a sin before God (Rom. 1:24-32). No matter how such practices may be explained, justified, rationalized, they are still sin. TV is largely responsible for the promotion of these far-out and reprehensible acts. Yes, TV gathers up the garbage of the world and dumps it into our livingrooms, and it does it day after day, 365 days each year, and year after year. It is no wonder that the minds of our people are pumped full of the leaven of sin after awhile.

It can be truthfully said that America just loves sex; the more lurid and ghastly its presentation, the better. Full disclosure of all the sensational details must be made! Thousands keep up with the sexual escapades of the famous and the near-famous. Books, magazines, movies, radio and TV have built sex into a \$1,000,000,000 business, and more. Both men and women expose themselves in pornographic magazines and movies with never a thought of shame. Abortion is thought of as a way to save civilization with no thought of murder. Sin is sin called by whatever other name (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; I John 3:4).

It is high time for America to return to the proper sense of shame. Surely, there is such a thing as right. Truth, honor, goodness, morality, rectitude are virtues which built our nation, and virtues to which our nation should return (Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 6:9-11).

(5) Those who promote evolution, infidelity and atheism are exerting their pressure for acceptance as never before. These false doctrines often are given free promotion via TV, newspapers, magazines, etc., being presented as truth, with no questions asked. In many instances evolution is supported by tax money; but that same tax money is forbidden to be used to teach the Genesis account of creation (Gen. 1:1-2, 26-28). If man is no more than an animal, we should expect him to act as an animal: no morality, no

intellectual powers, no spiritual qualities, no Bible, no God, no heaven, no hell.

Man is made in the image of God. Man is the offspring of God. The doctrine of evolution removes all restraints from man and, if he considers himself a mere animal, he can do as he pleases if he possesses the power, not being bound by any moral or religious concepts. Man's view of himself and the world in which he lives will determine his conduct. If we

remove the bridle from a horse, we turn him loose to roam as he will; if we remove man's concept of God as his creator, we are saying that man is his own God, and that he can do as he pleases without impunity. Life never comes from non-life; life always comes from preexistent life; therefore God created the heaven and the earth — they did not create themselves. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

The Bible

The Bible is by far the best book in all the world. It merits our reverence, our respect, our love, our belief, our trust, our subjection, and our complete obedience. Without the Bible we would be as helpless, hopeless nomads travelling the road to eternity with no purpose, no map, no guide. Were it not for the Bible, we would know nothing of God's law, will, love, and eternal purpose; we would be ignorant of Christ's sacrifice, blood, intercession, and advocacy; we would be without knowledge of our sin, our need for salvation, and our eternal nature and destiny.

The word "Bible" is not found within the Bible. God's book refers to itself as the law (Psalms 119:97), the word (Psalms 119:11), the word of God (Hebrews 4:12), the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11), scripture (II Timothy 3:16), doctrine (II John 9), and truth (John 17:17). The Bible describes itself as a sword (Ephesians 6:17), a fire (Jeremiah 23:29), a hammer (Jeremiah 23:29), seed (Luke 8:11), a lamp (Psalms 119:105), and a light (Psalms 119:105).

This book, the Bible, is not a "dead letter." According to the Hebrew writer, the word of God is



DALTON KEY

both quick (alive) and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The heavens were made and the world was framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 33:6). Even now, all things of the universe are upheld by the divine word (Hebrews 1:3). The Bible quickens (Psalms 119:50), begets (James 1:18), cleanses (John 15:3), purifies (I Peter 1:22), converts (Psalms 19:7), saves (James 1:21), pricks the heart (Acts 2:36-38), performs spiritual surgery (Hebrews 4:12), builds us up (Acts 20:32), provides patience, comfort and hope for the faithful (Romans 15:4), and will judge us in the Last Day (John 12:48).

The Bible is unlike any book of man in that it is perfect (Psalms 19:7), verbally inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16), and eternal in nature (I Peter 1:24,25). The Bible is perfectly complete and completely perfect. Further, while human books may rise and fall with respect to their public acceptance and popularity, the Bible has throughout the years maintained a "best seller" status. Other volumes constantly undergo revision, yet God's book is every bit as relevant — up to date — today as it was in the ancient days of its inspiration.

Attitudes concerning the Bible are varied. Some are apathetic towards it, some reject it as foolishness, some wage war against it, and some few cherish and respect it. Like Jehoiakim, many would like to cut it and burn it (Jeremiah 36:23). Others, like David, love the Bible to the point of making it their constant meditation (Psalms 119:97).

Friend, what is your attitude concerning this Book of books? Does your manner of life correspond with your profession? — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Crucified With Christ

The importance of scriptural baptism is underscored in Paul's affirmation that "the body of sin" is destroyed when we contact Christ's death through obedient faith (Romans 6:1-7). In verse six of the sixth division of Romans he emphasizes that in contacting Christ's death the believer is rid of the "old man." The former man with his dedication to sinful living is rendered powerless. A servant of sin's passion has now become a slave to righteousness (Romans 6:16-19). This "new man" is dedicated to a life of sobriety, righteousness and Godliness (Titus 2:11,12; Romans 6:22).

While the Bible clearly teaches that God reckons us dead to sin when our souls have been cleansed through Jesus' blood at baptism, it is likewise forcefully implied that one receiving immersion has, prior to this act of faith, undergone such a change of heart and purpose that he is ready to walk after a



R. W. GRAY

radically new life style (Colossians 2:12,13; 3:1-6; I John 2:6; Galatians 2:20). It is obvious that the act of immersion itself does not effect such a radical change of mind and heart. If so, then baptismal regeneration is a true doctrine. It follows, then, that one coming to be baptized must understand that he is "putting off" the old man that he might "put on" a new man (Colossians 2:11,12; Romans 6:5-14; Colossians 3:9-10).

"Repent," commanded Peter, "and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). The baptizer challenged those who would be immersed at his hands to "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). His was indeed a baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4). This radical change of heart that precedes baptism, and the radical change of conduct that follows baptism, is what brother E. R. Harper has in mind in his powerful sermon, "Did Your Baptism Take?"

Because of our failure to give proper emphasis to repentance, to a revolutionary change of moral and spiritual behaviour, some have found their way into "our" fellowship who are yet unregenerated children of the devil. "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and has not "added" the unsaved to his family (II Timothy 2:19a; Acts 2:47). But it is frequently the

Continued on page 4

Crucified With Christ

Continued from page 3

case that one coming to baptism is not prepared to "depart from iniquity" (II Timothy 2:19b). As a result elders often find themselves guarding the goats rather than feeding God's sheep. Surely the Lord is not pleased with our tacit approval of the unregenerated enjoying full fellowship among the saints.

We are not required to be the judges of the thoughts and intentions of others, to be sure, but we can observe by some of the fruit that is borne, or not borne, that some who are unsaved meet with us around the table of the Lord (Matthew 7:16-20; John

7:24). It is because of this very thing that we suffer so many family problems, divisions, and embarrassments. The name of God is blasphemed because of the shameful conduct of those who were "immersed" but who did not "put away sin" (Romans 2:24).

It is an intolerable error that would impose so-called "Lordship-baptism" upon the church, but it is time we give more thought to the complaints that precipitated this and related errors. Seeing that many enter the church without any apparent knowledge of the cost of discipleship some felt a stop gap was needed. The answer does not lie, obviously, in the

formation of a human creed, an appointed spiritual father, and the like. But an answer is needed. And it is not that difficult to find. We just must give greater emphasis to the fact that in baptism we are "crucified with Christ," and that we will be expected to "walk in newness of life" as a consequence of that death and resurrection. The candidate must understand that baptism is not a substitute for repentance, and that genuine, heart-felt change of attitude, prompted by Godly sorrow, must precede immersion. Think on these things. (See Acts 19:18-20.) — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

Sinners Are Expensive

ROGER JACKSON

At Matthew 20:28 the Bible records that Jesus said, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." A ransom is a purchase price used in buying back something that is lost or in the possession of another. From this passage it is clear that our Lord wanted us to understand that he was buying every sinner who obeys the gospel (Matt. 26:28; Rom. 6:1-6). The purchase price does not avail unless the sinner wants to come home (Matt. 11:28-30). The one thing that we do know about it all is that sinners are expensive.

However, there is another way in which sinners are expensive, and this is the way I propose to discuss in the following lines, and I solicit your undivided attention.

Those who remain among God's people after they have evidently decided to forsake the Lord (II Tim. 4:10) are extremely expensive to the congregation where they are still in fellowship, undisciplined and constantly used in a leadership role in the worship services. How expensive are they?

They cost local brethren the esteem of unbelievers. The reputation and good standing of the Lord's church in any given locality is of extreme importance and Paul cited that factor in his rebuke to the Corinthians for their protection of the adulterer of I Corinthians 5. Every faithful gospel preacher who has ever labored under such a handicap knows what I am trying to get across. How can you go to people's homes and teach them the gospel and encourage them to obey the gospel and worship with a congregation that not only harbors but also sanctions the conduct of one even the ungodly community will not overlook? We are so afraid that we are going to hurt somebody's feelings (and I do not advocate that) or move too quickly that we drag it out over months and months until we think father time and poor memories have rendered effective action invalid and we keep on paying the price. It is no great wonder to me that some little congregations never grow. Fuming, fussing and fighting have consumed their energies and ruined their good name in the community and cost them far, far more in the long run than any loss of attendance and contribution would have cost them if they had acted lovingly, scripturally and expeditiously. We are so afraid we are going to hurt ourselves that we have hurt ourselves most in our fear.

Wilful and rebellious sinners in a congregation cost it its zeal and enthusiasm. God wants his people to be zealous (Acts 2:41-47; Tit. 2:11-14). Sinners unrebuked sap the strength of good people and break the spirit of the congregation. Those hurt the most are usually the new converts and young people. Evangelism is at a stand still. Missionaries might as well go somewhere else. The ones who are being supported will soon have to come home because the

contribution will drop and cut-back will be the order for the future instead of vision and challenge. Brethren will stop speaking or associating with each other or else they will greet each other with harsh words and ugly attitudes that lead to separation. Instead of a warm and friendly group of redeemed Christians the congregation becomes cold and unloving. This is a part of the cost of retaining in our fellowship even one who sins and refuses to repent. Christ died for him and that means his soul is worth more than all the gold in the world (Matt. 16:26), but he is not worth more than the church in his sinful condition.

A third thing such sinners cost a congregation is usually its preacher. Gospel preachers are a conscientious lot if they are true gospel preachers at all. They know they are not personally responsible for impenitent sinners after they have done all they can to warn them (Ez. 3:17-19; Acts 20:26,27), but a good man's concern does not stop there. His conscience will not allow him to stay where open sinfulness is either condoned or unchecked because its cure is dragged out and haggled over for months. Many has been the case that as brethren watched the moving

van disappear over the horizon they in perpetual perplexity turned one to another and asked, "I wonder why he left?"

A final cost that undisciplined sinners are to a congregation is the congregation. Many preachers have been accused of splitting a congregation when they left when the blame is to be placed upon the brethren for not standing together on God's Word against wrong. Even the Lord said he would remove his favor from such congregations (Rev. 2,3). We will never find a perfect congregation I know. I am not looking for one, and if I ever accidentally come across one it will be imperfect the day I am added to the church roll. We are talking about congregations who ignore and even approve of sinfulness in its ranks. From our mouths there cannot proceed blessings to God and cursings toward our brethren (Jas. 3:9,10). How can we commune with Him who died for us and at the same time hate one for whom he died? (I Jn. 4:20)?

Retaining sinners who will not repent in our fellowship costs the Lord's people far more than the effort to withdraw our fellowship. We may either learn the lesson or pay the cost. — P.O. Box 176 Hackleburg, Ala. 35564.

Preaching: God's Plan

JIMMY EDWARDS

An imaginary story is told of a conversation which took place when Jesus went back to heaven. One of the exalted angels asked: "Master, what provision have you made to save the world?" Christ replied, "I outlined a plan of salvation for all the world and entrusted its spread to a little band of men — my disciples." "But Master, suppose they fail you? What then?" Jesus replied, "I have no other plan."

God chose to bring the world to salvation through the "force of ideas" rather than through the "force of might." The Apostolic Commission, or Great Commission, was committed to the apostles and gave them authority to preach the gospel and proclaim the terms of salvation offered by Christ (Mark 16:15,16).

Phillips Brooks in his *Lectures On Preaching* gives a definition of preaching. He wrote that "preaching is the communication of truth by man to men." In *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* Carl G. Kromminga wrote that "preaching is the proclamation of the word of God to men by men under assignment from God." Webster defines the word preach: "to deliver a sermon; to urge acceptance or abandonment of an idea or course of action; to exhort in an officious or tiresome manner; to set forth in a sermon; to advocate earnestly." Each of these definitions accurately describe preaching.

There is nothing more beautiful than the message-bearer of God. "How then shall they call on him in

whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:14,15).

Save the world by preaching? "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). Human wisdom cannot bring about the salvation of any individual. We are totally dependent on the God revealed through the preaching of the gospel. When we accept the teaching of the gospel as true wisdom we have hope of salvation.

Burton Coffman in his commentary on Romans wrote: "Men must look again at the method God has chosen; and remember the omnipotence of him who chose the divinity of the message, and the power of the living word." He added, "We must dare to trust and use the means God elected as the instrument of his holy will."

It is imperative that men today preach the gospel. It is absolutely necessary to preach the word of God. It is through the preaching of Christ crucified that the wisdom and power of God is to be made known. There is no other means available to proclaim the message of Christ! — 316 LaFayette St., S. LaFayette, Ala. 36862.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

Speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 1982

NUMBER 34

The Shepherds Of Bethlehem

It is sad that the shepherds of Bethlehem are known only as an adjunct to the traditional Christmas story. Rarely is their narrative studied for its own worth, although it contains many valuable lessons.

All we know of these men is recorded in Luke's gospel (2:8-20). They were unknown peasants whose place in history was made immortal by the events of that night. The year would have been 4 B.C., for Herod the Great died in April of that year.

A shepherd's life and work was hard and demanding. Jacob related his gruelling experience tending Laban's flocks: "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night . . . in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from mine eyes" (Genesis 21:39-40). David told of delivering a lamb out of the mouth of a lion or a bear (I Samuel 17:34-36). Shepherding was a 24 hour per day, 7 day a week profession. Equipment and provisions for their work were Spartan. Garments were simple. A rough cloak of sheepskin was worn in bad weather. On their shoulder, they carried a bag or wallet with food and personal items. For protection, there was a sling and a rod; and for support, a staff. In foul weather they used a small tent. Each morning, they led their flocks to pasture and at evening they returned to the fold.

Among the ancient Hebrews, shepherding was a vocation, venerable and honorable, hallowed by great ancestors like Jacob, Moses and David. Even the great Jehovah was likened unto a shepherd (Psalms 23:1). By Jesus' time, they Pharisees and scribes scorned shepherds as common and unclean. The Talmud tells us that they were not allowed in the courts as witnesses. It is interesting that the sheep intended for daily sacrifice at the temple were



JOHN WADDEY

pastured near Bethlehem.

"And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and they were sore afraid" (Luke 2:9). So great was the message that no less a person was suitable to announce it. The careful student notes that angels attended every step of our Lord's ministry: the annunciation, birth and temptation, the passion, resurrection and ascension. "The glory of the Lord" which shown about them was the Shekinah, the symbol of God's presence seen repeatedly in the Old Testament (Compare Ezekiel 10:18-19).

It was an humble audience the angels appeared unto: lowly shepherds. Not to kings or princes, not to wealthy merchants or moguls, not to priests or rabbis, but to common folks who truly loved him they came. The birth of our Lord in such lowly circumstances hallowed the common life and allowed the masses of humanity access to the divine priesthood. Today, anyone can be a priest of God who is willing to enter the kingdom (Revelation 1:6).

It was a thrilling message they brought (Luke 2:10-11). "Be not afraid," they said. Such a spectacular glory would leave a soul awestruck and trembling. "There is born to you . . . a Saviour" — what joy these words brought to a Hebrew heart! The promise of the ages, unfolding now before their very eyes! His very name, Jesus, meant Savior (Matthew 1:21). He was not just a political or economic Savior, he was "Christ the Lord," their long-awaited Messiah now come in the flesh.

The angel's message was *good news*, i.e., the "gospel." This was the first gospel message given to mankind. Then and now it brings great joy to all who receive it. Even to this moment, no joy is comparable to that of the gospel of Jesus. It is for all people, not just for the Jews. A new age had arrived, good news for all nations, they could be saved by Christ (Mark 16:15-16). The *theme* of their gospel was "a Savior is born." If this central theme is neglected, our preaching is no longer *gospel*, no matter how eloquent. Their message was *confirmed by a sign*. They would find a baby "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." God's ways are strange to men. This was not at all what Jews were expecting of their Messiah: perhaps an angel, a king or a warrior, but never a helpless babe!

The angels praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest," i.e., *in heaven*. Truly his coming has caused millions to give God the glory for his love and salvation (John 3:16). "*On earth* peace among men in whom he is well pleased." What a welcome, joyful message was this in a world torn by strife and hatred. How beautiful, even today. Among the Hebrews there was a festive celebration when a child was born. God provided his own minstrels to celebrate the birth of his Son in that austere situation.

We see their *faith* in the divine message. We mark their *obedience* to the divine charge to seek out the child. We admire their *zeal* in sharing their good news with others (vs. 20). There is a contagion about the gospel. A heart truly touched by it can never hold it in. Each of us like Legion should "declare how great things God hath done for [us]" (Luke 8:39). We should not overlook the fact that these men were busy, tending their common duties when God's message came. One cannot be pleasing to the Father who is negligent of his daily responsibilities.

The "glory of the Lord" did not appear at the temple where were the professional priests whose hearts had long grown cold; rather it came to the warm, receptive hearts of humble shepherds.


The Savior's humble birth served at least two purposes: it made known to the race the supreme love of Christ's condensation (II Corinthians 8:9), and it concealed the greatest event of the ages from the wicked who would have sought to thwart the divine plan.

Francis of Assisi wrote, "For our sakes he was born a stranger in an open stable; he lived without a place of his own wherein to lay his head, subsisting by the charity of good people; and he died naked on a cross in the close embrace of holy poverty." It is a marvel that a cradle too poor for a child was fitting for God's Son. Where normally lay food for beasts now lay the bread of life to feed a hungry race of men (John 6:48-57). No man will complain about his poor clothes or shelter if he remembers the swaddling clothes and manger of our Lord. How much we owe him who sacrificed so much for us!

The Almighty Son of God as a helpless babe was a type of his coming kingdom, apparently helpless in

Continued on page 2

Harding Graduate School
of Religion Lit



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Shepherds Of Bethlehem

Continued from page 1

the world of powerful kingdoms, yet more powerful and enduring than all (Matthew 13:31-32).

Christ's birth was a real historic event, not a myth or fable like those of pagan religions. Dates and places are given. Eyewitnesses verified the facts.

May each of us respond to the good news of Christ as did those shepherds. Let us seek out the Savior, let us tell everyone all we have seen and heard of him and let us praise and glorify our God all the days of our lives. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Working With God

ANCIL JENKINS

I heard once of a little girl who was afraid of the dark. One night her mother told her to go on the back porch and get the broom. The girl, wanting to obey her mother, was still full of anxiety. "Don't be afraid," her mother told her, "The Lord is everywhere and he will protect you."

The little girl opened the back door and closed her eyes. Reaching out her hand she said, "Lord, if you're there, please hand me the broom."

We may smile at the young girl. Yet we all may have had the feeling at one time that if the Lord is supposed to be with us, why doesn't he do more? This is partly explained by Paul's statement that we are laborers together with God (I Corinthians 3:9). This relationship is somewhat like a see-saw. By working together, we can accomplish almost anything. By ourselves, we can do nothing, and neither can God. This is not to say his power is limited. However, he can accomplish nothing in our lives without the surrender of our will.

If your life seems powerless, if you feel like a person on a see-saw by yourself, give God a little cooperation. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Shank And Jeconiah



BOB DUNCAN

In September of 1976, less than five months after I moved to Jasper to become editor of *Words of Truth*, the elders of the Sixth Avenue church asked that I review *God's Tomorrow*, a book written by Robert Shank, and which teaches that the kingdom of Christ is yet to be established right here on earth. When we had published two articles in our review, brother Shank, along with others associated with him in the *Restoration Leadership Ministry*, came to Jasper, and agreed to withdraw the book from the market upon the condition we stop our review. Brother Shank never saw anything wrong with the book, but made the following statement for publication: "Because it is a matter of concern, and some regard it as divisive, I will agree not to continue the distribution of the book as long as I am associated with this work." In that meeting he also agreed that he would not teach, either publicly or privately, his views concerning the future aspect of the kingdom of Christ.

We were surprised to learn in September of 1980 that brother Shank had gone back on his word, and was distributing *God's Tomorrow* again. Then early in 1982 his new book, *Until*, a large volume of more than five hundred pages, was published. In this he argues in no uncertain terms that "Christ is coming to earth again . . . to rule over the nations from Zion (Jerusalem) in righteousness and invincible power" (P. 19).

Brother Shank is no longer with the *Restoration Leadership Ministry*, and the elders who are overseeing that work have made a fine statement to the brotherhood to the effect they do not approve his new book and did not know he was writing it.

In addition to teaching his false ideas concerning the kingdom, brother Shank has behaved in a manner somewhat less than honorable. (1) He did not honor his word with reference to the distribution of the book, *God's Tomorrow*. (2) While he was being supported by churches of Christ, he was writing a book teaching a false doctrine which he had agreed not to teach — a doctrine which not one of the churches supporting him would knowingly support or endorse. And remember, please, that this was after he had agreed not to teach these views either publicly or privately. All of this is a matter of record.

One other matter concerning which brethren generally may not be aware is brother Shank's shifting position with reference to Coniah. During our discussion with brother Shank in that meeting in which it was agreed that he would not teach his theory concerning the future kingdom, we made the familiar argument based upon the prophecy concerning the seed of Coniah. The prophet said: "Thus saith the word of the Lord, Write ye this man [Coniah] childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah"

(Jeremiah 22:30). But Jesus is of the seed of Coniah (Matthew 1:12). (The *Jechonias* of Matthew 1:12 is the *Coniah* of Jeremiah 22:28-30). Therefore Jesus cannot, by the decree of the Almighty, prosper sitting on the throne of David and ruling in Jerusalem. This fact destroys the Premillennial and Zionist theories.

But brother Shank's reply to this argument was a simple denial that the *Jechonias* of Matthew 1:12 is the same as the *Coniah* of the prophecy in Jeremiah 22:28-30. One can imagine our surprise when we found in his new book, not that Coniah and Jechonias are two different people, but that "Jesus is not of the seed of Jeconiah" (P. 34). He explains that "Shealtiel [the *Salathiel* of Matthew 1:12] was the 'son' of Jeconiah by a Levirate marriage . . . Thus Shealtiel, as the Levirate son of Jeconiah, was a legal heir to the throne, though he was not of the seed of Jeconiah" (P. 35). (For an explanation of the Levirate marriage read Deuteronomy 25:5,6.)

But all of this is mere conjecture on the part of brother Shank, and is certainly not in harmony with what the Bible teaches about Levirate marriages. According to brother Shank, the Levirate marriage of Jeconiah "was arranged under the emergency of Jeconiah's imprisonment to ensure posterity for Jeconiah" (P. 35). But there is nothing to indicate that a Levirate marriage was ever entered into under such circumstances. The Bible says: "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child . . ." (Deuteronomy 25:5). Jeconiah had not died. Furthermore, it should be observed that the king's wives were also taken with him into Babylonian captivity (II Kings 24:15). Why, then, should there be any need for a Levirate marriage?

Furthermore, in Matthew's genealogy, there is only one man listed who it is certain was born of a Levirate marriage, and that one is Obed. And notice, please, that Mahlon, the dead husband of his mother (Ruth 4:10), is not said to be the father of Obed; Boaz, the one who actually begot him, is. One other in the list might, by a loose interpretation (but not as loose as brother Shank imagines was the case with Salathiel), be considered as having been born by means of a Levirate arrangement. We refer, of course, to Phares, the son of Judah by the widow of Judah's dead son, Er. But again it is Judah, the actual father, and not Er, whose name is contained in the genealogical list. This being the case, why should one suppose that Jeconiah would be said to have begotten Salathiel if, indeed, Salathiel had been begotten by someone else? And this question is especially appropriate since God had directed by Jeremiah that no man of the seed of Jeconiah would prosper sitting on the throne of David and ruling in Judah?

Finally, the genealogical list given by Matthew was given for the purpose of establishing the fact that Jesus is the one who came to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament. It was by inspiration he included "Jechonias" (Coniah or Jeconiah) in the list. It was also by inspiration that Jeremiah had declared that no man of the seed of Coniah would prosper sitting on David's throne and ruling in Jerusalem. If Jeremiah told the truth, and if Matthew told the truth, then Jesus, being of the seed of Coniah, can never occupy David's throne in Jerusalem and enjoy a prosperous reign. But this is the very thing brother Shank says

Continued on page 3

Problems Of Prayer

(No. 2)

By JAMES MEADOWS

(SOME CAUSES OF PROBLEMS IN PRAYER Continued)

Third, the many theories advanced by man created problems in prayer for some. Many do not ask "What does the Bible say and promise about prayer," but "is it possible for God to answer prayer?" *First*, one theory argues that the unchangeableness of God renders prayer ineffective. God has always been unchangeable (Jas. 1:17; Heb. 13:8), but such did not keep him from answering prayers in the past; why should it now? *Second*, another theory says miracles have ceased which is true (I Cor. 13:8-13), and God cannot answer a prayer without a miracle (more about this later) and without violating his natural law. This theory is based on an assumption, because one would have to know everything about God's natural laws to prove it. Let us not be so presumptuous as to assume that we have learned all of God's natural laws and how they operate. A *third* theory argues that the omniscience of God renders prayer unnecessary. True, God does know all our needs (Matt. 6:24-34) but he still wants us to ask (Matt 7:7-12; Jas. 4:1-3). *Fourth*, the reflex theory argues that reflex influence is the only benefit one receives from prayer. But if reflex influence constitutes the sum total of prayer's benefits, then what advantage has a Christian over a heathen? "In the very nature of the case the reflex influence is good only when we sincerely pray to one whom we believe hears us and is willing and able to grant us the desires of our heart" (Gus Nichols). *Fifth*, Christians often say, "Some of my religious neighbors make too much of prayer. They have fashioned it into a substitute for many commands of Christ." Beloved, should we begin to go out the window because some use the door? In other words, should we quit praying because some have abused and misused prayer?

Fourth, some problems arise in prayer because of one's failure to recognize and remove hinderances to one's prayer. *First*, hypocrisy hinders prayer. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:5, 6). Hypocrisy (*Hypokrisis*) "primarily denotes a reply, an answer... then play acting, as the actors spoke in dialogue; hence, pretence, hypocrisy..." (W. E. Vine). *First*, the prayer of the hypocrite is deception. He deceives his fellow-man. He prays to be seen of men while pretending piety, but they are deceived. He deceives himself. He gets what he seeks—the praise of men—but it is inconsiderate, fickle and short-lived. He receives

nothing from God as he thinks. *Second*, the hypocrite's prayer is idolatry. He does not pray to the true God, but has made himself his God and men his idols, whose praise he seeks. In seeking the praise of men he puts their approval in competition with the favor and approval of God. Such is, in effect to say, my interest is in myself rather than the one to whom I am praying. Some of the so-called "beautiful prayers" of today might fall in this category. "When a man thinks more of how he is praying than of what he is praying, his prayer dies upon his lips" (William Barclay).

Second, vain repetitions hinder prayer. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetition, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knows what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6: 7, 8). Our Lord does not condemn repetition itself because he used the same words three times in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:44). "Vain repetition" is from *battalogein* which means "to stammer, stutter, then to babble or prate, to repeat the same formula many times." "Vain repetitions" imply a multitude of words without thought—"they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."

Third, sin can be a hindrance to prayer. The Psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18; cf. Isa. 59:1, 2).

Fourth, selfishness constitutes one of the greatest hindrances to prayer. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:1-3). Sometimes we do not have what we want because we ask it in the wrong way (v. 2a) or we do not ask for it (v. 2b; cf. Matt. 7:7). At other times our prayers are selfish and God will not grant a request where the purpose is to fulfill selfish desires. To ask *amiss* "is to be influenced by low, mean, selfish considerations... It is possible for one to pray for ability to serve others when the chief reason for the desire is not the welfare of man, but lust for

power, fame, notoriety, etc." (Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary On the Epistle of James*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964, p. 206).

Fifth, prayer can be hindered by family trouble. "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" (I Pet. 3:7). The word "hindered" is the rendering of a word which means literally "to cut in, to interrupt." Strife and discord in a home cut off and interrupt prayer—"the message to heaven is short-circuited."

PROBLEMS IN PRAYER

First, lack of faith is one of the greatest problems in prayer. James said, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering..." (Jas. 1:6a). Faith means taking God at his word in the face of impossible odds. God's promise to give Abraham a son, at the time his own body was as good as dead and Sarah's womb was barren (Rom. 4:19), seemed impossible. But "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform" (Rom. 4:20, 21). God encourages us to "come boldly to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:14-16) and to ask and receive the petitions asked according to his will (I Jn. 3:22; 5:14, 15).

Praying in faith means faith that God is. The Atheist cannot pray because he has no God to whom he can pray. The Pantheist cannot pray because his God is an infinite IT. The Agnostic cannot pray because he doesn't know whether there is a God or not. The Christian can pray because he believes that God is "and that he is a rewarder of them that did gently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). The problem here, if it arises, is not on God's part but ours. It is lack of faith in God's power to do things. It is failure to believe that prayer has power. Instead of excusing our neglect, when we do not pray, why not be honest and say, "I have no faith or little faith, therefore I see nothing in prayer." "We walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17). God's word says, "but let him ask in faith..." (Jas. 1:6). This is sufficient for the faithful child of God.—P. O. Box 41804, Memphis, Tn. 38104. (To Be Continued)

How To Change Your Hurtful Mental Attitude For The Better

W. A. HOLLEY

Take a good, hard, honest look at yourself. "Examine yourselves," saith the Scriptures (II Corinthians 13:5; I Corinthians 11:28). What do you see? A person who is reasonably happy and satisfied and contented? or a person who is frustrated, balky, angry, and dissatisfied? Are you afraid to think positively? Are you afraid to trust the Lord's promises? (Matthew 6:19-34).

Develop a burning desire to build a wholesome outlook upon life. There is no need to sour on the world! It will not hurt you to try real hard to smile. Never withdraw into a shell, saying that there is no use in trying to improve yourself, because you think matters simply cannot be changed. How about reading the following Scriptures: Deuteronomy

33:25; Philippians 4:13, 19. If you will but try, you can do something for yourself (II Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 7:7-12).

If you will but become a Christian, you will not be alone; the Lord will be with you; he will help you bear your burdens, and thus, make it possible for you to live acceptably despite your handicaps or problems (II Corinthians 4:8-9; Psalms 46:1ff; Hebrews 13:5-6; Matthew 28:18-20).

View yourself as a happy, active, likeable, loving, helpful, capable, and cheerful person. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Someone has said, "Smile and the world smiles with

Shank And Jeconiah

Continued from page 2

Jesus will do.

One thing is certain: (1) Either Jeremiah missed it when he said, "no man of his [Coniah's] seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah," or (2) Matthew missed it when he pointed out that Jesus was of the seed of Coniah, or else (3) brother Shank missed it when he said, "Jesus will reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem as king and priest" (P. 32). I think I know which one missed it.

Continued on page 4

How To Change Your Hurtful Mental Attitude For The Better

Continued from page 3

you; cry and you cry alone." Thus, seek to build a new image of yourself!

If you wish to change your hurtful attitude for the better, force yourself to look on the bright side of life. One can look up and see the stars, or one can look down and see the mud! Things may not be as bad as you may think! You have observed that even storms, floods, hardships, and sickness will soon pass away. Talk to yourself and say, "It is a good morning," every day. To the Philippians, Paul wrote, "Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you. . ." (Philippians 2:2-5).

Make a special effort to learn from the past. All wise persons do. Strive not to make the same mistake twice. Surely life has taught you something! Why worry about things which never happen? Fear is a terrible master. Most storms which one worries about never come to pass. Most of our lions turn out to be kittens and many of our obstacles are blessings in disguise. If you are not a Christian, become one today. If you have been a Christian, but now have blundered and fallen by the wayside, repent of your sins, ask God to forgive you, and then forgive yourself, and forget, as much as possible, past mistakes (Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9; Philippians 3:13-14).

Open your eyes and look about you. "Count your blessings, name them one by one." You are richer than you think. You have clothes to wear, food to eat, a bed to sleep in, friends to encourage you, and life itself — the greatest of all blessings as far as earthly possessions are concerned. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15). I challenge you to compose a list of ten blessings which you would not wish to lose.

Do a lot of praying. Realize that God talks to you through the words of the Bible. The only way you can talk to God is through earnest and sincere prayer. Of course, you must be a child of God in order to be able to address him as your Father (Matthew 6:9-13; John 8:44; I Jno. 3:10; Romans 10:1). Do you think that there is no one who prays for you? Would that not be all the more reason why you should pray for yourself? Is it not possible for us to pray for all others but ourselves? Jesus was a man of prayer: "Thy will, and not mine, be done," manifests the proper attitude. Paul, a man of prayer, stated the following conviction, saying, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (II Timothy 4:18). Exercise your faith!!

Read your Bible daily. Set up a reading schedule which will carry you through the Bible each year. In addition, do extra reading as well (Isaiah 34:16; II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 5:11-16). Bible instruction will help you solve many personality and emotional problems. In fact, any psychological or psychiatric advice or instruction that is contrary to the teaching of the Bible would be sinful. Our "mind" needs to be "renewed" day by day (Romans 12:1-2). "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). If you will but read Philippians 4:8, you will learn that there are some good things to think about.

Raise the estimate of your worth to yourself, to your nation, to your family, and to the church of Christ.

What are you worth in terms of character, or money,

or example?? Are you a blessing to the world or a curse? What contributions do you make toward improving the church attendance? its financial standing? its reputation in the community? Do you throw cold water on all people and all programs, no matter how worthy? Jesus realized that his disciples could lose their "saltiness" and thus become "good for nothing" (Matthew 5:13-14).

If you will but think of yourself in terms of service to others, you will then begin to see how valuable you are to yourself and to others as well. Service to others will bestow upon you the sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. You can make a telephone call to an aged person, visit sick and lonely persons in nursing homes, send a get-well card to one in the hospital, speak a word of encouragement to the down-trodden, warn a wayward boy or girl of the dangers of

worldliness, and tell a lost person the Lord's plan of salvation.

I once read a proverb which was said to be German in origin: "What I spent I had. What I saved I lost. What I gave I have."

Whatever you give in service to Christ and to others — of your hopes, your enthusiasms, your tears, your labors, your words, your good deeds — that and that alone is yours, and yours forever (Cf. Matthew 10:41-42).

"Cast thy bread upon the water: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). This passage suggests that good deeds done unselfishly for others not only do good to the one for whom they are done, but return in blessings upon the head of the doer. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Together We Have Strength

A friend of mine was relating to me how that during World War II a squadron of B-17s was nearly indivisible while flying bombing raids over enemy targets. He mentioned that the enemy fighter planes were in the air constantly but would not attack the squadron because of its fire power. Only when a plane in the squadron became disabled in any manner and fell out of the formation did it become vulnerable to the opposing planes. Together the squadron of B-17s protected each other. But when one aircraft lagged behind, it was usually destroyed immediately.

There is somewhat an analogy contained in this illustration. When Christians have the moral support of one another, it is very difficult for a member to be lost to Satan. However, the Christian who falls behind through indifference and negligence soon becomes easy prey for the devil who "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

Our heavenly Father, in his infinite wisdom, knowing that man was a social being, provided in his scheme of redemption the bringing together of his people in public worship. This is clearly set forth in Hebrews 10:24,25: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh." In the light of this context that we are to consider one another and to provoke one another, the exhortation is given not to forsake the assemblies of the saints. Other than the adoration given to God, the next important reason given for the assemblies is to exhort one another. It is encouraging and strengthening to the Christian when one is faithful in attendance to the various gatherings of the local congregation. It is very unlikely that one would ever become unfaithful to God if he is faithful in his presence to these assemblies. It isn't that he couldn't. It's just that he will not want to leave his Lord and his body.

But one of the first signs of a brother or sister becoming unfaithful is the slow but steady decline in the attendance of the various periods of Bible study and worship. When a Christian "falls out of the formation" and begins to lag behind, separating



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

himself from the other members, you can just about know that he is going to be "shot down" by the "fiery darts of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16).

While assembling to worship God is not the sum total of Christianity, it is an essential ingredient in the Christian's harmonious relationship with his Savior. — 809 Perry Store Road Opp, Ala. 36467.

Let's Advertise

BARRY CUNNINGHAM

"When it comes to advertising, many congregations are still in the horse and buggy days." These are the words of Brother Ira North in his practical little book on church growth entitled, YOU CAN MARCH FOR THE MASTER.

The power of advertising is seen in the food we eat, the products we use and the services we employ. When we wake in the morning, we roll off our "Posture Pedic" and put on our "Levi's." In the kitchen, "Mr. Coffee" has some "Sanka" ready. (Too much caffeine makes me nervous.) After Safeguard, Colgate, Right Guard and Listerine we get into our Ford ("Ford has a better idea"), and go to work. Around lunch, we pull into McDonald's for a "Big Mac" and a Coke. After all, "Coke Is It"). Then finally, toward the end of the day, we drive home past "K-Mart," "Food World" and "Shell," knowing all too well that we will be using their services before the week is through.

Why? Advertising. If anyone doubts this, let him look at his car, the food in his refrigerator and the clothes on his back and ask, "Have these been advertised?" In all probability, the answer is "yes."

Question: If advertising works, or, I should say, SINCE advertising works, WHY ARE WE NOT DOING MORE OF IT? I mean for the gospel!

The church in this generation, by and large, is letting the greatest preaching possibilities the world has ever known slip through its fingers. We have the opportunity to preach the gospel by means of radio, television and the printed page; and in so doing, preach the word to every creature under heaven. Jesus said, "Evangelize." No, mass evangelism will never take the place of "personal work," i.e., a one-on-one teaching of sinner by saint. But I submit it will make the latter easier and more likely.

The day of mailing out a few letters to sister congregations in hope that they will "support our Meeting," as our main source of "advertising" is gone. The time for seriously studying and using modern means of communication for the gospel is here. We must rise to the occasion. — P.O. Box 242 Morris, Al. 35116.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble:
the Words of Truth and so!"

Slogans

I like concise statements which are easily remembered: A "catchy" clause may be teeming with ideas. Yet, some such phrases may express only partial truth.

For example: "The fruit of a Christian is another Christian." Certainly there is a sense in which this is true. Like the Romans, we are "married" to Christ, and are expected to reproduce, or to "bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). However, there is other "fruit"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

beside new converts to be borne by Christians, for "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). Each Christian should bear an abundance of such fruit.

To say that we are "Not grape-juice consumers, but productive branches" may imply that one should not drink the fruit of the vine even in the communion! This is not true, of course; for of the fruit of the vine, Jesus expressly said: "Drink ye all of it" (Matt. 26:27). But remember: Jesus also said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away" (Jn. 15:2).

Another such "Slogan" is that "We are not SEA-FOOD lovers, but Fishers of Men." While it is true that Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19), it is also true that later — even after his resurrection — Jesus himself invited the apostles to a "Fish Dinner" which he had prepared! (Jn. 21:4-13).

To say that we are to be "Sowers of the Seed, not grain silos" is another witty statement. Of course, we must plant the truth in human hearts, for Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11), and "The sower soweth the word" (Mk. 4:14). However, we ought to be able to say with David: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). In the American Standard Version this text reads: "Thy

word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." So there is a sense in which we should store up the knowledge of God's word in our hearts and minds. But just as a grain silo does not permanently keep its grain, so we likewise should dispense out the truth, teaching it to every person as we have opportunity. To a young preacher, the apostle Paul wrote: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2).

Consider with me one more catchy saying! "God said it, I believe it; therefore it is true." Whether I believe it or not, if God spake it -- it is true!

The *veracity* of God's word does not depend upon any man's acceptance of it! "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:3-4). Thus the proper sequence of the slogan above would be: "God said it, therefore it is true; I better believe it!"

Are you a Christian? If not, become one *today!* If you are already saved, whom have you taught about God's redeeming love? "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). — 1000 Saint John Road Rt. 9 Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701.

Lo, I Am With You Always

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

I AM WITH YOU UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD

What did Jesus mean when he said to the apostles, "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"? Most preachers say this means Jesus will be with us in 1982 until this ole world (heaven and earth) comes to an end. Is this what Jesus is saying? Brethren, it is true that Jesus is with us, but does *this* passage say he will be with us in 1982? I think not:

We have always understood that to determine the meaning of a passage, we must ask several questions. First, who is speaking? Second, who is he speaking to? Third, does this have an application to us today?



RAY HAWK


It is true that disciples are to go. It is true that disciples are to teach and immerse the taught. It is true that disciples are to teach these new disciples in all that Jesus commanded. But, the parallels stop there!

MARK 16:15-20 AND MATTHEW 28:19,20

Mark 16:15-20 and Matthew 28:19,20 are parallel. We have always recognized this when it came to "Go," "Preach/Make Disciples," "Baptize," and "Saved/Teaching them." We should recognize this when it comes to Mark 16:17-20 and Matthew 28:20b. The expressions, "The Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following," and, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," are parallel and have reference to the same time period. That time period refers to the miraculous era. This is *not* to say Jesus isn't with us today. He is! But, this passage does not say Jesus is with us in 1982. It is referring to Jesus' being with the apostles during the miraculous era. That era came to an end and Jesus is no longer with anyone in the church on earth today as he was between Pentecost and the end of miracles!

END OF THE WORLD

If Jesus is not with us today according to Matthew 28:20b, why does he say, "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"?



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



"Scriptural Principles Of Church Growth" To Be Theme Of Gus Nichols Words Of Truth Lectureship

The 1982 Gus Nichols-*Words of Truth* Lectureship promises to be the best one yet. This is what those of us who have put the program together believe. Our theme this year is, "Scriptural Principles of Church growth." The fact that the church is not growing as it grew during some former years is a matter of concern to all Christians. Some have tried to cope with this problem without giving proper attention and emphasis to the necessity of being scriptural. This has, in some cases, swelled attendance figures, but has not really made any contribution to the growth of the Lord's church. It has instead created problems. Church growth must be according to scriptural principles. This will be the emphasis of our lectureship.



BOB DUNCAN

To develop this theme, evening lectures and speakers will be as follows: Sunday, Hudson Nichols: "Christ's Attitude Toward the Scriptures"; Monday, James Watkins: "The Power of Scriptural Preaching"; Tuesday, Don McWhorter: "The Power of the Individual in Evangelism"; Wednesday, Prentiss Spivey: "A Vast Mission Field — the Erring"; and Thursday, James Segars: "Into All

the World."

Daily speakers and their subjects will be as follows: Franklin Camp: "Preaching from the Old Testament"; Hugo McCord: "A Study of Words"; Mrs. Lois McCord: "The Power of Womanhood" (for ladies only); Cecil May: "Building Scriptural Family Relationships"; and Jack Wilhelm: "Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership."

A keynote speech will be delivered each day as we begin the afternoon session. On Monday, Lawrence Williams will speak on, "Be Thou an Example." Tuesday, Dan Winkler will speak on, "We are Labourers Together with God." Wednesday, the subject will be, "Let This Mind Be in You," and the speaker will be Paul Tarence. Thursday, Byron Laird will speak on, "Endeavouring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit."

In past years we have heard the complaint that not enough time was allowed for the lunch and supper breaks. We have tried to alleviate that situation this year. We believe this will make for a more enjoyable and beneficial lectureship. It will also allow more time for fellowship — a very important part of any great lecture program.

As in the past, the good people of Jasper and Walker County will be opening their homes to guests from out of town. Those who desire lodging in one of these homes should make reservations as early as possible. To do so, call (205) 384-6446, or (205) 387-1670, or write to the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501. For those who prefer there are several motels in our area.

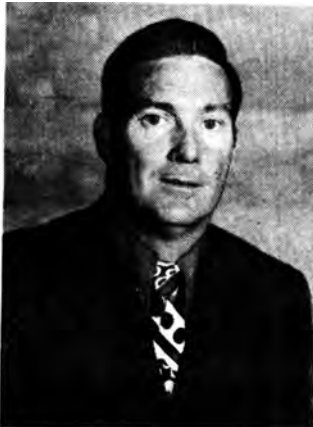
Gems From Exodus

The book of Exodus is the second book of the Old Testament. Moses is the author of this book. There is no way in a brief article such as this to discuss every lesson in the book, but my desire is that this article will create enough interest to motivate you to study this good book that you may know more about God.

The meaning of the word *Exodus* is departure. Moses was the leader of the people, and he was leading them out of Egyptian bondage. A valuable lesson for us today is that we can be in bondage to sin, and we should want to depart from this condition. The world's greatest problem today is sin (James 1:15; 4:4; Isaiah 59:1-2). Departure from sin is only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God (John 6:68; Galatians 3:26-27).

In studying this good book we read about the ten plagues. These plagues displayed the miraculous power of God which was given to confirm that Moses' words came from God. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3). This has always been the purpose or function of miracles in Bible times. To claim to have miraculous power today would be to deny the following: (1) that the word of God has been confirmed, (2) the validity of the word of God. In the study of the plagues we learn that Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he rebelled. Many today, like Pharaoh of old, have hardened their hearts to the word of God and have rebelled.

In chapters three and four we can learn one of the greatest lessons on the subject of talents. Moses tried time and again unsuccessfully to offer an excuse to God why he was not adequate, but there was always an answer from God to Moses that he could do what God wanted him to do. We learn from these two chapters that there is not any excuse we can give to God for



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

The Bible often compares the Christian's relationship to this world to that of a pilgrim. Peter beseeches us "as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" and that our behavior be seemly among the Gentiles; that wherein they speak against us as evildoers, they may by our good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (I Pet. 2:11-12). *Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the greatest books ever written, uses the analogy of the Christian's pilgrimage. Numerous hymns reflect this thought.

A pilgrim is one "sojourning in a strange place, and away from one's own people" *W. E. Vine*. Three terms are used to describe pilgrims in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. *Xenos* means a stranger or foreigner. In that ancient day strangers were viewed with hatred, suspicion and contempt in most societies. Tertullian wrote: "He knows that on



JOHN WADDEY

earth he has a pilgrimage, but his dignity is in heaven." *Paroikein* suggests a resident alien. An unknown disciple wrote, "The world is a bridge. The wise man will pass over it but will not build his house upon it." *Parepidemos* speaks of one whose stay was temporary; whose permanent house was elsewhere. Augustine wrote, "we are sojourners, exiled from our fatherland." One of the problems of the pilgrim is reflected in these words from the Letter of Aristeas: "It is a fine thing to live and die in one's native land; a foreign land brings contempt to poor men and shame to rich men, for there is the lurking suspicion that they have been exiled for the evil they have done" (The above is gleaned from Wm. Barclay's *Daily Study Bible*).

They obey God without reservation even though they may not understand the consequences. Abraham, when called by God, obeyed to go out unto a place he was to receive, not knowing where he went (Heb. 11:8). So will all true pilgrims.

Pilgrims do not become too attached to this present world. Abraham became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, for he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:9-10). Like Paul, our citizenship is

Pilgrims And Strangers

Continued from page 2

in heaven (Phil. 3:20). We know that to depart to be with Christ is far better than to cling to this life (Phil. 1:21-24). Sadly, many pilgrims get too attached to the campground.

They are looking to the eternal city (Heb. 11:10). The promise of Jesus is precious to pilgrims. "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . for I go to prepare a place for you . . . I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

True pilgrims see the promises of God by faith, not by sight. The patriarchs of old did not receive the fulfillment of the promises, but saw them and greeted them from afar . . . confessing that they were but pilgrims on the earth (Heb. 11:13). So today, Christian pilgrims "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). Promises of God that cannot be subjected to empirical testing are nevertheless confidently accepted by faith. That faith gives "assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

They eagerly embrace the promises of God. The Hebrew writer tells us that the early fathers greeted those divine promises and embraced them as we would a loved one returned from a long journey (Heb. 11:13). Like Mary of Bethany, we will sit at his feet and eagerly absorb every word that falls from the Master's lips (Lk. 10:38-42).

Faithful pilgrims freely acknowledge to others their faith and their citizenship (Heb. 11:13). They are not ashamed of Christ and his words (Mark 8:38). Because they confess their Lord before men, he will confess them before his Father and the holy angels (Matt. 10:32). As they go on their way to their heavenly home, they invite others, saying, "Come ye, and let us go up to the . . . house of the God of Jacob" (Is. 2:3).

God's pilgrims never turn back. This is a choice they make. "If indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return" (Heb. 11:15). Jesus taught us that "no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62). When they consider the wonderful paradise to which they are going and the waste

land of sin from which they came, their hearts are firmly set on the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). They desire a better country — a heavenly home (Heb. 11:16).

To please their Lord, they abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul and live seemly lives among the sinners of the world (I Pet. 2:11-12). Like lights in the world, they hold forth the word of life to crooked and perverse generations (Phil. 2:15).

They die in faith, even as they have lived (Heb. 11:13). With John we can hear the heavenly voice saying, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (Rev. 14:13). Surely this world is not worthy of such godly saints who have taken up their crosses and followed Jesus (Matt. 16:24).

God is not ashamed of his pilgrims to be called their God (Heb. 11:16a). They might be dressed in rags and have no place to pillow their heads at night; the world may despise and reject them; yet to the King of kings, they are his precious children. They wear his

holy name, Christian, and he will one day welcome them home.

"He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16b). It is not a city that will grow old and perish with the years; not one plagued by the blight of our great sin-cursed cities. It is where the Father is. It's streets are paved with gold. The *glory* of God is in her midst. The water of life and the tree of life are there. The saints are safe behind its massive walls — all the wicked are shut out. The curse that has laid upon the race since Eden will be lifted and they shall see his face. God himself shall wipe away every tear from their eyes (Compare Rev. 21-22).

"Sing on ye joyful pilgrims, The time will not be long,

Till in our Father's kingdom we swell a nobler song,
Where those we love are waiting to greet us on the shore,

We'll meet beyond the river, where surges roll no more." — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Gems From Exodus

not using the talents we have. For every talent that we have, we must give an account of it in the day of judgment. When we do not use what we have we will be lost. Our talents can be added to or taken away. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:29-30).

In Exodus 23:2 is a lesson that we should learn and give attention to daily. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Exodus 23:2). Many of us do evil because we try to pretend that we are God and do things according to our own reasoning. But is this evil? We can find information concerning this question in the following

statement. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Never should we go by the way of man. The second lesson that we should learn is that the majority alone does not make it right. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Many people want to know who is going to heaven, and we need to give this important question due consideration. "And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus 32:33). Can we not conclude from this verse that we must live lives that will overcome sin if our names are not to be blotted out of God's book? We can gain further information from this statement "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5). To be saved and go to heaven we then must not have our names blotted out of the book of life. This warning should inspire each of us to obey the Lord. — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, MS 38858.

Lo, I Am With You Always

Continued from page 1

What does the phrase, "unto the end of the world," mean if it does not refer to the end of the heaven and earth as we know it?

The expression "world" is taken from a Greek word, *aion*. This word is found 101 times in the KJV. It is translated as "world," "for ever," "eternal," "ages," and "ever and ever." The ASV translates the word "world" as found in the KJV as "age" in several places. Thayer, p. 19, shows the first definition of *aion* is "age." His second definition is, "2. an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity."

Since Matthew 28:20b is parallel with Mark 16:17-20, Jesus was saying to the apostles, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." The age he had reference to was the end of the Jewish age. The miracles would last until Judaism's final and significant end! This is seen in Peter's words in Acts 2:16-20 where he gives the commencement, characteristics, and consummation of the miraculous era. Verses 19,20 of Acts 2 speaks of God's judgment on Judaism when the miracles would cease. That event has transpired, therefore the miracles have ceased. Jesus would work with them or be with them until the end of that age. Does this mean he is not with us today? No. But, keep in mind that Jesus is not talking about his presence with the apostles as we have his presence today. He was speaking in context with a miraculous presence.

If Jesus was talking about being with his disciples until the end of the miraculous era, does this mean when that world came to an end he would no longer be

with them? If we parallel Matthew 28:20b with I Corinthians 13:8-10, I believe we can see what our Lord is saying to his apostles. In Corinthians Paul stated,

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

When the perfect or complete came, did every ounce of knowledge cease to exist? Did all language end at that point? Certainly not! However, *miraculously given* knowledge and languages ceased. Natural knowledge and languages did not, but miraculous knowledge and languages did. See the difference? Jesus said he would be with the apostles until the end of the age. When the miracles ceased, he ceased being with them *in that way*. Did his presence completely and totally cease? No. But, can we not see the difference between the two? Surely, by letting the Scriptures speak, we can see the *kind* of presence Jesus is speaking of in Matthew 28:20b. That kind of presence was with the apostles to whom he spoke until miracles ceased. When miracles ceased, that kind of presence ceased. — 1461 East Chester Street, Jackson, TN 38301.

I Said A Prayer

BOBLEONARD

I knew you had a problem
That life to you seemed blue;
I wanted very much to help
I said a prayer for you.

I heard about your sorrow
I wished it were not true;
My heart for you was heavy
I said a prayer for you.

I saw that you were anxious
You knew not what to do;
Because I truly was concerned
I said a prayer for you.

I felt your pain and anguish
It hurt me through and through;
I tried to ease your burden
I said a prayer for you.

I know that trials come to all
That I must face them, too;
I know your prayers will then be said.
I can depend on you. — Route 5, Box 413 Fayetteville, TN 37334.

Problems Of Prayer

(No. 3)

JAMES MEADOWS

PROBLEMS IN PRAYER Continued . . .

Second, a problem often arises as to how God answers prayer. People often say, "But I don't understand how God answers prayer." Do you understand how your spirit lives and works in your body? No! Do you reject it because of a lack of understanding? Does your lack of understanding keep your spirit from working? The acceptableness of our prayers does not depend on our understanding how God does it. God answers our prayers according to his infinite wisdom, not according to our limited foresight and lack of understanding.

God answers our prayers at least three ways. Sometimes he says *yes*. He grants us that which we request because it is good for us and in harmony with his will. He sometimes grants our request, not because it is good for us, but because we insist on it (cf. I Sam. 8: 1-9). He sometimes answers *yes* but does not give us exactly that for which we ask. Jesus requested that the cup might pass from him. God didn't remove the cup but gave him strength to bear it (Lk. 22:42,43). Paul asked that God remove his thorn in the flesh, but God gave him sufficient strength to live with it (II Cor. 12:7-9). We sometimes ask for stones, but God gives us bread (Matt. 7:9-11). At other times God's answer to our prayers is *no* (Jas. 4:1-4). Then God will say *wait a while*. Paul prayed that he might go to Rome (Rom. 1:10) but it was two years later before the prayer was answered (Acts 27,28).

A *third* problem is how God answers prayer without a miracle. "But I cannot understand how God can answer prayer without a miracle." Can you understand how he can answer prayer with a miracle? You can no more understand how God could answer prayer with, or by, a miracle, than how he would do it without a miracle. (Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher, Prayer*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1954, p. 181.)

We create this problem because we set limits on God's ability to act without miracles. Is there no special, general, or particular providence of God? Did God create the universe, fold his hands, and leave it to run itself? Are there no benefits from prayer? "If prayer does not bring any benefit or blessing that we cannot obtain ourselves without prayer or that would not come through the natural or mechanical processes of life without prayer to God, without trust in God, or even without a belief in the existence of God, they why should we ever pray?" (G. C. Brewer, *Contending for the Faith*, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., p. 29.)

There are many examples of God answering prayer, even in the days of miracles, without a miracle's being involved. *First*, James says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months" (Jas. 5:17). Did God perform a miracle? "How did the rain come? If it had come without the cloud, that would have been a miracle. If it had come from over the desert, that would have been a miracle. How did it come? The clouds came up from the sea, as every rain cloud does. The wind blew it eastward, and when it came in contact with the cooler volumes of air, its vapor was condensed, and the rain fell. It came just as any other rain comes" (J. W. McGarvey).

Second, David prayed that God would turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. David then did what he could; God overruled and answered the prayer, but there was no supernatural sign. God did it, but we don't know exactly how (II Sam. 15:31, 32-34; 16:23; 17:7,14). *Third*, God told the Christians in Jerusalem to "pray ye that your flight be not in the winter neither on the sabbath day . . ." (Matt. 24:20). God answered that prayer, but there is absolutely no evidence that a miracle was involved.

"It is not prayer to prescribe to the Lord how he must do this or that, or to dictate to the Lord how he shall bless us. But it is faith that looks up to him and assures us that he can and will bless us, though we understand not how he will do it; and it is prayer that implores him to do it. We have the faith; the full

assurance of faith that the Lord can and will answer the prayers of the saints, who ask according to his will, without their understanding how he will do it" (Benjamin Franklin, "The Gospel Preacher", p. 182).

A *fourth* problem in prayer is ritualism. Webster defines ritualism as "a conducting of religious worship according to a ritual: the use of ritual." He defines ritual as "any practice done or regularly repeated in a set precise manner so as to satisfy one's sense of fitness . . ." How many prayers, both public and private, are simply repetitions of what one has heard someone else say? Each one needs to word prayers for himself. Each one needs to express his own feelings and heartfelt desires to God and not merely repeat what one has memorized from other prayers. Solomon prayed, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart . . ." (I Kgs. 3:7,9). The prayer of Jabez was an earnest appeal for his own particular needs. "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested" (I Chron. 4:10). *First*, it was directed to the right

person — "The God of Israel." *Second*, it was an earnest prayer — "Oh, that thou wouldest." *Third*, blessings were asked — "bless me indeed." *Fourth*, he asked for prosperity — "enlarge my coast." *Fifth*, he realized his need for strength — "that thine hand might be with me." *Sixth*, he asked to be kept from evil — "keep me from evil." *Seventh*, he asked to be kept from sorrow, should evil overtake him — "that it might not grieve me." *Eighth*, "and God granted him that which he requested." A real problem has developed in prayer when ritualism, formalism, vain repetitions, etc., have entered.

There have always been problems in prayer, many of which we have not touched. But enough have been discussed to show that most of the problems, if not all, are manufactured by us.

Let us realize that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of" (Alfred Lord Tennyson). Someone has said that of the six hundred sixty seven requests in the Bible, six hundred fifty four have definite answers. We need to go forward, realizing that men ought always to "pray and not to faint" (Lk. 18:1); "pray everywhere" (I Tim. 2:8); "in everything give thanks" (Phil. 4:6); and know that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). — P.O. Box 41804, Memphis, TN 38104.

The Gems Of Genesis

JERRY T BRAMLETT

The word Genesis means origin or beginning. The author of the great book of Genesis is Moses. Moses also wrote the first five books of the Bible which are named Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books are called the Pentateuch, which means the five-fold volume.

Man is a very inquisitive being. Today people are asking such questions as what, when, who, how, etcetera. The very first verse of God's word answers these questions by stating, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). From this verse man's questions have been answered and we can go forward and learn many other valuable truths, because Genesis begins with God in the beginning.

In chapter two verses sixteen and seventeen we read, "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In chapter three we read where Adam and Eve transgressed this law by doing what God told them not to do. This is a great lesson on what sin is — the transgression of the law or going beyond what God says. This corresponds with the teaching of I John 3:4 which states, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." The second lesson we can learn is the consequence of going beyond the law and committing sin. "For the wages of sin is death. . ." (Romans 6:23). "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished bringeth death" (James 1:15). Do these verses not contain enough warning to cause us to consider the seriousness of sin?

In chapter three and verse six we can see the parallel of I John two and verse sixteen. We also can conclude that Eve committed sin because she loved the world. Let's look at the comparison below:

Genesis 3:6 Good for good, Delight to eyes, Make one wise.

I John 2:16 — Lust of flesh, Lust of eyes, Pride of life.

Noah was given instructions to "Make thee an ark of gopher wood. . ." (Genesis 6:14). This verse is one of the greatest lessons on the law of exclusion. When Noah was told to use gopher wood this excluded every other type of wood, and there was no need to elaborate on the kinds of wood not to be used. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 we are told to

sing, and using the law of exclusion, we do not use the instruments of music. Just as gopher wood excluded the use of any other wood, so singing excludes any other type of music. The Bible doesn't have to say not to use instruments of music; for singing excludes instruments of music.

"And Jacob said, sell me this day thy birthright. . . and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. . . thus Esau despised his birthright" (Genesis 25:31-34). This is one of the saddest lessons to me in God's word. In looking at this lesson from the New Testament view and in being a child of God, we sell our birthright when we cease to live the Christian life and quit the church. What do we lose when we sell our birthright today as members of the family of God? We lose the benefits expressed in the following scriptures: redemption—Romans 3:24; no condemnation—Romans 8:1; one body in Christ—Romans 12:5; all spiritual blessings—Ephesians 1:3; and salvation—II Timothy 2:10. In Hebrews 12:16 the writer refers to Esau as being a profane person. We today are like Esau when we sell our birthright because we become profane.

Many today catalogue the subject of sin and try to minimize it. Some claim that when one sins against a person this particular sin is not as bad as sinning against God. Whom do we sin against when we sin? In Genesis 39:7 Potiphar's wife said, "lie with me." Joseph answered and said, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against god?" (Genesis 39:9)? David committed sin with Bathsheba and had her husband, Uriah, killed in battle. David said speaking of God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. . ." (Psalms 51:4). Peter said to Ananias, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:4). Let us forever remember that when we commit sin it is against God and sin cannot be minimized.

The great and wonderful book of Genesis closes by recording the death of Joseph in chapter fifty, verse twenty-six. Joseph is one of the greatest biblical characters in God's word and yet he died physically. Can we not see that unless Christ comes again in our life time that we must also die physically? "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Are you ready to die physically and stand in the day of judgment? If not, you need to submit to Christ and obey the gospel and live a Christian life to the very best of your ability and the remainder of your days upon this earth. — P. O. Box 97, Nettleton, Ms. 38858.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 65)

Speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1982

NUMBER 36

“Catchall” Verses

DAVID COURINGTON

Every house must have a “catchall.” That is some place to put all of those little things that do not belong anywhere else. My desk seems to be one of these. Contracts must have “catchall” phrases to assure those signing them that everything has been included. It is common in our writing to see such phrases as, “and such like,” “and so forth,” or the very familiar, “etc.” These cover the things that we may not have mentioned specifically that need to be included. There are some verses in the Bible that might be called “catchall” verses. Since the Bible is a book for us to live by, these verses are necessary. It would not be possible to have a book specifically listing every minute thing that one is to do or not to do. The trouble with many of us is that we pay no attention to such verses. We often want to follow only those commandments of God that are mentioned very specifically like, “Thou shalt not kill,” or “Thou shalt not steal.” It is, of course, of great importance that we live by the Biblical “catchalls” as well.

One of the first of these verses that comes to mind is Galatians 5:21. After Paul listed many works of the flesh which one must avoid if he is to inherit the kingdom of God, he concludes with the phrase, “and such like.” There are other things, too numerous to list, that might have been called works of the flesh which Paul did not mention. He simply included this phrase. One might take the position that dancing is not sinful because it is not specifically mentioned in the New Testament as a work of the flesh. The terms lasciviousness and revellings would include dancing, but even if they did not, the “and such like” would. Anyone who is a teenager or adult surely realizes that passions are stirred by dancing. Many other activities might fall under the heading of “and such like.”

Another of these verses is Romans 13:9 which states, “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” In living with other people do we remember that regardless of what type of dealings we are engaged in we are to love them like we do ourselves? There may not be a verse that says, “If you sell peaches or tomatoes to some-

one, do not put good fruit on the top and rotten on the bottom.” There is a “catchall” verse that states, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” A Bible verse may not be found that says, “When you go to the grocery store, do not break in line in front of others,” but if we love others like ourselves we will not do it.

In doing good to others there are some who only want to do those things that are specifically listed, like giving drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, lodging to the stranger, clothing to the naked, and visit the imprisoned (Matthew 25:34-40). (And many

do not even want to do that.) Galatians 6:10 commands, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” This might include a host of things not specifically listed in the Bible as something we must do. When we find opportunities to do good, let us seize them quickly for they might not come our way again.

Let us not only be mindful of these things, but *if there are other “catchall” verses*, let us follow them as well! — P.O. Box 323, Mulga, Ala. 35118.

Rejoicing




RAYMOND ELLIOTT

Whenever one reads the Biblical accounts of some of the true stories of conversions to the Lord, he cannot help but to note that there was great rejoicing. In Acts 2, the people on Pentecost who were baptized “praised God” (v. 47). The man from Ethiopia “went on his way rejoicing” after his act of obedience (Acts 8:39). The Philippian jailor “rejoiced greatly with all his house” upon his obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:39). Many have been the times that people have broken forth with emotions by shedding tears of joy and expressions of gratitude to God whenever their sins had been washed away by the Redeemer’s precious blood. As one who has witnessed such occasions I know that such a reward is simply wonderful. It may have been a cold winter’s night when an individual was baptized in an unheated baptistry or during the regular period of worship in the presence of a large assembly, but the end results were the

same — forgiveness and rejoicing.

The wonderful thing about the great commission is that each Christian can share in this responsibility and privilege. Preaching the gospel and saving souls are not limited to preachers. “They [the disciples] therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). I know personally men and women who have taught and led others to Christ without ever making a public proclamation of the gospel from a pulpit. I read of a brother who was responsible for converting 138 precious souls to Christ during a period of ten years. He was able to accomplish this feat for the Lord through the study of the Bible with people on an individual basis. We all can influence others in the way of the Lord if we care enough to study, pray, visit, and teach. Many times the member in the pew can reach more people with the gospel through contacts at work, school, and other relations than the preacher in the pulpit. This does not lessen the importance of the public proclaiming of the word but will compliment it. If each Christian would lead one soul to Christ in a year’s time, our church buildings could not contain the number present for the various assemblies.

And consider the joy in your heart which you would have when that individual whom you had taught obeyed the gospel and rejoiced because of salvation from sins. It is a feeling that you would never forget. — 809 Perry Store Road Opp, Ala. 36467.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Inadequate Coverings

"And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

When Adam and his wife sinned, they realized their naked condition and used fig leaves to cover themselves. After God pronounced his punishment on them, he made for them clothes of skin. New clothes were needed because the fig leaves were inadequate.



ANCIL JENKINS

SIN CAUSED MAN

TO HIDE FROM GOD. Prior to sin, man had a perfect relationship with God. This also meant his relationship with his wife was perfect. Sin, with all its ugly associations and results, caused this relationship to change.

MAN TRIED TO COVER THE RESULTS OF HIS SIN. Guilt is of such a nature that man cannot look at it and remain the same. Man will either try to remove the guilt in God's way or he will try to rationalize his sin. There are many ways this is tried. Some blame others, as Adam did. Some feel circumstances justifies their actions. There is often an attempt to minimize what has been done. Many and varied are the ways of man to hide his sin.

MAN'S ATTEMPTS AT COVERING SIN ARE ALWAYS INADEQUATE. All of these efforts are as Adam's fig leaves. They are not what God intended for man to do with his sin. Sin is against God. The separation caused by sin is in the mind of God. Man, to cover his sin, therefore must make his sin right with God.

GOD PROVIDES THE COVERING FOR SIN. Just as his grace is seen in his provision for all of Adam's needs, so is it seen in his covering of our sins. Only one covering is, or has ever been adequate. Man's sins are covered by the blood of Christ so they

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Faith And Opinion

The greatest religious error is the failure to distinguish between matters of faith and matters of opinion. In fact, we could say that the two most common religious errors are (1) treating matters of faith as if they were matters of opinion, and (2) treating matters of opinion as if they were matters of faith.

What are matters of faith? Since faith "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17), then whatever one believes because of a proper understanding of the testimony of the word of God is a matter of faith.

A classic illustration of the difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion is recorded in John 3:1,2: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Now, we may have our differences of opinion with reference to the matter of why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, for the Bible simply does not say. It may be that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night because, being a ruler of the Jews, he was too busy to come during the daylight hours. It may be that he came to Jesus by night because Jesus was so busy during the day that he could scarcely have an opportunity to talk with him privately. It may be he came to Jesus by night because he wanted to come under cover of darkness, lest his own popularity be damaged. Or there may have been some other reason. We may each have our opinions about the matter, but whatever we may say about it, it is nothing more than our opinions, for the Bible simply does not say why Nicodemus came by night. In those instances in which the Bible does not tell us a particular thing, there is room for differences of opinion. And not one of us has the right to accuse the other of an inferior loyalty to the scriptures just because he does not share our opinion with reference to the matter.

But we see in these same verses from John 3 some matters with reference to which there is no room for differences of opinion, for they are not within the realm of opinion, but are in the realm of faith. Following are some things one must believe if he believes the Bible: (1) Nicodemus was a man of the Pharisees, (2) he was a ruler, (3) he was a ruler of the Jews, (4) he came to Jesus, (5) he came to Jesus by night, (6) he addressed Jesus as Rabbi, etc. These are all matters of faith; they are matters we believe because of the clear testimony of the word of God. One who states what he calls an opinion, but which contradicts one of these clearly revealed facts, is demonstrating his lack of confidence in the testimony of the Bible.

The denominational world in general has never learned this distinction between matters of faith



BOB DUNCAN

and matters of opinion. The average person in the religious world thinks it is just a matter of opinion whether baptism is a burial or is sprinkling or pouring. Most of them think that whether we eat the Lord's supper "upon the first day of the week," or quarterly or annually is just a matter of opinion. They think the question of mechanical instruments of music in worship is nothing more than a matter of opinion. They think that whether infants or adults should be baptized is a matter of opinion. They do not realize these are matters of faith, clearly revealed in scripture.

One reason for treating matters of faith as if they were nothing more than matters of opinion is the very liberal attitude toward the Bible which is characteristic of so many in the religious world. So many believe the Bible is something less than the verbally inspired word of God. They consider it to be merely the opinions of fallible men. No wonder they treat what the inspired writers said as if it were nothing more than an opinion with which they are free to differ! But it must be remembered that all scripture is "given by inspiration of God" (II Timothy 3:16), and to have an opinion which contradicts what the Bible said is to show one's lack of confidence in God himself. The majority in the denominational world and a large number of my own brethren have made the tragic mistake of treating matters of faith as if they were nothing more than matters of opinion.

But another error, and one which is just as serious, is the error of treating matters of opinion as if they were matters of faith. Naturally we all believe that those who differ with our opinions about anything are wrong. But we must recognize that to differ with one's opinion about a matter is not tantamount to denying something God said. Two people might have a difference of opinion about a matter, and still be in total agreement with reference to matters of faith. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement over whether John Mark should accompany them on their second journey (Acts 15:36-39). But this does not mean that Paul and Barnabas had a difference with reference to any matter of faith.

Now, we may, and probably will, have differences of opinions with reference to matters that are within the realm of opinion or human judgment. There is nothing wrong with that, provided we do not begin to treat our own opinions as if they were matters of faith. But this is precisely what has happened, and which has caused the church to be splintered into a number of warring factions. One group has an opinion that it is wrong to divide into Sunday school classes, but they treat their opinion as if it were a matter of faith, and refuse to have fellowship with those who will not conform to their opinion. One group thinks all should drink the fruit of the vine out of the same container. It's all right to do it that way, if that's the way they want to do it. But they want to bind their opinion on others and require all to do it that way, or else be excluded from their fellowship. One group thinks the meetinghouse should be used only to conduct worship. Some have even gone so far as to prohibit the use of the meetinghouse for weddings. Many others think it is wrong to eat a common meal in the meetinghouse. Each congregation has the right to determine what shall and what shall not be done in

Continued on page 3

The Seed We Sow

Jesus taught many profound lessons by means of parables. In so doing, he took the commonplace and used it to convey great lessons of spiritual truth. One such parable was that of the man who sowed his seed in four types of ground, each of which responded in various ways (Mark 4:1-8). In explaining the parable he explained that the soils represent different kinds of human hearts. "The seed is the word of God"



JOHN WADDEY

(Luke 8:11). As in the physical world, so in the spiritual, if one expects a harvest, he must have the proper seed to plant.

God's Word is Like Seed. A seed is alive and "the word of God is living and active . . ." (Hebrews 4:12). Seed has great power resident within. Most of us have seen a pavement buckled when a tiny seed pushed forth into budding life. A building can sometimes suffer structural damage from a sprouting seed. So also the word of God has great power to change lives, customs, even civilizations for good. It is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Great evils such as infanticide, slavery, and abuse of women and children have fallen before the influence of the gospel. A man dead in sin can be made into a new creature through the implanted word of God (Ephesians 2:1; James 1:21). From a tiny mustard seed can come a tree for birds to lodge in (Matthew 13:31-32), and from a single Bible can come a whole community of converts, a church of Christ with far-reaching influence and power.

Seed Can Be Spoiled and Ruined. Pollinization by inferior plants will produce an undesirable product. Dampness or insects can ruin seed. Likewise, false doctrine can corrupt God's message. Misinterpretation and misapplication can spoil the success of the word. Paul charges us to handle aright the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15). God warned Jeremiah: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully" (Jeremiah 23:28). In every generation there are some that handle "the word of God deceitfully" (II Corinthians 4:2). Such conduct will adversely affect the harvest produced.

Seed is of Little Value if Left Shut Up in a Package. Seed can do its job only when properly planted in the soil. Similarly, a closed Bible is powerless to save. We must search the Scriptures in order to benefit from them (Acts 17:11). James says we must "receive with meekness the implanted word" before it can save our souls (James 1:21).

There Must be Adequate Preparation Before Seed Will Produce a Harvest. The ground must be cultivated. The seed must be planted, watered and nourished. Young plants must be carefully cultivated and cared for lest they be choked out. The same is true of the human heart and the gospel seed. Few are won to Christ without the lengthy preparation of teaching and influence. We plant and water, then God gives the increase (I Corinthians 3:6). "The care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word and [a disciple] becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). Such weeds must be kept out of our lives if we would be fruitful.

Much Seed Must be Sown to Produce a Decent Crop. Agriculturally or spiritually, "he that soweth sparing shall reap also sparingly" (II Corinthians 9:6). We must never be discouraged by the numbers who do not respond to the gospel. Rather we should rejoice over the few who do. Jesus tells us that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). If only one of twenty receive the word favor-

ably, then we must increase the number of our failures in order to win more.

Our Harvest Will Depend Upon the Quality of the Seed Sown. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Poor quality seed or seed sown in a sloppy manner will reveal itself in the harvest reaped. No successful farmer wastes his time and money on old seed or seed with a low germination count. So we must make the best effort to see that we preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). We must neither add to or diminish from his word (Deuteronomy 4:2). Human opinions, creeds or customs have no place when sowing the gospel seed.

There is an Appropriate Time to Plant Seed. Solomon wrote there is "a time to plant" (Ecclesiastes 3:2). There is a relatively brief time in the year for a particular seed to be planted if it is to produce at its best. There are times in every life when the heart and conscience are especially tender and receptive. A person's heart is most likely to be touched with the gospel in his youth, or in times of great sorrow, trouble or serious illness. We must be ready to seize that opportune moment.

Even Premium Seed Cannot Produce in Poor Soil. Many a farmer has labored in vain to make a living on poor ground that lacked top soil or nutrients. Jesus showed us that some hearts are like the hard beaten soil of the pathway. The seed cannot penetrate it and the birds devour it. Other hearts are like thin rocky soil. Plants that cannot root deeply, wither before the hot sun. Shallow faith fails in time of temptation and persecution. Some hearts are like the thorny ground. "They are choked with cares and

riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection." There are good and honest hearts that, like the good soil, hear the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit . . ." (Luke 8:11-15). Every person determines the condition of his own heart. Even God himself will not violate a person's personal freedom in this area.

Seed Takes a Certain Amount of Time to Germinate and Still More To Make A Crop. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and later rain" (James 5:7). We must never grow impatient with those we teach. God's word will accomplish its intended purpose (Isaiah 55:11).

Our Job Is To Sow The Seed Of The Kingdom and God Will Give The Increase (I Corinthians 3:6). When we preach the gospel to a soul, we have done our duty. He has been evangelized. His response to it is between him and God.

There is a Reward to the Faithful Seed Sower. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters" (Isaiah 32:20). "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy . . ." (Psalms 126:5-6). "He that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8). "He that repeath receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life" (John 4:36).

A growing church is a sowing church. We have the divine seed; we have the fields before us. We have the heavenly charge to be about our Father's business. The hymn asks: "Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother?" If not, may you begin today to scatter the precious seed. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Inadequate Coverings

Continued from page 2

are no longer seen by either God or man. This sin is not merely covered to be unveiled at a later time. Christ's blood washes us and makes us clean completely. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). "Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalms 51:7).

GOD'S COVERING IS ADEQUATE. Christ's blood and God's love are adequate for the cleansing of man for all time. They stretch back to Adam and forward until the last sin has been committed before Jesus returns. The sacrifice of Christ is adequate for all men, yet is effective only to those who come to him. No covering for sin is available to the disobedient. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Faith And Opinion

Continued from page 1

its meetinghouse. Each has a right to its own policy with reference to the matter. But no congregation has a right to expect other congregations to be governed by its policy with reference to the meetinghouse.

We need to look often and long at that great motto of the Restoration Movement: "In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; in all things, charity."

A real friend warms you by his presence, trusts you with his secrets, and remembers you in his prayers.

Inconsistencies

FRANK CHESSER

A recent newspaper article quoted from the new leader of a major denominational group that was meeting in convention in New Orleans. He stated that a literalist approach to scripture is "absolutely essential." He described those who rejected the literal approach to the account of the creation in Genesis as not possessing the "high view of Scripture that is necessary."

He then proceeded to contradict himself in his very next statement by declaring that such individuals are not barred from the Christian fold which he said depends "only on faith in Christ." It would be interesting to hear him expound on how something can be "absolutely essential" and yet not essential at the same time.

However, this kind of inconsistency inheres in the concept of salvation by "faith only." Advocates of this doctrine meet themselves coming back at every turn. If "faith only" satisfies the demands of God, why express concern over any attitude that such individuals might manifest toward the scriptures? If "faith alone" without any additional acts of obedience, grants one the privilege of divine acceptability, what real difference does it make what attitude such a person might possess with regard to Genesis 1-2 or any other portion of scripture?

This shallow concept of faith tickles the ear and soothes the troubled conscience. It allows one to maintain a liberal lifestyle while feeling that all is well with his soul. It promotes an easy-going attitude toward sin. It permits a person to drink, gamble, use profanity, attend services whenever the mood strikes him, indulge in various fleshly pleasures and still receive the right hand of fellowship from the denomination of his choice. Such a relaxed attitude toward spiritual matters may appeal to the flesh, but it is still true that without holiness of life, "no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). — Thomson, Georgia 30824.

**THIRD ANNUAL
GUS NICHOLS — WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP**

SEPTEMBER 26-30, 1982

**UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 SIXTH AVENUE
JASPER, ALABAMA 35501**

THEME: SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GROWTH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. Christ's Attitude Toward The Scriptures Hudson Nichols

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. WORDS OF TRUTH Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Be Thou An Example" Lawrence Williams
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. The Power of Scriptural Preaching James Watkins

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. Eldership Appreciation Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "We are Labourers Together With God" Dan Winkler
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. The Power Of The Individual In Evangelism Don McWhorter

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. Franklin Camp Appreciation Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Let This Mind Be In You" Paul Tarenæ
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles Of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. A Vast Mission Field — The Erring Prentiss Spivey

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. Fellowship Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Endeavouring To Keep The Unity Of
the Spirit" Byron Laird
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. Into All The World James Segars

All sessions are to be held in the auditorium of the SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Lodging for out-of-town guests will be provided free of charge in the homes of Christians in and around Jasper. To make a reservation, call (205) 384-8288 or (205) 352-1978. For those who do not have a telephone, contact is available at Harper's Motel (205) 384-3368, Holiday Inn (205) 384-3050 or the Motel 6 (205) 384-3050. Free continental breakfast is served on a daily basis, and at no charge.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am . . . like Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1982

NUMBER 37

God's Guidebook For Man

"O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Within this verse lies:

(1) A negative affirmation, ". . . it is not . . ." [such is not the case]; (2) the nature of man, ". . . in man . . ." [man

has not the capacity nor capability to accomplish what this verse concerns]; and (3) the need of man, ". . . to direct his steps . . ." [man needs direction or guidance]. Jeremiah affirms that man has neither the capacity nor capability to guide his own life. He must seek guidance from some external source.

Many affirm the contrary. Existentialism makes truth relative: "Truth is what you think truth is." Antinomianism denies the existence of moral law: "Good is what you feel good after and bad is what you feel bad after." Situationism [situation ethics] says, "You determine the how, what, when, and wherefore of love in each situation and decide what is right." Denominationalism substitutes the teachings of man for the Bible. Each of the foregoing is a subtle way of saying, "Man, direct your own steps." But God, who knows the "in's" and "out's" of man says, "It cannot be done." Many have tried, making shipwreck of their faith and shambles of their lives.

There must be a source of guidance for man that is not of man, and God provides that source with the Bible (Ps. 119:24,172; 2 Pet. 1:3). The Bible is "God's Guidebook for Man!" Such is the contention of this brief treatise which focuses on the text: "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 Tim. 3:16,17).



DAN WINKLER

Two basic thoughts are projected in this passage:

I. The Bible Is From God

(1) Consider the note of origin: "All scripture is given . . ." Scripture was not contrived by man's imagination, composed of man's ingenuity, nor constructed by man's industry. It was "given" by God. Such is true of the Old Testament. Jesus divided the Old Testament into two segments: Law and prophets (Matt. 22:40). Both were given to man. God gave the law with the ordination of angels and through the mediation of Moses (Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). He gave his will to the prophets in divers manners (dreams, visions, direct utterance, angelic mediation, etc.) (Heb. 1:1). Therefore, the Old Testament was given to man by God. Such is also true of the New Testament. God gave the truth that makes men free (John 8:32; cf. 17:7) to Jesus (John 7:17; 12:48-50). Jesus gave this truth to the Holy Spirit (John 16:13,14). The Holy Spirit, in turn, gave this truth to the apostles and prophets (John 16:13; Eph. 3:1-5). Therefore, the New Testament was given to man by God.

Consider the note of agency [how all scripture was given]: ". . . by inspiration of God . . ." Paul did not say that God inspired the thought and man gave the scripture. God inspired the "scripture [the words written]." Neither did Paul say that God inspired some of the scriptures. He inspired "all" scripture. Such is true of the Old Testament (II Pet. 1:20,21 — Note, the words were inspired). Evidence for such lies in fulfillment of predictive prophecy (I Pet. 1:10-12). Some aspects (times and seasons) of their prophecies the prophets did not fully comprehend. Yet, they made detailed predictions that came true (cf. Lk. 24:25-27). Such can only be explained by seeing the scriptures as the product of miraculous inspiration. The same is true of the New Testament (I Cor. 2:10-13 — Note, the words were inspired). Evidence for such lies in the fulfillment of predictive promise (Acts 2:40). The apostles, men of integrity, made a promise (universality of the gospel and Christian system) which they did not believe at the time of making it. Peter had to be convinced of such by three visions (Acts 10) and the rest of the apostles had to be convinced by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15). This promise has been

fulfilled and was even propagated by the apostles (cf. Gal. 2:9,10). Such action on the part of honest men can only be explained by seeing their message [a message that was penned (Eph. 3:1-5)] as the product of miraculous inspiration.


The Bible is the product of revelation plus inspiration. It is from God.

II. The Bible Is For Man

The Bible was given by God so that man can be what God wants man to be, "perfect [spiritually complete]." When part of the physical body is missing, its efficiency output is reduced to the extent of that missing. The same is true spiritually. When man is long on teaching and short on temper, mighty in capabilities and weak in care, deep in principle and shallow in practicalities, etc., he is incomplete. God wants man to be spiritually complete (I Thess. 5:23; James 1:4). To be spiritually complete, one must be a Christian (Acts 26:26-29). Well, the Bible provides doctrine that, when obeyed, makes one a Christian (Rom. 6:17). To be spiritually complete one must not only be a Christian but a faithful Christian (I Cor. 4:2). Well, the Bible projects areas in which and errors which one must change. It is profitable for reproof and correction. Furthermore, it provides instruction in righteousness, teaching man how to think (Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:5; 4:10), speak (Eph. 4:29; James 1:19; 4:11), and live (Rom. 6:1,2; Phil. 1:20,21). Therefore, the scriptures should be applied to man so he can be what God wants him to be.

The Bible was also given by God so that man can do what God wants man to do, "good works" (John 5:28,29; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:7,14; 3:1,8,14; James 4:17). The Bible tells man what is good (Heb. 5:14). Items of interest or question are either good or bad. The Bible provides doctrine by which man may distinguish between good (correct) and false teaching. It is also the source of instruction by which one may know righteous conduct from conduct that needs to be corrected and reproof. The Bible not only discerns between good and evil, it reveals works that are good, such as: Encouragement (Acts 11:22-240; prayer (I Tim. 2:1-3), modesty (I Tim. 2:9,10), domestic responsibilities (I Tim.

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Luncheon To Honor Franklin Camp

Each year during the Gus Nichols *Words of Truth* Lectureship a luncheon is held in honor of some deserving and well known Christian. This year's honoree is brother Franklin Camp, evangelist, author, scholar, and outstanding Christian gentleman.



BOB DUNCAN

Brother Camp began preaching in 1935, and has spent his entire preaching life within relatively few miles of where he now lives. His practice during all these years has been to study the Bible six to eight hours a day, rising around four or four-thirty each day. He is the author of two books of sermons and one book on the Holy Spirit, in addition to numerous articles and tracts. In our estimation, his book on the Holy Spirit is the very finest thing in print on the subject.

Brother Camp has for years taught a class of preachers on a weekly basis. This class grew out of a request that a number of preachers made to him. Some have through the years, and still do, drive quite

a distance each week to attend this class. At present, those who wish to do so may receive college credit for his class through the Alabama Christian School of Religion.

Brother Camp presently serves as editor of two monthly publications: the *Word of Life*, published by the Shades Mountain church in Birmingham, and *Vigil*, published by the church at Adamsville, Alabama. Both of these publications enjoy a wide circulation and a good reception.

Those who know brother Camp best realize these outstanding features we have mentioned are really somewhat insignificant when compared to the truly great, yet humble, dedicated, and deeply spiritual life he lives.

The luncheon honoring brother Camp will be held on Wednesday of our lectureship (September 29), with the place and the cost of the meal to be announced.

In previous years during the Gus Nichols *Words of Truth* Lectureship luncheons have been held in honor of sister Gus Nichols and of brother Rex A. Turner, Sr.

Other luncheons during the lectureship will be the *Words of Truth* luncheon on Monday, the Eldership Appreciation Luncheon on Tuesday, and the Fellowship Luncheon on Thursday. This latter will be a basket lunch provided by the ladies of the Sixth Avenue church, with all out-of-towners as guests.

What Lies Beyond The Grave?

Death is not a popular subject, but it is a necessary topic of discussion. We must think much about the future. This life is short. James says, "Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away" (James 4:13-14). Our plans for the future must be centered on God's plan for us in his scheme of things.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

ETERNITY IS COMING FOR US ALL. Jesus spoke of the verdict of the judgment: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the

Continued on page 3

God's Guidebook For Man

Continued from page 1

5:10), benevolence (I Tim. 5:10; cf. Gal. 6:10), etc. Therefore, the scriptures should be used by man so he may do what God wants him to do.

It should be observed that "all" scripture is "God's Guide For Man." He learns from (Rom. 15:4) and is admonished by (I Cor. 10:11) the examples of the Old Testament in his efforts to "fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:4).

How important it is to apply oneself to a study of the Bible and a study of the Bible to oneself. It is "God's Guidebook For Man!" — Rt. 2, Box 240, Woodbury, Tennessee 37190.

God Is Also Law

DAN BILLINGSLEY

There is no conflict in the Scriptures between the fact that God is love and that God is law; however, there is a conflict in the minds of some who believe and teach that "God is love" but do not accept the biblical doctrine that God is the source of all divine law. The same people do not understand that where there is no divine law there can be no divine love. These two words describe two of the harmonious attributes of the Lord.

The Bible teaches that God is the Word (John 1:1-3); he is the Truth (John 14:6); he is the Light (knowledge) (John 12:8); from him come all divine standards, commandments, statutes, judgments, and he is the basis for all divine counsel (Deuteronomy 6:6; 11:8; Leviticus 26:46; Malachi 3:5). God is the Eternal One, and his will and word never perish (Matthew 24:35). God is Love (I John 4:8), he is righteous (Psalm 145:7), holy (Isaiah 6:3), and just (Romans 2:2; 3:26). God is all-knowing (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), and everywhere present (omnipresent); because God is God, his will is in force throughout the domain of the universe and in every place of man's habitation.

as follows: "To regard with a strong feeling of affection; to have a devoted attachment to; to regard with the characteristic feelings of one sex toward the other; to like: to be pleased with; to delight in" (p. 503). The Greek word "agape" or "agapao" used in the New Testament is defined by Vine's as, "the attitude of God toward his Son (John 17:26); the human race and believers particularly. Love can be known only from the action it prompts (I John 4:9-10). Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:14). Christian love is the fruit of his Spirit in the Christian (Galatians 6:22). Christian love had God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to his commandments (John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; I John 2:5; 5:3; II John 6). Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God. Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all (Romans 15:2) and works no ill to any (Romans 13:8-10); love seeks opportunity to do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the

The English word "love" is defined by Webster's

Continued on page 3

God Is Also Law

Continued from page 2

household of the faith (Galatians 6:10)" (p. 20-22).

The English word lends itself more to the "feeling of affection" while the Greek word stresses "the action that it prompts." Truly, the original intention and teaching of the Lord concerning "love" emphasizes the trait of character which prompts our treatment of God and man. Love is more than how one "feels" — *it is how one treats others!*

In the October, 1981 issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, in an article entitled, "The Fruit of the Spirit is Love," (p. 5-6) by Carl D. Mills, the author states: "Agape, however, is a principle of life that requires a man to hold in highest regard every other human being regardless of their position in life. It does not permit a man to have regard only for those from whom he may gain something (Luke 6:27-35)." Alan McGinnis wrote: "the test of a great man is how he treats little people . . . It is not an emotion or a feeling; it is *greater than emotion or feeling* in that it is consistent and reliable as a principle by which one lives." No man who loves God will willfully disobey or disregard his law and commands.

Just as "love" is a trait in the character of God, so also is righteousness, holiness, justice and law. God is righteous because he lives and exists by his own law. Just as "love" is good, "law" is also good (I Timothy 1:8), as men use it lawfully or righteously. The end of the law of God for the New Testament church is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of a faith unfeigned . . ." (I Timothy 1:5). Law reveals sin and provides the opportunity for divine love to extend mercy and grace (Romans 5:8-9; Titus 2:11). Two things reveal God to man: the natural world and the gospel (Romans 1:14-20); the universe reveals God's care for the physical man, and the gospel reveals the love of God for the spiritual man.

Of the many times in which the word "love" is used in the Scriptures in a good sense, there are several times in which the word is used in a corrupt, selfish, grasping, and evil way. The noun form of "love" (*agape*) is always used in a good and holy way. The verb form (*agapao*) is used 142 times. However, there are six times when it describes "love" that is evil. (See Luke 11:43; John 3:19; John 12:43; II Timothy 4:10; II Peter 2:15; and I John 2:15.) All six of these examples show man's love directed away from God and toward those things which God condemns. Evil and worldly "love" condemns the soul.

Most feel that since "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16), there is nothing which "God hates." Nothing is further from the truth! Solomon points out six things which God hates (Proverbs 6:16), and there are many "principles" which God loves more than he loves "sinful men." Some have been spiritually brainwashed into believing that God "loves sinners" so much that he could really never condemn them to a devil's hell. Everlasting condemnation is just an "empty threat" which God really doesn't intend to bring upon sinners (Mark 16:16; John 3:19).

God loves "righteousness" (Philippians 1:11); "truth" (II Thessalonians 2:11-14); the "church" (Ephesians 5:26-33); "godliness" (I Corinthians 6:9-11); "justice" (Romans 2:2); "the gospel" (Romans 1:16-18); "unity of believers" (John 17:20-23); and many other divine principles more than he loves sinful men. And while he is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9-11), in the day of judgment (II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15) God will embrace these divine principles and cast into hell every man and woman who willfully rejects his terms of salvation. Man cannot "love" God while "hating" the things which God loves most.

Bible "love" and "law" are synonymous as they relate to God and salvation. The "love of God" does not negate nor compromise the "law of God." But the kind of teaching and preaching that denominations have used concerning "love," and the same

kind of preaching done by some brethren today, *is not preaching Bible love.* Preaching "the love of God" but not "the law of God" such as baptism, purity of life, and faithfulness to God's revelation, is not preaching true love! Neither Divine nor human

love will cover the religious errors of men who persist in those errors!

Truly, God is love, but he is also truth, righteousness, justice; and law! — 403 Welch Street Denton, Tx. 76201.

What Lies Beyond The Grave?

Continued from page 2

righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). The Greek word *aionion* is the word translated "everlasting" and "eternal." Punishment will last just as long as life in heaven.

By thinking of what lies beyond the grave, WE MAY BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR SALVATION. Sin is very destructive to our present and future. Paul said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:6). Jesus promised in his Father's house many mansions if we believe in him (John 14:1-3). This faith of which Jesus speaks, is a faith strong enough to obey (Jas. 2:17-18). The Bible plan of salvation calls for faith in Jesus as God's Son, repentance from sin, a confession of faith in Jesus, and baptism for the remission of sins. The Lord then adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). The child of God must be faithful till death (Rev. 2:10).

Now let us notice some of the things that will come to pass after death.

THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO MAN. Commenting on the death of the earthly sojourn of man Solomon said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). This passage reveals man as a physical and spiritual being. At the separation of the body and soul, the body goes back to the dust. The spirit or soul goes to God.

The soul of man is the more important of the two parts of man. Jesus said to his disciples, "And fear

not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:29). On another occasion Jesus asked, "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?" (Matt. 16:26).

ALL WILL BE RESURRECTED FROM THE GRAVE. There will be one general resurrection of all mankind who have lived. Jesus is quoted by John as saying, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

There as some who speak of two resurrections. They say there will be a resurrection of the righteous, then a resurrection of the unrighteous. The passage they use to support their claim is I Thess. 4:13-18. This is a very comforting passage. It does not teach two resurrections. It only speaks of the resurrection of the righteous. Paul says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WHAT LIES BEYOND THE GRAVE? (to be continued) — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

Satan Met A Brick Wall

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

Temptations to forsake good works are legion and always with us. Satan, as "a roaring lion" is still "seeking whom he may devour," and he destroys many through discouragement. The Devil has always known that the quickest, surest way to stop a good work is by discouraging the workers. He delights in pulling a dark cloud of pessimism over all that is good and right and profitable by tempting us to accentuate the negative and eliminate the positive. We know he's lying, but still we listen. We become weary in well doing.

Nehemiah hadn't labored long in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem before his enemies heard of it and began their attempts at halting the work. They ridiculed the effort, saying the wall



DALTON KEY

would fall under the weight of a fox. The work continued. The enemies then "conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it," but still the work continued with the workmen holding a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. Sanballat and Geshem tempted Nehemiah to take a rest from the work and come down to the plain of Ono to talk things over. But the invitation was refused and the work continued. Finally, ugly rumors were circulated in a last ditch effort to discredit the work and the motive behind it. But still the work continued, and the wall was finished in just fifty-two days.

What caused Nehemiah's success? Two things. First, "They perceived that this work was wrought of . . . God" (Nehemiah 6:16). And second, "The people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6). Because the work was perceived as greater than the workers, because it was seen as God's work, the workers could be neither discouraged nor dissuaded. Their eyes were not focused upon themselves, but upon their God and his work. They lost themselves in their labors.

Satan met a brick wall when he came up against Nehemiah. May it also be true with respect to Satan's advances toward you and me. — Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

THIRD ANNUAL

GUS NICHOLS — WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 26-30, 1982

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 SIXTH AVENUE
JASPER, ALABAMA 35501

THEME: SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GROWTH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

7:00 P.M. — 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M. — 8:30 P.M. Christ's Attitude Toward The Scriptures Hudson Nichols

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

9:30 A.M. — 10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M. — 11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M. — 1:30 P.M. WORDS OF TRUTH Luncheon
1:30 P.M. — 2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Be Thou An Example" Lawrence Williams
2:10 P.M. — 2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M. — 3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M. — 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M. — 8:30 P.M. The Power of Scriptural Preaching James Watkins

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

9:30 A.M. — 10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M. — 11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M. — 1:30 P.M. Eldership Appreciation Luncheon
1:30 P.M. — 2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "We are Labourers Together With God" Dan Winkler
2:10 P.M. — 2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M. — 3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M. — 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M. — 8:30 P.M. The Power Of The Individual In Evangelism Don McWhorter

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

9:30 A.M. — 10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M. — 11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M. — 1:30 P.M. Fellowship and Appreciation Luncheon
1:30 P.M. — 2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Let This Mind Be In You" Paul Tarene
2:10 P.M. — 2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M. — 3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles Of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M. — 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M. — 8:30 P.M. A Most Mission Field — The Erring Prentiss Spivey

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

9:30 A.M. — 10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M. — 11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M. — 1:30 P.M. Fellowship Luncheon
1:30 P.M. — 2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Endeavouring To Keep The Unity Of the Spirit" Byron Laird
2:10 P.M. — 2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M. — 3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M. — 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M. — 8:30 P.M. into All The World James Segars

All sessions are to be held in the auditorium of the SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Lodging for out-of-town guests will be provided free of charge in the homes of Christians in and around Jasper. To make a reservation, call (205) 384-3368. Dinner will be provided for out-of-town guests at a special rate. For more information, call Mrs. Harpers Motel (205) 384-3368. Hold your seats for September 26-30, 1982. The program is free and open to all. There is no charge for service, meals, and at no charge.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1982

BER 38

The Christian's Sins

Assuming that we have a hundred million responsible people in the United States we may be sure that many things are not common to them all. Each individual is different from every other member of our nation. As a whole the nation is not white, not black, not brown, not rich, not poor, not educated, not illiterate. No one such characteristic is common to all. The one thing that is common to us all is that we are sinners. Different types and kinds, to be sure, but sinners nevertheless.



VIRGIL BRADFORD

In Romans 1 Paul shows that the Gentiles were far away from God. The Jews no doubt agreed. But in chapter 2 the apostle tells the Jews that they are sinners, too, and then declares in 3:23, "for all have sinned and *fall short* of the glory of God." Notice that "fall short" is in the present tense, hence, continuous in its nature. This truth led John to say, even to Christians, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

No specific, overt act of sin is unforgivable, as murder, robbery, profanity, and such like. However, we should be aware of the extreme danger of presumptuous sin, that is, high-handed, defiant sin wilfully committed against man and God. (See Numbers 15:30f; Hebrews 6:4ff.) All such reveals a wicked, depraved heart which could easily become so hardened that its possessor is past redemption. The "evil heart of unbelief" finds it impossible to repent and therefore is never forgiven (cf. Heb. 3:12; 10:26f).

"There is [a] sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request" (I John 5:16b). You need not ask the Lord to forgive "sin unto death." Now what is this sin? We know with certainty that God does not wish for anyone to perish (II Peter 3:9), but for "all to come to repentance." Now, if we had just received John's epistle we would have

read from the first, hence, we know that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I Jno. 1:9).

The logical and scriptural conclusion is this, in order: sin, no repentance, no confession, no forgiveness.

Simon the sorcerer, when he witnessed the miraculous works of Philip and those to whom the Spirit was imparted, offered to buy the same power for money. After denouncing the very thought on Simon's part, Peter said, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven" (Acts 8:22).

James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another." And as we noted above, there is sin unto death, but there is also "sin not unto death" (I Jno. 5:16). For such you may pray. What sin is this? Now I John was written to Christians, not to sinners of the world, therefore the alien should not be misled to think that his sins are forgiven through repentance and prayer. Hear this again: "If we [Christians, the church] confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (I Jno. 1:9).

Therefore, when we read of "sin not unto death" we have already read chapter one and know that the honest, earnest confession of our sins brings forgiveness from God. This blessed promise is for Christians only.

Some Sins Not Laid to Our Account

It is altogether possible that you have sinned this very day without being aware of it. What then? Those in Christ, in his body, the church, are kept clean by the precious blood of Jesus. First John 1:7 says: "Walk in the light . . . the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." Again, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin*" (Romans 4:7f). Blessed hope!

As the blood of our bodies delivers its life-giving oxygen to every cell of the body, and picks up the impurities and carries them away, so also is the *body of Christ* kept clean. Are you in the body? in Christ? Repent and be baptized to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Ac. 2:38). Then "walk in the light" of God's word unto his heavenly

kingdom.

Only sin can keep you from the word of God; Only the gospel can save you from sin. — 4311 Castleman Court, Nashville, Tennessee 37215.

Keys To Successful Living


RUSS CROSSWHITE

In Romans 15:4, the apostle Paul says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." With this verse in mind let's read Ezra 7:10: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to each in Israel statutes and judgments." Even though this was written while the author was living under the law of Moses, the principles in living for God successfully are still the same for us today. Let's look and see what made Ezra an example of living for God.

First, Ezra "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord." Notice that Ezra's devotion was to the word of God and not to the word of men. Ezra sought the word of the Lord and not the opinions of men. Psalms 1:2 says, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Our attitude toward God's word should be like Ezra's and David's. As we read the New Testament, we see warnings about adding or taking away from God's word. We need to "seek the law of the Lord," nothing more or nothing less.

Second, we see that not only did Ezra "seek the law of the Lord," but he did it, or he applied it to his life. We know that we learn by practicing what we know. It's my understanding that the late brother Gus Nichols used to say, "We must both know and practice what we preach." James 1:22 says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." In Psalms

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Imparting Spiritual Gifts

During the infancy of the church, miraculous powers were necessary in order that the will of God might be revealed and confirmed. Once the matter of revelation was completed, and once that revelation had been sufficiently confirmed, there would be no further need for miraculous powers. This is precisely what the apostle Paul had in mind in I Corinthians 13:8-10: "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." A careful study of the method by which these miraculous powers were obtained will confirm their temporary nature and make it plain that they are not available to Christians in modern times.



BOBBY DUNCAN

the apostles' hands, why was it necessary for the apostles to go to Samaria, and what is the meaning of these verses?

Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11). No apostle was at Rome when Paul wrote, and probably none had been there. The church was in need of additional spiritual gifts. The gifts which they had (12:6) must have been given certain ones when they were in contact with some apostle at some other place. In chapter sixteen it is quite obvious that some at Rome had been acquainted with Paul at other places. Also there had been present on Pentecost some "strangers of Rome" (Acts 2:10). But Paul wanted to go to Rome that he might impart other spiritual gifts to the saints there. If miraculous powers of the Spirit can be received independently of an apostle, why did Paul make this statement.

Unlike the church at Rome, the church at Corinth had an abundance of spiritual gifts (I Cor. 1:7). This fact Paul uses as proof of the genuineness of his apostleship. "Truly, the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong" (II Cor. 12:12,13). Some at Corinth had questioned Paul's apostleship. His reply is that the "signs of an apostle were wrought among" them. This could not refer to the mere performing of miracles, for many others were given this power. What were the "signs of an apostle"? The imparting of spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands identified one as an apostle. When Paul pointed to the church at Corinth as proof of his apostleship, the Judaizing teachers who were challenging him had no reply. If miraculous powers can be received in some way other than through the laying on of the apostles' hands, then Paul's argument in defense of his apostleship has no weight, and those who opposed him certainly would have pointed this out to him and the church at Corinth. Paul said the church at Corinth was the "seal" of his apostleship (I Cor. 9:2).

In view of these facts, how do some today claim to be able to perform miracles like we read about in the New Testament? How do some claim to speak with tongues and have the direct leadings of the Holy Spirit? Has some apostle laid hands on them? The fact that the church at Corinth had these powers proved Paul's apostleship. Whose apostleship is proved by those who claim miraculous powers today?

What about Cornelius, the exception to the rule? Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles to be converted to Christ. The Jews did not believe that Gentiles had the same access to God as did they. God knew if the first Gentile converts received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Jews would still look upon the Gentiles as second-rate Christians. In order to emphasize that Jews and Gentiles are equal, Cornelius and his household received the baptism of the Holy Ghost like the apostles. A careful reading of Acts ten and eleven will confirm this fact.

Keys To Successful Living

Continued from page 1

119:9 the writer tells how a young man can cleanse his way; "by taking heed thereto according to thy word." We must "take heed" to the word of God today just like Ezra did.

Third, not only did Ezra "seek the law of the Lord," and do it, but he "taught in Israel statutes and judgments." Ezra was willing to tell others about God and his will. Similarly, we must tell others about the gospel of Christ. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). We need to tell our friends, neighbors and people in our community about the gospel of Christ and the need to obey it today.

We see that Ezra knew what it took to live successfully for God. He sought the law of the Lord, he did it or applied it to his life, and he taught others about God. We must apply these principles to our lives in order to live successfully for the Lord. — 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Ala. 35501.

Characteristics Of The Church

RAYMOND ELLIOTT

There is a sense in which the church of the Lord could be classified as being Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. This may seem rather strange to a society wherein all religious organizations are quickly placed in one of the aforementioned categories but hardly to be found in all three of them.

First, the church of Jesus Christ is to be catholic in nature because of God's design. The term *catholic* means universal, general. Isaiah prophesied that the "house of God" which is the "church of the living God" would be inhabited by people from "all nations" (Isaiah 2:1-3; I Timothy

Continued on page 3

As evidence that miraculous gifts were given only through laying on of the apostles' hands, observe the following: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-18). This passage makes it plain that the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost could not be given to the Samaritans except by the agency of the apostles. Philip, the evangelist, was miraculously endowed (Acts 8:5-7, 13), but he was not an apostle. While he himself could perform miracles, he had not the power to enable others to do so. Peter and John were dispatched from Jerusalem to accomplish that which Philip could not accomplish, i.e., the imparting of spiritual gifts to the people of Samaria.

Simon saw that it was "through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given." It was not through laying on of the hands of Philip; and neither was it separate and apart from the laying on of hands. But it was through "laying on of the apostles' hands." Now, if the Holy Spirit can be received in some way other than through laying on of

What Lies Beyond The Grave

(No. 2)

Man's desire to exist forever is not a vain dream. It is a promise of God's inspired word. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

Another fact is ALL WILL APPEAR AT THE JUDGMENT. This will occur after death. The Hebrew writer wrote, "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

We will be JUDGED ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS. Paul stated, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). We must not deceive ourselves into thinking, we can mock God. Whatever we sow, we shall also reap. "If we sow to the flesh we shall reap corruption. If we sow to the spirit, we shall reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

Jesus said we will be judged by the words he has spoken (John 12:48).

There will be PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED. The evil will be lost. Paul taught, "For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23). In Luke 16:19-31, we have an example of a rich man who was lost. This passage reveals no overt act of wickedness. His sin was neglect. He neglected to care for the poor beggar (Lazarus), who begged for the crumbs that fell from his table. Both men died. Lazarus found himself in Abraham's bosom and the rich man lifted up his eyes in torments. Both were in hades (the unseen world). They were in different places waiting for the judgment (II Pet. 2:4). Their eternal destiny was known. The rich man desired Lazarus to go back to earth to warn his five brethren, but such was not possible. Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31).

A BLESSED HOME WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE RIGHTEOUS. John wrote, "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" (Rev. 22:14). Paul stated, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). In speaking of Abraham, the Hebrew writer said, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

A CROWN OF LIFE WILL BE GIVEN those who are faithful until the end of life (Rev. 2:10). Faithful to what, is the question. Answering this question could fill many pages. The following statement by the writer of Hebrews states it in a nutshell: "And being made perfect, he [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

ETERNITY CANNOT BE MEASURED. Time indicates a conclusion. Everything on earth must end except the eternal soul. The soul will live forever. John Newton wrote, "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as

the sun; we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun."

WILL THE FUTURE BE BRIGHT FOR YOU? — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

What Must We Do . . . To Grow?

We tend to accept the latest in trends and jump on the band wagon that seems to be moving the fastest. The latest of these is church growth.

I am disturbed that some have turned to denominational sources as authorities on a subject which God has spoken so clearly. There is nothing wrong in learning from every source possible. Yet, can we learn more from those who do not understand the nature of the church as revealed by God in his word than we can from him?

There seems to be one major thing for us to do to help the church to grow. We need to let the church be the church. We need not add anything to the church. The seed is already planted. We need only remove our hindrances.

What must we remove? What hinders our growth? I see these as stumbling blocks.

WE ARE LACKING IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. The church needs more of the attitudes of Jesus in its relationships. Can we say we possess his spirit in our concern and treatment of those who visit our services? Do we share his concern for the lost, needy, and spiritually dying and dead? Even more, do we treat each other with his spirit? One



ANCIL JENKINS

of the greatest difficulties Jesus had was in getting away from multitudes, instead of attracting them. He had more difficulty in getting people to understand fully his teaching than in getting them to be interested. If the church has difficulty in arousing interest, it may be because it does not treat people like Jesus did.

WE LACK CONSISTENCY BETWEEN WHAT WE PREACH AND WHAT WE PRACTICE. Few, if any, can beat us in preaching. Many people hear the gospel, yet comparatively few are interested. It may be they see a difference in what we preach and what we practice. We, too often, suffer from a credibility gap. I have heard Ira North say more than once, "The ocean could not hold our preaching, but you could put our practice in a wash tub."

WE MUST LEARN OUR REASON FOR EXISTING. The church exists to carry on the work Jesus came to do. We exist to serve, as this was his mission. By serving, we relieve the needs of man and lead him to salvation. It would seem some think the church merely exists to exist. The church must not, and cannot, exist only to provide a place for worship or to carry on activities and sustain its existence. When the church is the church, it will do these things, but they are incidental to carrying out its mission. They are not a reason for existence.

Someone has well said, "If you cannot push — pull. If you cannot pull — GET OUT OF THE WAY." One answer to church growth may be for us to remove whatever hinders the church from being the church. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Characteristics Of The Church

Continued from page 2

3:15). Since the gospel of Christ is to be preached to every creature, it is clearly seen that the church is also universal in nature (Mark 16:15). Especially is this understood when we learn that the Lord adds the saved to his church (Acts 2:38,41,48). Jesus died for the sins of all the world. He also shed his blood in order that the church might be established (John 3:16; Acts 20:28). There is to be no restriction placed on the universality of the gospel and the church of our Savior.

Second, the church is protestant in that the members thereof are to protest, speak against and express disapproval of all kinds of sins. The church and the world are opposed to each other. There can be no peace between the two, no more than between Christ and Satan, good and evil, righteousness and wickedness. Paul taught Timothy to preach the word and in doing so to rebuke and to reprove (II Timothy 4:1-3). Christians should speak against all injustices, departures from the faith and the rank immorality that exist today.

Third, there is a sense in which the Bible refers to Christians as being the descendants of Abraham, the head of the great Hebrew nation. We learn in Romans 2:28,29: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart; whose praise is not of

men, but of God." It is the putting off of the old man of sin and the putting on of Christ that makes a man acceptable to God today. As penitent believers who are baptized into Christ, we become the true race of God (Romans 6:1-6; I Peter 2:9). "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Galatians 3:29). God's Israel today is not fleshly, but spiritual.

The universal church (Christians throughout the world), God's chosen people, should be protesting the words of Satan continuously until time shall be no more. In this manner, we understand that the church is Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp, Ala. 36467.

He who would be great must be fervent in his prayers, fearless in his principles, firm in his purposes, and faithful in his promises.

When parents cannot control their children in the home, it is extremely difficult for the government to control them in the streets.

God honors no drafts where there are no deposits.

THIRD ANNUAL

GUS NICHOLS — WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 26-30, 1982

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 SIXTH AVENUE
JASPER, ALABAMA 35501

THEME: SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GROWTH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. Christ's Attitude Toward The Scriptures Hudson Nichols

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. WORDS OF TRUTH Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Be Thou An Example" Lawrence Williams
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. The Power of Scriptural Preaching James Watkins

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. Eldership Appreciation Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "We are Labourers Together With God" Dan Winkler
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. The Power Of The Individual In Evangelism Don McWhorter

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. Eldership Appreciation Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Let This Mind Be In You" Tarenæ
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles Of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. A Vast Mission Field — The Erring Prentiss Spivey

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

9:30 A.M.—10:20 A.M. Preaching from the Old Testament Franklin Camp
10:30 A.M.—11:20 A.M. A Study of Words Hugo McCord
The Power of Womanhood Lois McCord
11:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. Fellowship Luncheon
1:30 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Keynote Speech: "Endeavouring To Keep The Unity Of
the Spirit" Byron Laird
2:10 P.M.—2:50 P.M. Building Scriptural Family Relationships Cecil May
3:00 P.M.—3:40 P.M. Scriptural Principles of Church Leadership Jack Wilhelm
7:00 P.M.—7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. Into All The World James Segars

All sessions are to be held in the auditorium of the SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Lodging for out of town guests will be provided free of charge in the homes of Christians in and around Jasper. To make a reservation, call (205) 384-6446 or (205) 387-1670. For those who prefer, the following motels are available: Harper's Motel (205) 384-3388, Holiday Inn (205) 221-3080, M & M Motel (205) 384-6573. Display space is available on a first come first served basis, and at no charge.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad
the Words of T

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1982

NUMBER 39

The New Testament Church

W. A. HOLLEY

When we write of the New Testament church, we are thinking of that church which can be found within the pages of the New Testament. Surely, if any church would be acceptable to God Almighty, it would be that church which Jesus built, and which is clearly revealed in that book called the New Testament (Matthew 16:18-19).

Jesus Christ didn't come into the world to establish an earthly government as is contended for by the premillennialists. There is no reference or allusion to the church as "a new society" — meaning a new society or institution that functions as a world government, with all the powers of both a worldly and ecclesiastical body. Jesus taught that his kingdom "cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for lo, the kingdom God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21). Jesus wanted his disciples to understand that his kingdom could not be observed by the five senses, nor could they watch its progress by outward manifestations. Jesus said that his kingdom "is within you." Since the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, it is not to be observed by outward show, political and military triumphs, nor can its boundaries be extended by such efforts.

A further statement, I think, will be in order: The kingdom of Christ is a reign of peace (Isaiah 2:1-5; 9:6-7; 11:6-9). Here we have figurative language. We are not to think that Jesus intended to remove the emoluments of war, convert the animals, and inaugurate universal peace upon the earth. The kingdom of Christ is neither to be advanced nor defended by the carnal sword (Matthew 26:52; II Corinthians 10:3-4). Jesus is the Prince of Peace! The peace that Jesus offers the people of earth is found in Christ. It is in this sense that Jesus made peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; that he might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that

were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: that through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:14-18, ASV.).

It is for the reason stated above that the following passage is added: "These things have I spoken unto you, *that in me ye may have peace.* [Emphasis, mine, WAH.] In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, ASV). Thus, Jesus plainly stated that peace was/is in himself! Peace cannot be found in the world! Hence, carnal weapons are not the instruments of the Prince of Peace!

Jesus taught that his will and way among men would cause conflicts, combat, and controversy, wherever the truth of God is preached (Matthew 10:34-38; Luke 12:49-53). The sword of the Spirit is the only weapon that the Christian soldier possesses with which Satan and his strongholds can be demolished and destroyed (Ephesians 6:10-17; Hebrews 4:12).

The New Testament is easily identified. It is called: "body of Christ" (I Corinthians 12:27), "one body" (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4), "my kingdom" (Luke 22:30, John 18:36), "the church" (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25), "church of God" (Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 1:1-2; I Timothy 3:5), "household of faith" (Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19), "a spiritual house, an holy nation" (I Peter 2:5-10), "kingdom of God" (John 3:5; Acts 28:23; Romans 14:17), "the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Colossians 1:13-14), "The kingdom of God and of Christ" (Ephesians 5:5), "a kingdom that cannot be moved" (Hebrews 12:28), "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), "the churches of God" (I Corinthians 11:16).

The New Testament church is entered through the new birth. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-5). To make things perfectly clear, we state unequivocally that the statement: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit" equals conversion or salvation or remission of sins. Thus, whatever is required of one to be saved would be the same thing as the new birth. For example, were the Pentecostians of Acts chapter two, born of water and of the

Spirit? Yes, indeed! Well, what were they told to do? Simply read Acts 2:36-38. Peter, the Apostle, told these inquiring souls to: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" Furthermore, these born again people were added to the church (Acts 2:41,47).


The blessings of the New Testament church are of a spiritual nature. One may never believe that God is, never attend a single religious service, yet become and be more wealthy than the most devout Christian, anywhere. But, such an one cannot know "the peace of God that passeth all understanding . . ." (Philippians 4:7). "In Christ" represents, a special relationship! God has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:3). Hence, to be "in Christ" is to be in his spiritual body, which is his church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18,24). In the body, the church, we enjoy every spiritual blessing.

Now friends, if language means anything, there are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ, or outside of his church! It follows as night follows the day that, since all the promises of God are in Christ and, since salvation is located in Christ, one cannot claim "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" without having been baptized into Christ (II Corinthians 1:20; II Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 6:3-4).

The New Testament church is a spiritual institution; it was not built for man's fleshly nature. Rather it was founded for the special benefit of man's spirit — that part of man that shall live forever. Its divine mission is to prepare man to live forever with God. Verily, all Catholic organizations, all denominationalism, all civic organizations, all lodges of men, all human institutions of every kind, shape or form, can never take the place of the church which the Lord Jesus Christ built (Matthew 16:18-19).

Human institutions may support us, feed our egos, and comfort us during our lifetime on earth, but beyond the grave they cannot go. You, my dear reader, need something to hold on to as

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

What If It Were Your Sheep?

There are three parables in the fifteenth chapter of Luke: the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the prodigal son. These three parables were spoken by the Lord in reply to criticism from the Pharisees and scribes that "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (verse 2). We have correctly made application of these parables by pointing to verse 7, which says, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." A similar statement is also repeated in verse 10.



BOB DUNCAN

But we may have overlooked the real point of these parables. Notice that Jesus introduces the parable of the lost sheep by asking a question: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (verse 4). The question is not merely, "What man, having an hundred sheep . . . ?" But it is, "What man of you . . . ?" The Lord is asking, "What would you do if it were your *sheep*?"

The Lord knew that, while they criticized him for seeking lost sinners, if it were their sheep which were lost, they would not stop seeking until they had found them. The parable of the lost coin is spoken, no doubt, to call to their attention the fact that they would not stop searching until they had found that which was lost, if that which was lost were money. They would seek and find a lost sheep, and they would seek and find a lost coin. But they criticize one who is seeking lost men and women.

Now look at the parable of the prodigal son. A boy is lost! If he were a sheep, or a coin, someone would be searching for him. But there is none to go out in search of this precious lad. And when he finally decides, on his own, to return home, his brother, who should have been out searching for him, does not even rejoice to see him come home. No doubt, this elder brother in the parable represents those Pharisees and scribes who had criticized the Lord for his efforts to bring sinners to repentance.

Is it not a fact that many, even in the church, are a great deal more concerned about sheep and about coins than they are about lost human beings? When the local congregation begins to enlist men and women who will go out and try to seek and save those who are lost, every imaginable excuse for not participating can be heard. Can it be we place more value on our sheep, or our cows, or our hogs, or our farms, or our money than we do a lost human being? What if it were a sheep or a coin which became lost? What would you do?

The New Testament Church

Continued from page 1

you walk down into the dark valley of the shadow of death, as you surely will!

Before you sleep, hear the word of the Lord, believe it and obey it, and then live faithfully the Christian life. You will never be sorry that you chose the right way of the Lord. Now, before it is too late. Another opportunity may never knock on your door! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

What Is So Bad About Divorce?

"For I hate divorce, says Jehovah, the God of Israel" (Malachi 2:16).

Divorce is bad because marriage is good. Even though society has moved away from God's plan by approving divorce for any cause (or no cause at all), marriage is still good, sacred and designed to be permanent. Worldly standards for marriage are often based on convenience, while God's plan is based on commitment. The secularist says, "If it doesn't work out we can always get a divorce," while the Christian says, "With God's help our marriage will last."



EDDIE J. MILLER

The author of Hebrews clearly says marriage is honorable (Heb. 13:4). In defense of marriage, Paul went so far as to say that only a liar would forbid marriage (I Tim. 4:2,3). "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). Divorce is bad because marriage is good!!

Divorce is bad because companionship is good. The only portion of God's creation labeled "not good" was Adam alone (Gen. 2:18). God's solution? He

made the situation good by creating marriage!

Marriage partners are companions in a way that no other two people can rightly be. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great . . ." (Eph. 5:31,32). The greatest friendship in this life is between two people who are married and plan to stay married. Divorce is bad because it breaks down this companionship.

Divorce is bad because parenting is good. God's plan for the home calls for both mother and father "on location" deeply involved in nurturing children (Eph. 6:4, Titus 2:4). Since divorce diminishes the influence of one parent (and in most cases both), it destroys God's plan. Of all the world's underprivileged children, those most to be pitied are the ones who spend their formative years being tossed from one parent to another, or to and from grandparents, or others!

In Psalm 127 we read the following tribute: "Children are an heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." To end a marriage in divorce is to dispise our children, God's heritage.

Obviously, I'm not recommending "stay married for the kids" as the ideal, but I am suggesting that innocent children will be among the casualties when a marriage collapses.

Divorce is bad because parenting is good.

Just why does God hate divorce? Because divorce is antithetical to so many things which have been created for our good — marriage, companionship and parenting. Yes, divorce is bad because God said so; but God said so for our own well-being.

Parents, teachers, preachers, let's teach our young people *now* why divorce should not be a part of their lives later. We can do that as we provide them with a solid defense for marriage, companionship and parenting, and we will ultimately be successful if we *show them the way* through the examples of our own lives! — 800 Gunter Ave., Guntersville, Ala. 35976.

Can you remember way back when a juvenile delinquent was a kid with an overdue library book?

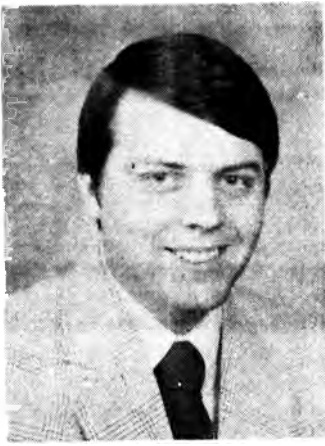
The big question is: Where can we put our hatred while we say our prayers?

One way to curb juvenile delinquency is to take the parents off the streets at night.

Throughout the ages no nation has ever had a better friend than the mother who taught her children to pray.

Egalitarian Evangelism

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons,



PHILLIP GRAY

ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:1-10). The point that the inspired writer is making in this passage needs little explanation. He is saying that it is sin for brethren to show a respect of persons in the worship assembly. A case in point with which he deals is the preferential treatment of the rich over the poor. James' inspired denunciation of this kind of discrimination is designed to underscore the sanctity of the "royal law," which is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Thus, the writer is reasoning from a particular circumstance, deference to the rich, to a general principle, namely, the royal law. Can we not safely, then, ourselves reason from this general principle to the sin inherent in other similar, particular instances of discrimination? Surely we can and, when we do, must recognize that the warning pronounced in verse ten would equally apply to all kinds of discrimination stemming from a respect of persons. Hear it! "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." But would not this principle also apply to circumstances other than the assembly? Surely it would. Hence, we should realize that discrimination based on a respect of persons even in our evangelistic endeavors is a clear violation of the royal law. But are brethren today making such distinctions among persons in seeking the lost? The sad reality is that some are. Yet, in contrast to this prevalent philosophy of selective evangelism, Paul insists that the gospel is for all — not just in some nebulous, "spiritual" sense, but in a literal, practical sense (cf. Rom. 1:16; 10:11-13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-16). Furthermore, in view of the divine description of the typical disciple drawn for us in I Corinthians 1:27-29, can we not confidently conclude that after all is said and done in reference to evangelistic methods, the kingdom of God will be composed mainly of the poor, the downtrodden, the outcast and uneducated by this world's standards? If the examples of the average citizens who were disciples of the Lord during his earthly ministry afford any indication of those who will follow him even today, then surely we can (cf. Mark 12:37; Isa. 61:1,2). While failing to recognize this, however, we often have been misguided in our approach to evangelism by showing a respect to persons on some of the following bases (some have even evoked the aura of "scientific" as a rationalization of such discrimination):

I. SOCIAL SNOBBERY. Brethren frequently are being heard to say that we need to upgrade the image of the church in our communities in order to compete with the larger, more prestigious denominations. It is even insisted that our chances of numerical growth are enhanced when those who are on the same level of the social scale as ourselves (or those even a little higher up) are brought into the congregation. For example, is it not probable that the average congregation would be more exhilarated at the prospect of the mayor visiting during one of

its gospel meetings than that of the school janitor or even a mechanic at a local garage? Would not many feel that the mayor's presence would increase the likelihood of congregational growth more than the presence of some "average Joe"? But stop and listen, brother! Don't you hear the echo coming down from the first century, from the inspired discussion of this same issue which was living then? "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (I Cor. 1:26). Is it right, therefore, to take into significant account a man or woman's social status in the selection of prospects for conversion?

II. RACIAL/CULTURAL BIGOTRY. In an appalling number of circumstances, churches are refusing to be integrated in actual fact, while professing to be so in theory. Maybe in many cases this is a genuine concern on our part for the welfare of the church. We may wonder what the community will "think about us" if we open our doors to those of other races. We may be afraid that our town is not yet ready for such a radical departure from its customs and mores and consequently would ostracize us and greatly hamper us in our work of saving precious souls if we adopt a color-blind policy. Hence, segregation appears to be the most "expedient" option for many, especially in certain racially "hot spots" of the deep south. Several observations about this view are worth considering: (1) Historically speaking, it is true that segregation was largely initiated by blacks on the American religious scene after the war between the states. According to one historian,

"It is scarcely surprising that the defeat of the South should have been accompanied by the withdrawal of most Negroes from the churches of their former masters. For one thing, the mere act of leaving was a symbolic expression of their new freedom. Furthermore, few congregations were prepared to give the Negro any different status than he had had as a slave Even had the churches pressed for some tangible integration, it is unlikely that the mass of Negroes would have gone along."¹

(2) It further is true that this move basically has been unopposed by the majority of white members. (3) It is even true that under some circumstances, segregation might be the most practical, desirable situation for the most effective work of both races of brethren. (4) But, although a voluntary, bilateral segregation lies perhaps within the realm of expediency, a forced, unilateral segregation on the part of any congregation — and for any reason — is unmitigated defiance of the egalitarian ideals of the gospel of Christ! (5) A final observation on this point is to note possible instances where certain Christians living in a given area where both predominantly white and predominantly black congregations are represented may not feel as effective in the churches of their own race as they could be in the other congregations. This could rest on a number of reasons. For example, a black member might be persuaded that the "black congregation" of his community is not as active and dedicated in the Lord's work as it should be. Or, he may know of serious doctrinal unsoundness in that congregation, thus feeling obligated to place membership elsewhere. Whatever his reason, could white brethren shamelessly face God in judgment if they have refused him the needed opportunity of growing and working with them because of a policy of forced segregation? "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all!"

III. INTELLECTUAL ARROGANCE. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, for the

school year of 1869/1870, the grand total of all college and university graduates in the U.S. was 9,372. Of these, 9,371 were bachelor's and first professional degrees. Zero was the number of master's degrees. Only one received his doctorate. However, in the year 1976/1977, 322,000 were conferred master's degrees, 35,000 their doctorates which, combined with all others, made a total of 1,399,000 college degrees!² Truly there has been a "knowledge explosion" in our age, to borrow a striking phrase from our brother Rex Turner, Sr.! But how are Christians responding? Surely we should thank God for the tremendous advancements in education that have benefited our lives and provided us with so many valuable tools for the study of the Bible not available to past generations. But have we been so overwhelmed by a love of education that we have set up academic achievement as a criterion for church membership? Would we rather have the high school principal visit our assembly than the truck driver or policeman across the street with only his high school diploma?

IV. MATERIALISTIC AMBITION. Put tersely, some congregations are just plain too contribution conscious. Is meeting the budget the basic impetus in our seeking converts to the cause? Few readers have not heard of some congregations, especially those that are young and laboring in difficult areas, which have experienced respectable numerical growth yet who feel that they have failed for not becoming "self-supporting." Brother, honestly, would you rather baptize two wage earners to every five who are unemployed or on social security?

V. PERSONAL COMPATIBILITY. Perhaps this is the most common criterion we erect for choosing prospects for conversion. Many brethren simply will not make the extra effort to meet and befriend someone for evangelistic purposes who they feel has little or nothing in common with them. Yes, it is true that those we know and are close to are more likely candidates to respond to our teaching than others. Still, we need to take heed, lest we allow ourselves to shut out those with whom we may have little natural affinity.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the gospel is for all, not simply ideally but practically. It is true that we are most likely to succeed in teaching those of the same socio-economic level as ourselves, who share common interests, and are of the same racial/cultural background. However, if we allow this to become an excuse for an unloving bigotry or selectivity in evangelism, we will have violated the royal law and become guilty of all the perfect law of liberty (cf. James 1:25; 2:10). — Rt. 1, Box 55-D, Grove Hill, Ala. 36451.

Footnotes

1. Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in American* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1965), p. 224.
2. Martin A. Bacheller, ed., *The Hammond Almanac* (1977) p. 736.

When you get the daily bread you've been praying for, don't grumble because it's not cake.

Juvenile delinquency is now defined as a situation where the youngsters stop asking their parents where they came from and start telling them where to go.

A hypocrite prays on his knees on Sunday — and on his neighbors the rest of the week.

Juvenile delinquency is no mystery. Mama is so busy keeping up with the Joneses and Papa is so busy keeping up with Mama that neither of them has any time left for keeping up with John and Mary.

Reaping The Benefits

WAYNE MILLER

John 4:1-2 contains a valuable lesson that is good for gospel preachers to remember and keep before us. From these verses we see the disciples of Christ reaping the benefits of labor that previously had been done by John the Baptist. John was the forerunner of Christ and was truly "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Matt. 3:3). Obviously, men were not ready yet for the King of Kings. The task of John was calling men to remove the barriers, and thus make passable the way for the King of Kings to enter into their hearts. He truly "made straight the way of the Lord" (John 1:23). As John prepared the hearts and lives for Christ he told them, "There is one that cometh after me" (John 1:15, 27). He spoke of Christ as he said, "I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him" (John 3:28). We find in John 4:1-2 some results of John's work in pointing men to Jesus. The benefits were being reaped of John's great work for Christ.

We, as gospel preachers, at times *must* stop and realize many of us are reaping the benefits of others

before us. This is so true if we work with an existing congregation. It may be easy for some of us to forget this. When the congregation that we work with begins to grow in attendance, giving, knowledge, love, etc., we may need to look at self. I am for church growth and believe it is essential to preaching and teaching the gospel which saves the souls of mankind (Rom. 1:16; James 1:21). Brethren, may we stay away from thinking these people are so fortunate to have *me* preaching for them. It is because of *me* this congregation is growing and pleasing the Lord. If not for *me* they would be doing nothing for Christ. They are truly lucky and blessed with *my* presence.

Those of us that labor with an existing congregation are reaping these benefits of others. It is because of their foresight and sacrifices, not myself, that we have a building in which to meet. It is through their dedication in Christ that we have the church today. It is *their* love for the Lord

that has motivated them to be faithful and win others to Christ. It is the great sacrifice of time and money of others that has allowed me the opportunity to be with this particular congregation. Many of these people have left this earth long before I moved here, but I have reaped the benefits of *their* work. Some husbands and wives, of those who have gone on, are attending and working for Christ with this congregation. Let us remember these people and be thankful (Eph. 5:20) for the work and preparation that others made before us.

Brethren, it is a true joy to be privileged to reap the benefits of others. The disciples of Christ reaped the benefits of John the Baptist's work. May we realize the same lesson today. Before we think more highly of ourselves than we should (Rom. 12:3), may we stop and be thankful that **WE ARE REAPING THE BENEFITS OF OTHERS BEFORE US.** — State and 18th Street Bristol, VA 24201.

The Need For Balanced Preaching

The apostle Paul pointed out that while at Ephesus he "kept back nothing that was profitable" and had "not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:20,27). That, brethren, is balanced preaching.

It is difficult to reach an audience with balanced preaching today. Not because the preacher refuses to preach the word (II Tim. 4:2), but so many hear half of what is preached. By this I mean, those



CURTIS DOWDY

Sunday mornings and fail to return on Sunday night get only half of the preaching. It is, therefore, difficult to maintain a balance.

Most preachers with which I am acquainted consider their audience when preparing for the pulpit. We usually think of most "outsiders" being present at the a.m. worship, and thus first principals come up often. During the evening it's mostly "us" so we hear teaching toward growing spiritually, etc.

As I look back now, I think I can see why so many "oncens" have not developed as they should, they are not getting a balanced diet. It's not because the preacher is out of balance, but the listener is out of balance.

Now what is the solution? The best solution, of

course, would be that every Christian return in the evening. But being a realist we know that is not going to happen. Another alternative would be to preach two lessons on Sunday morning, but who would sit still for that? Is there a third? Maybe we could "mix and match." In short, take some of those things we plan for the evening and preach it in the morning, etc.

Preacher, look back over your preaching and you may find that the very things you preached at night are just what was needed in the morning.

It sure would help the preachers if everybody saw the need to come back on Sunday night. Then again, it might help you as much as it does the preacher. — 1518 Highland Avenue Columbia, Tn. 38401.

Isolationism In Reverse

I can vividly recall a statement made by some members of the Lord's church during my high school days at Alabama Christian College that went something like this: "You shouldn't send your children to a Christian school, because you will isolate them from society." And, I suppose that some amount of isolationism was practiced in that day among the students and teachers. But, there were enough "outsiders" and worldliness around the situation.

I know that Christians are not to be isolated, but rather to live in such a manner as to be "insulated" from carnality and ungodliness. We must permit our salt to savor and our lights to illuminate in



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

place to equalize the

order that we can be a proper influence among the peoples of the world. The church is to be a fort on the front lines of a spiritual battle. We must radiate Christ in our lives in order to bring others to him. In this manner, we must "mix and mingle" with non-Christians. I believe that most Christians will agree with this premise.

However, I believe also that some Christians practice isolationism in the reverse. Please correct me if I am wrong. Some members cannot be found except for one hour per week. They would be highly insulted if you should ask them why they don't come around more often to the various periods of Bible study and worship. Some members have for their bosom friends non-Christians, and they never visit in the homes of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Their children grow up not knowing the elders, deacons, preachers and the local membership. Other members never attend any of the special functions of the local church, such as Vacation Bible School, gospel meetings, and they never are present for such occasions as a fellowship meal. A goodly number of disciples never attend area meetings and Sunday afternoon singings. This is

isolation in reverse. Whenever we care more for the world and activities in the civic, sports, social and educational fields than we do for the church of the Lord, we have placed the emphasis on the wrong endeavors. I believe that the Lord said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" How can we come to "love the brotherhood" if we never associate with our brothers and sisters of "like precious faith" in worship and Christian fellowship?

If you are guilty of isolationism, from whom are you practicing it? — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp, Ala. 36467.

Did the conversion of so many woodsheds into garages have anything to do with the alarming increase in juvenile delinquency?

Some people talk about heaven being so far away. It is within speaking distance of those who belong there.

A juvenile delinquent is a teen-ager who wants what he wants when he wants it and won't wait to get it.



Words Of



(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

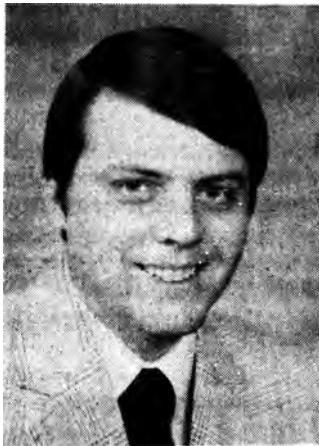
VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1982

NUMBER 40

"The Innocent Party"

So much has been presented on the sensitive issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage, by brethren with far greater credentials than I possess, that I am somewhat hesitant to presume to make my contribution. However, there is at least one aspect of the controversy which it seems has not received as much attention as is due. That is the question of whether there really is any



PHILLIP GRAY

such person as "the innocent party" in situations involving marital infidelity. It is sometimes argued that the New Testament actually sets forth no legitimate grounds for divorce whatsoever. Although it is not my purpose here exhaustively to deal with this contention, I would like to attempt an answer of one allegation often adduced in support of this aberrant belief. Is there an innocent party? Some are saying, No! Advocates of the idea that no divorce is ever permitted under the New Covenant will often insist that no party could be free to remarry in cases where the sacred union has been violated since both must share the blame of the "guilty party" to one degree or another.

Obviously, this question should not be considered apart from the Lord's doctrine on divorce recorded in Matthew 19:9. Here Jesus affirms, "And I say unto you, 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." Here the Lord makes it clear that putting away one's mate is not permitted under the terms of his will, except in the case where fornication (sexual immorality) has tarnished the marriage relationship. In such a case, the mate who has been wronged (i.e., the one against whom the trespass has been committed) is free to remarry.

The question is, can this one who has been wronged be said to be "the innocent party"? It is my thesis that this is a perfectly legitimate label within this context. Of course, "innocent party" is not the term Christ used in describing the one who has been betrayed by his or her partner, but it expresses adequately the

Lord's *idea*. It is true, no one is completely free from sin. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). However, the expression, "innocent party," is not being used to denote sinless perfection, or the ideal companion, but to indicate a marriage partner's innocence with respect to the crime of adultery. Hence, it does not follow that there is no ground for divorce approved by God simply because no one can claim a spotless record for one's life. Christ certainly acknowledges the possibility of a husband or wife's innocence with respect to fornication.

But what are those who disagree really implying about all souls who have ever experienced the heart-rending ordeal of marital infidelity against them? Is it not to say that they are partly to blame for their mate's unfaithfulness? What a terrific burden to bear! Sometimes it is cruelly insinuated that, had the partner against whom the offense was committed been more attentive to his or her conjugal duties, the "need" for the guilty spouse's seeking intimacy elsewhere could have been avoided. It is true that husbands and wives are to "defraud ye not one the other . . . that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (I Cor. 7:5). However, is this to say that whenever unfaithfulness occurs that the offender necessarily has been defrauded? According to a recent study reported in *Good Housekeeping*, September of 1982, by Alan Loy McGinnis, PH.D., there are common misconceptions that must be dispelled concerning why partners sometimes stray. One of these we often hear is, "A person never would have strayed unless there was something wrong with the marriage." Dr. McGinnis points out that, "Surveys show that many unfaithful spouses rate their overall marital relationship as 'good' or 'very good.'" Thus, there are no scriptural nor statistical reasons for

always, and as a matter of course, assigning guilt to both partners in a case where only one has committed adultery. It may be that, in some cases, forced deprivation of the conjugal rights might be a contributing cause of temptation, which leads to infidelity (as Paul recognizes in I Corinthians 7:5). However, ultimately "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14; see also 1:13, 15 and I Cor. 10:13). An unfaithful husband, for example, could not claim that his wife "made me do it." Her disregard for his basic needs might have been a contributing factor to his downfall, but his decision to yield to baser desires was entirely his own! Cases abound where wayward husbands might argue that their wives could have been more attentive to them in their marital obligation than they were. However, this of itself does not exonerate the adulterer, nor necessarily implicate the offended party with that most heinous crime. There is probably some room for improvement in this area in every union, but we tread on the dangerous ground of being wise "above that which is written" when we insist that there is no such person as "the innocent party".

Therefore, since the Lord teaches that there is a legitimate ground for divorce, i.e., fornication, then who are we to presume to legislate where God has not in effectively doing away with the option of divorce for the offended when we contend that there is no "innocent party"? Surely, we can show more compassion and pity on those who have been through the nightmare of such a dissolution of the sacred union by our refraining from advocating theories which would saddle them with some of the guilt. Such an one can be "innocent" with respect to the crime of fornication! — Rt. 1, Box 55-D, Grove Hill, Al. 36451.

The Ostrich Vs. People


GRACE LOWREY

(Editor's note: In 1979 the editor was in a meeting with the Pleasant Valley church in Mobile, Alabama, and was invited to speak to the ladies' Bible class. He spoke on the ostrich, from Job 39:13-18. Sister Grace Lowrey was in the class, and composed the following poem, but it was not until recently that we knew of the poem or had access to it.)

Everything God made is good.
—We know that this is true.
Why from the ostrich wisdom kept,
I really wish I knew.

Perhaps some lessons we could learn

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Ostrich VS. People

Continued from page 1

From silly things they do.
Tho' we have minds to understand
We oft act foolish too.

The ostrich lays eggs on the ground;
And often forgets where.
If they, by chance, should hatch and grow
No mother's love is there.

When mothers seek for wealth or fame
And leave their children dear
For someone else to feed and train,
Do ostrich's ways seem queer?

Sometimes the ostrich tries to hide
Behind a bush too small.
She feels secure and looks just like
You can't see her at all.

When conscience pricks the mortal mind
We run and try to hide
Behind some worthless thin excuse,
And think we're justified.

The ostrich eats most anything
That's thrown down near her feet.
It may be rags, or food, or trash;
She thinks it's there to eat.

We humans watch the TV shows,
Tho good or bad they be.
Whatever's put before our eyes
We fill our minds, don't we?

Sometimes the ostrich struts around
With quite a selfish pride;
But beauty's hardly seen in one
Where wisdom is denied.

The ostrich cannot help herself.
This fact we can deduce:
Of wisdom she hath been deprived;
But what is our excuse?



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Apostle Of Assurance

Some time ago we wrote some things about the fact that the apostle John is often thought of as the apostle of love, because in his writings he has so much to say about the subject of love. For example, in John's gospel, *agapao* and *agape* (verb and noun forms of the Greek word translated "love") appear a total of forty-four times, as compared to twenty-eight times in the other three gospels combined.

We observed also, however, that this same apostle is eminently qualified as the apostle of truth, since he used the word *aletheia* 'truth' (in all its forms) a total of fifty-six times in his gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all combined use the word a total of seventeen times. And so the "apostle of love" is also the "apostle of truth."

Another interesting thing about the writings of the apostle John is his use of the Greek word *ginosko* 'know.' He uses this word in all his writings a total of eighty-seven times, as compared to seventy-nine occurrences of the word in the combined writings of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But the remarkable thing is that John uses this word twenty-five times in the five short chapters of the book of I John (about one time in every five verses). Notice some of the occurrences of this word in I John:

"And hereby we do *know* that we *know* him, if we keep his commandments" (2:3). One's knowledge of the Father is not based upon some subjective feeling, but upon his keeping the commandments.

"He that saith, I *know* him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4). John may be the apostle of love, but this does not keep him from stating very dogmatically that it is only the one who keeps the commandments who can truthfully say he knows God.

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we *know* that we are in him" (2:5). One may talk about the love of God, but it is only lip service if he does not keep the word of



BOBBY DUNCAN

God, and we *know* this is the way it is.

"If ye *know* that he is righteous, ye *know* that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (2:29). It is amazing to hear the talk among religious people about "born again Christians," as if there were some other kind of Christians. But what does it mean to be born again? Is there any way for us to *know*? This verse says we *know* that those who do righteousness are those born of him. What does it mean to do righteousness? It means to keep the commandments of God, "for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we *know* that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (3:2). There are certainly some things we do not *know*; but the fact we do not *know* everything does not prove we cannot *know* anything. We do not *know* what we shall be, but we do *know* we shall be like the Lord when he appears.

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we *know* that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (3:18, 19). It is easy to love in word and in tongue, i.e., to talk about one's love for God and one's fellow man. But loving in deed and in truth requires effort and sacrifice. One is not of the truth merely by knowing what the Bible teaches. But he can *know* he is of the truth if his love manifests itself in action.

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we *know* that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (3:24). Some questioned the genuineness of the gospel John preached. But the Spirit was given to the apostles to enable them to confirm the word preached (Mark 16:20). Miraculous powers to confirm the word were also imparted to other first century Christians through the laying on of the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:17, 18). Now that the revelation of God is complete and completely confirmed in the New Testament, we *know* that God abides in us because we have this assurance in that revelation.

These are just a few of the occurrences of the word *know* in I John, but these should serve to strengthen our faith and help us live the Christian life with more confidence and assurance.

Church Discipline

LOUIS EVERETTE RUSHMORE

A congregation which tolerates sin within itself is a congregation in which the leaven of sin has leavened the whole lump (I Cor. 5:6,7).

Many other congregations do little better when they fail to enact church discipline, although, they may announce the names of those from whom the congregation should withdraw. These congregations too are out of step with the divine pattern respecting Bible discipline. "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" (II Thes. 3:6). To do less than what II Thessalonians 3:6 commands Christians to do is to be less than obedient to the author

of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:8,9). II Thessalonians 3:6 and kindred passages are obeyed or disobeyed on an individual basis, AFTER a public announcement of withdrawal is made. NO ONE has an option in this matter; EACH CHRISTIAN must obey the command to withdraw from the disorderly in order to avoid becoming disorderly himself. "And why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Withdrawal of fellowship should never be an act of vengeance, but rather, it should be an act of love, exercised as a last resort to prompt erring church members to repent. Neither should withdrawal of

Continued on page 3

Church Discipline

Continued from page 2

fellowship be undertaken without first expending much effort to instruct and to bring about penitence in the erring. Erring children of God must never be allowed to MISUNDERSTAND the purpose of the visits received from those concerned for their souls. Even after withdrawal of fellowship the erring should be admonished as brethren (kindly instructed). After withdrawal and prior to repentance, erring brothers and sisters are ERRING WILLFULLY and are not entitled to Christian companionship outside of instruction.

Christian fellowship is a partnership or companionship wherein Christians prefer each other rather than the companionship of the world (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1; I Pet. 1:22; 2:17). Withdrawal of fellowship is calculated to produce a void for which cause erring brethren are compelled to repent, in order to be restored to fellowship with their fellow Christians and God. (Unfortunately, the effects of church discipline are often minimized because many Christians never develop a love for the brotherhood which exceeds their affection for the world. Christian fellowship includes but surpasses assembling at appointed times and eating together occasionally.)

Fellowship among Christians is both a spiritual and a physical relationship. Likewise, withdrawal of fellowship is both spiritual and physical in nature. "Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thess. 3:14) portrays the act and the effect of withdrawal of fellowship. (1) Faithful Christians are to avoid pleasurable activities and accompanying with erring children of God. (2) The loss of physical fellowship is intended to cause the erring to feel his loss of spiritual fellowship with his brethren and with God.

The apostle Paul addressed the act of withdrawal of fellowship: "And if any obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (II Thess. 3:14,15). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ 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 . . . Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us . . . I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators . . . But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:4, 5, 7, 9, 11).

Those who faithfully follow the author of eternal salvation will obey the Bible respecting church discipline regardless of how painful it may be. However, the ones closest to erring disciples and who by exercising Biblical withdrawal could influence the erring the most are often the very ones who refuse to withdraw fellowship. Included in this number many times are parents of NON-DEPENDENT children. (If a physical relationship constituted an exception to II Thessalonians 3:6 and related verses, many inter-related congregations could withdraw from no one!)

While every faithful Christian is obliged to withdraw from the disorderly, doubtlessly, no one contends that a husband or wife should violate the passages pertaining to marriage in an attempt to practice church discipline (Matt. 5:32; I Cor. 7:3-5, 10-14, Eph. 5:28, 31, 33; Col. 3:18,19). Likewise, passages concerning the children/parental relationship should not be violated in an effort to participate

in withdrawal of fellowship (Eph. 6:4; I Tim. 5:8). However, if withdrawal of fellowship became necessary, parents of non-dependent children (children for whom their parents are no longer responsible) should carefully and prayerfully contemplate their responsibility in church discipline. If the situation were reversed, non-dependent children should contemplate the same. This writer, for instance, would feel compelled to withdraw fellowship from his non-dependent children in the

event that the church Biblically withdrew from them. My wife and I would likely have more effect thereby on our erring children than the rest of the brethren combined.

Bible discipline will not split faithful congregations, nor will it make godly people angry. It will, however, prompt the erring to repent and preserve the spotless bride of Christ, according to the wisdom of God. In whose wisdom should we trust? — 909 Golf Road, Waukegan, Ill. 60085.

Premillennialism - Its Current Revival

The word "Premillennialism" does not appear in the Bible. We must go outside the Bible to learn what it means. The term is a form of the word "millennial" or "millennium" which is derived from two Latin words "mille" which means thousand and "annus" which means year. Thus, the word "millennium" means "a thousand years" and the doctrine of "millennialism" is the doctrine of a thousand years of universal peace and tranquility here on earth before the beginning of the eternal state. *Pre-millennialism* says that Christ will come *before* (pre) the thousand years of earthly peace and tranquility and that, in fact, his coming will usher in the thousand years; that at that time he will set up his kingdom and begin to occupy the throne of David as an earthly king, and that he will continue that literal, earthly reign for a literal thousand years. *Post-millennialism* says that Christ will come *after* (post) the thousand years of universal peace and tranquility which they imagine existing here on earth. Premillennialism is, by far, the more prominent of the two basic millennial beliefs.

Revelation 20:1-9 makes three references to "a" thousand years and three references to "the" thousand years. All theories concerning the millennium are based on this passage. Take this passage from the millennialists—that is, show that it does not (cannot) mean what they say it means—and they have no basis for their doctrine. For instance, the following matters—all essential to substantiating the premillennial theory—are *not* to be found in Revelation 20: (1) The second coming of Christ, (2) The establishment of a kingdom, (3) The return of the Jews to Palestine, (4) A bodily resurrection, (5) The throne of David, and (6) An earthly reign of Christ. Is it not significant that the very elements so essential to sustaining the premillennial program are *not* to be found in the *one* passage premillennialists dote on so heavily and without which they could not even concoct their theory!

Some might wonder whether or not this subject should be of any present day concern to the Lord's people. It most certainly should be! It is by no means a dead issue! Every mainline evangelical denomination in America has a strong strain of premillennialism running through it. America's most popular and influential denominational preachers—including Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and especially Herbert W. and Garner T. Armstrong—believe the premillennial theory and preach it to their nationwide audiences via radio, television and the printed page.

One of the most popular religious books in recent years is *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal



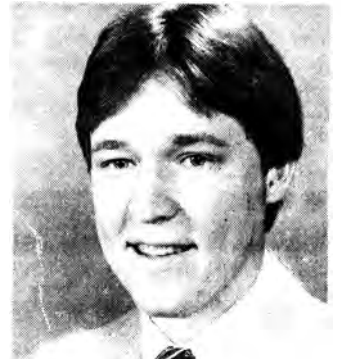
HUGH FULFORD

Lindsey. Lindsey is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, a thorough-going premillennial institution. Lindsey's book is written in the popular language of the day and has sold over five million copies—many of them to high school and college age young people. In this book he presents in convincing language—to the one uninformed in the scriptures—the case for dispensational premillennialism.

The churches of Christ are also affected by this doctrine. (What affects the denominational world, unfortunately, also sooner or later comes to affect us.) There are a dozen or more congregations in the Louisville, Ky. area that are premillennial. This is where R. H. Boll continued to live and wield such strong influence after being dismissed from the staff of the *Gospel Advocate* in 1915 because of his erroneous views on prophecy and his obvious premillennial beliefs. This is where E. L. Jorgenson—a co-laborer of Boll's—was still living (though then an old man) when I moved to Louisville in 1958 to do my first local work. Premillennial churches of Christ can be found in Gallatin, Tenn.; Winchester, Ky.; Hammond, La., as well as elsewhere. A few years ago a previously loyal preacher in Kentucky was converted to this theory. In recent weeks a book has come from the press, written by a man among us who was supposed to have been converted from denominationalism, that is literally filled with premillennial doctrine. Our members are reading Lindsey's book and listening to the Armstrongs. I go into members' homes and see issues of *Plain Truth* lying on their coffee tables. Many of our members will commend the preaching of Billy Graham. They do not recognize the obvious error of these men and their publications, much less how to refute it! We must familiarize ourselves with the tenets of the premillennial theory and prepare ourselves to deal with it in a forthright fashion. It, like all false ways, must be opposed by the faithful people of God! "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:104).—101 Dow Drive, Shelbyville, TN 37160.

Faith Action

The suspension bridge of Niagara Falls was begun by a thread attached to a kite. When the wind blew, the kite went across. Then on the thread they attached a string and pulled it across. Then to the string, they attached a rope and By this means, they were able to build



BARRY FIKE

the bridge. Your faith may be just a little thread,

Continued on page 4

Faith Action

Continued from page 3

or no larger than a mustard seed, but you must act on that faith. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13).

How many members of the church today believe that faith alone can save them? How many members of your congregation believe that? Probably more than you would imagine. Scriptures such as, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17) are virtually unknown. It is extremely popular to believe that only faith, and nothing

else, can save a person. That would allow the doctrine of "Faith only" to be correct. But, as the scriptures already noted have shown, that is simply not the truth of the gospel. The Bible tells us that each individual must take individual responsibility for his actions and that by those actions he will be judged (Matthew 25:31-36). We are all to "submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). It certainly includes the idea of faith but calls for more than just "faith alone."

Like the bridge, our faith may not be as large as someone else's, but the only way that it will

grow is for us to act upon it and allow the Lord to help us in our continual search for him and his wisdom. As James says, "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" (James 2:18).

The Christian must understand that through action, faith will be grounded and settled (Colossians 1:23), as it moves him to do even greater works of faith for the Lord (II Thessalonians 1:3). This is how a person's faith will grow exceedingly (Ephesians 4:15). — 5 Ludwell St. Charleston, S.C. 29407.

Profession - Pretense—Performance

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying . . . Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen . . ." are some of the words that pour from the lips of members of the church of Christ around the world. In practically every gathering of the saints there is heard great exhortation in song to heed the call that comes ringing across the dark waves, a call that says in effect, "Come over into our land, or into our culture, and help us!" If an alien from another world should eavesdrop on a worship assembly of "our" brethren the impression would doubtless be that "these folk are extremely concerned for those they describe as the lost."



R. W. GRAY

Our professed interest in and concern for the lost, whether in our midst or around the world, is not without scriptural warrant. The Bible, especially the New Testament, abounds in such expressions as, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). The founder of the Christian religion instructs that prayers to God petition him for more workers in the wonderful task of reaching the lost (Matt. 9:37-38).

The prayers heard in the average assembly implies an emotional, heart-felt love for sinners. We pray for the alien sinner and for the erring child of God. We ask for wisdom, opportunity, and courage in reaching and saving them.

Elders, for the most part, expect a great deal of emphasis in the pulpit on the matter of evangelism. Many churches show a willingness to spend large sums to bring in the professional who will "train us to reach the lost."

The church is not deficient in it's appeal to be evangelistic, to save the lost and recover the erring. It is even possible that we have "talked it to death"; however we must not cease to emphasize in sermon, song, and prayer, the wonderful task assigned in the Great Commission of our Lord (Mark 16:15).

But what about our performance? Does the question cause you to blush? It should. Our performance record in reaching the lost about us is worse than deplorable. The average elder among us who insists that we give great emphasis to evangelism in our teaching programs, is so involved with the affairs of this life that he seldom, if ever, visits the home of an erring Christian placed under his spiritual oversight. Few elders or elderships take the lead in searching out and teaching the lost in their

community.

The professional has come and gone, and the lack of real effort to rescue the perishing remains as it was before his appearance. Most are elated with finally "knowing how" to do personal work. Only a dedicated few become actively involved in some form of personal evangelism. Most are "too busy," "leave it to the preacher," or "blame the elders for failing to stimulate them."

It is a sad observation that even among the professionals many content themselves with the fact

they have instructed others in "how to win the lost." We are in a situation in the church of having too many chiefs and not enough Indians in the greatest work on earth.

Speak to the average hymn singer "after the service" about assisting you in visiting an erring brother or sister and you are in for great disappointment. Thank God for the remnant dedicated to the work, but may He have mercy upon the mere professor and pretender. *Think On These Things.* — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

Gems Of Leviticus



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

Moses is the author of the book of Leviticus. The book of Leviticus adds the dimension of worship and the fellowship with God. "For I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Leviticus 11:44). "Because it is written, be ye holy: for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). The major theme of Leviticus is: "Be ye holy." There is no way man can be holy in the Twentieth Century unless he puts God first and worships the Father "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). There is a title of a gospel song, "Nearer Still Nearer," that is an apt description of the purpose of this great book of Leviticus.

"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord" (Leviticus 1:3). "Of his own voluntary will" clearly shows beyond any shadow of doubt that man is a creature of choice. This verse answers the false doctrine of predestination that has been taught by John Calvin. God does not predestinate one person to heaven and another to hell. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11). Man is not a machine that can be turned off and on by a switch, but rather he is a creature of choice (Romans 2:6; 14:12). Every person has a choice to obey God or Satan. What is your choice?

In Chapter ten, verse one we read where Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before the Lord." In verse two, "they died before the Lord." Why? Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by the sin of presumption. One who is presumptuous speaks for God or acts for God. To be presumptuous is to be self-willed.

David said, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression (Psalms 19:13). We may not claim to be speaking for God or acting for him, but in reality that is what we are doing when we add to or take away from the word of God. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (II Peter 2:10).

"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it; for I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 26:1). This verse teaches that God comes first and we are not ever to worship an idol. Many believe idolatry only involves people overseas. Some give the connotation that the sin of idolatry is not a problem in the U.S.A. This is far from the truth. There are two questions that need to be considered in order for us to have a better understanding of idolatry. What is an idol? Anything which occupies the place due God is an idol. What is a god? "Whatever thy heart clings to and relies upon is properly thy god." Another important question that needs some consideration is: what are some forms of idolatry? Here are a few: (1) creature worship (Romans 1:20-25), (2) man worship (Acts 12:21-23), (3) mammon worship (I Timothy 6:10), (4) pleasure worship (II Timothy 3:4). John says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (I John 5:21). We need to heed not only John but also Paul when he said, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (I Corinthians 10:14).

A study of the book of Leviticus reveals the following: (1) God is to be worshipped. (2) God informs man how to worship. (3) Man must bow in humble submission to God to be saved. — P. O. Box 97, Nettleton, Ms. 38858.

When a child always gets what he wants, you can be sure he is well on his way toward delinquency.



WORDS OF TRUTH

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

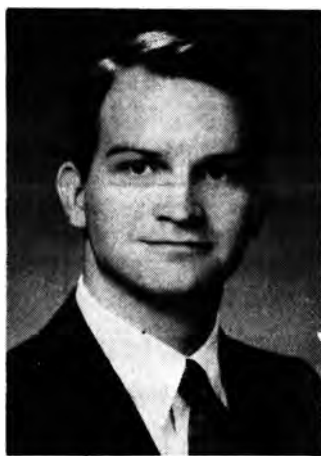
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1982

NUMBER 40

Are You An Apologist Or An Apologizer?

It's good to know what you believe; it's better to know why you believe it.

Convictions become ours only after we've thought them out and thus discovered them for ourselves. Though based entirely upon the Word of God, faith should be more for us than a second-hand story. We should believe a thing is truth, not because others see it as truth, but because it is truth, and this type of conclusion comes only as the result of personal investigation.



DALTON KEY

Sooner or later you will be called upon to defend or at least explain your religious convictions. When that time comes, will you be an apologist or an apologizer? Now before you tune me out, hear me out. An apologist makes an apology for his faith in the classical sense — he defends, proves. An apologizer, on the other hand, apologizes for his convictions in the popular sense — he embarrassingly makes excuses, he apologizes.

You are pleasantly conversing with your neighbor and are asked, "Why don't you folks (members of churches of Christ) use a piano in your worship services?" Will you be an apologist or an apologizer? A friend at work or school inquires, "Do you really teach that one has to be baptized in order to be saved?" Will you be an apologist or an apologizer? A relative wants to know, "Must you always be running off to church services?" Again, will you be an apologist or an apologizer? Will you defend or make excuse?

Someone counters, "Oh, but that's the preacher's job." Yes. But is it his responsibility alone? Are Christians to be nothing more than puppets dangling from the preacher's sermonic string? Shouldn't we all know what we believe and why we believe it? And shouldn't we be willing and ready to explain or defend what we believe before others?

Doesn't Paul's admonition to "prove all things"

and then "hold fast that which is good" apply to all of us? (I Thessalonians 5:21). The apostle did not say, "Let the preacher prove all things, and then hold fast to what he says is good." We might wish he had said this, but he didn't.

And what of Peter's admonition? "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). Like it or not, this applies to all

of us, preacher and non-preacher alike. We are to be ready. We are to be ready always. We are to be ready always to give an answer. An answer to whom? Every man that asks. Asks what? a reason. A reason concerning what? Concerning the hope which lies within us. How are we to offer such an answer? In meekness and fear.

Yes, we know what it says. The question is, do we live like we know what it says? Think about it. — Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

The Call To Preach

JIMMY EDWARDS

In his excellent tract "The Churches of Christ . . . Who Are These People?" Joe Barnett estimates that worldwide there are some 20,000 churches of Christ with a total of 2½ to 3 million members. Barnett points out that there are churches of Christ in every state in the United States and in 109 other countries.

Obviously the need is tremendous for sound men who can stand in the pulpits of these churches and proclaim the word of God. Which men should preach? What criteria should be used in deciding to preach? Who should make the decision? When should it be made?

There are many factors which must be considered in the decision to be a gospel preacher. Brother Battell Barrett Baxter, in our *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* class at Lipscomb, pointed out two key ingredients in the decision to preach: faith and an overpowering desire.

Faith is absolutely necessary. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:17). Paul knew and understood the meaning of this statement. The apostle trusted Christ and sought his strength in him; he was the object of Paul's confidence. Paul believed God's guarantee and placed his life in his protection. Christ had told Paul on one occasion, "Be not afraid . . . for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee" (Acts 18:9,10). He kept his faith in difficulties, conflicts, dangers, and temptations. Paul could not have succeeded as an evangelist unless he had cast himself on the love and mercy of God with complete faith in his word. Today, if the gospel

preacher would be successful in the work of preaching he too must have a deep, genuine faith in the Lord.

An overpowering desire is extremely important in the decision to become a preacher. David Lipscomb, H. Leo Boles, even Charles Spurgeon used to say, "If you can do anything else, don't preach!" This is a half-truth that has misled many people. It is intended to emphasize the importance of desire. In *The Heart of The Yale Lectures* Brother Baxter defined the "call to preach": "A man may assume that he is 'called to preach' when his natural qualifications are such as are needed by the minister, when he feels certain that God desires him as a public proclaimer of the gospel, and when he himself desires to preach to such a degree that he could never be quite conscience-free should he decline the opportunity to preach." Only those men who have a longing, craving and insatiable appetite for the pulpit should make efforts to prepare themselves for this important work.

Deciding to preach the gospel is a very important decision, upon which the salvation of many souls may depend. And, according to those in church leadership positions, more full-time preachers are desperately needed. The task of filling thousands of pulpits across the brotherhood continues to be a challenge. For those considering preaching remember the two ingredients: faith and an overwhelming desire. There are many other things to consider, but the person with these two qualifications will have the foundation for a successful ministry. — 610 LaFayette St. S. LaFayette, Ala. 36862.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation
Manager

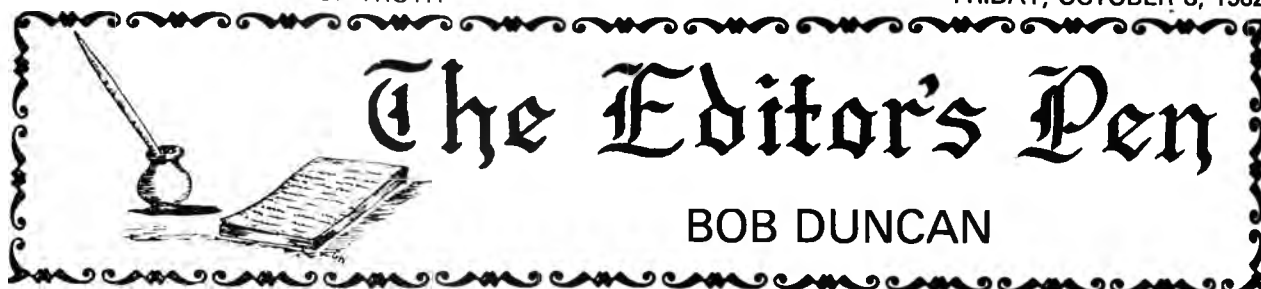
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Authority



BOB DUNCAN

It is safe to say that the major difference between the church of Christ and other churches is a difference in attitudes toward the authority of the scriptures. Roman Catholics believe in the authority of the scriptures, but they consider the scriptures to be only one of several authorities, including church tradition and the utterances of the Pope. Many in the denominational world give lip service to the authority of the scriptures, but allow their dreams, their imaginations, their inner urgings, as well as their creeds to control their actions. Even within the body of Christ divisions have come about because some have mistakenly concluded that their own opinions about the scriptures are authoritative.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE THAT GOD ACCEPTS IN RELIGION ONLY THAT WHICH HE AUTHORIZES. This was true during the Patriarchal Age. The religion of Abel was accepted of God, but the religion of Cain was rejected (Genesis 4:1-8). Two passages in the New Testament make it clear that God gave instructions concerning their worship. The first is Hebrews 11:4: "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." The second is Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." What Abel did, he did by faith; but faith comes through the testimony of the word of God." It follows, then, that what Abel did, he did because of the testimony of the word of God.

It was also true during the Mosaic Age that God accepted in religion only that which he authorized. The worship of Nadab and Abihu was rejected, and they lost their lives because they went beyond the authority of the word of God. Notice the reading of Leviticus 10:1,2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." Observe, please, that the fire they offered was fire "which he had not commanded them" (ASV). Their sin was not in doing that which they had been specifically forbidden to do, like the man who gathered sticks on the sabbath day, and was stoned to death (Numbers 15:32-36). Their sin was in the performance of a religious act which God had not authorized. But they were given the death penalty just the same.

That God accepts in religion only that which he authorizes is abundantly taught in the New Testament. In Matthew 21:23, the chief priests and elders of the Jews said to Jesus: "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" You see, even those hypocritical Jews knew that one must have authority for what he does in religion. And Jesus certainly did not deny their claim that one must have authority for what he does. If Jesus had believed, like some religionists of our day, that all the authority one needs is his own desire to do a thing, his reply to these chief

priests and elders would have been different. He might have replied: "Why, I am doing these things because I enjoy it, and it gives me a good feeling." But he knew that would not suffice.

In John 4:24, Jesus told the woman at the well: "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." "In spirit" has reference to the fact our worship must be from within, and not merely the performing of outward acts. "In truth" means it must be authorized by the word of God, for God's word is truth (John 17:17). Remember, we are emphasizing the fact that God accepts in religion only that which he authorizes.

II John 9 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." What does it mean to abide in the doctrine of Christ? It means to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. What does it mean to transgress, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ? It means simply to refuse to be governed by the authority of the New Testament. Well, what about one who refuses to abide in the doctrine of Christ? He "hath not God," that is, he has no claim on God as being his God. What of the one who abides in the doctrine of Christ? "He hath both the Father and the Son," that is, he sustains that relationship to the Father and the Son which enables him to claim both of them as his own. It seems it would be impossible for the writer to teach more clearly or emphatically than he does in this passage that God accepts in religion only that which he authorizes.

Many there are who have the idea that if a thing is not specifically forbidden, then it must by that very fact be considered as having been authorized. "Where did God say, 'Thou shalt not play instruments of music'?" An argument in Hebrews 7 shows the fallacy of such reasoning. The writer to the Hebrews is showing that Jesus could not have been a priest under the law of Moses, and his argument is this: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (verse 14). Did you catch it? "Moses spake *nothing* concerning priesthood." It was not necessary for Moses specifically to forbid one's being a priest from the tribe of Juda (Judah); the very fact that he said nothing (the same thing the New Testament says about playing mechanical instruments of music in worship) was enough to let the Hebrews writer know that Jesus could not be a priest under the law of Moses.

We are living under the New Testament, and not the Old Testament. When Jesus died the New Testament became of force (Hebrews 9:15-17). The Old Testament was nailed to his cross (Colossians 2:14). Paul pointed out to the Galatians that the law of Moses was to last "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (3:19), and of course, the "seed" is Christ (3:16). For this reason it is not in order to appeal to the Old Testament as an authority for things we do in religion in this Christian age in which we live. What we do in religion must be authorized by the New Testament in order to be accepted of God.

On the Mount of Transfiguration the Father made it plain that Christ, not Moses, is to be heard (Matthew 17:5). After his resurrection, Jesus declared that all power or authority had been given to him (Matthew 18:18). So Jesus is the fountain of authority for all our religious activity, and what he authorizes, he authorizes in the New Testament.

An Interesting Question

W. A. HOLLEY

"What should you do if someone tells you that you are narrow minded?"

Well, refuse to be intimidated. Keep your head and move to the offensive. Your ultimate goal is saving the soul of the inquirer.

Calmly and politely ask him a few questions: Let us see who is narrow-minded? Do you use human creeds as your religious guide? Do you teach and subscribe to the doctrines and commandments of men? Do you seek to force your creed, doctrine, and name upon all who will listen to you? Is what you are doing narrow-minded?

But, what of those who are members of the church of Christ? Are we to be considered narrow-minded when we urge others to follow the only safe course — the Holy Bible?? Are we to be considered narrow-minded simply because we take the Holy Scriptures as our source of authority? In matters of religion the only way we can ever agree and thus reach and maintain unity and harmony is to accept the Bible as our only guide (II Timothy 3:15-17; Revelation 22:18-19).

For example, we wear the name Christian, a divinely given name, a name upon which all true believers can agree and unite (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). For our doctrine, we strive to follow a "thus saith the Lord." Is such narrow-mindedness? (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:5-13; Jude 3).

Was Jesus narrow-minded? Did he permit the Sadducees and Pharisees to teach, without challenge, whatsoever they would? (Matthew 23:1-39). Was Paul narrow-minded when he condemned Elymas the sorcerer for trying to turn away Sergius Paulus from the faith, saying, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:4-12).

Always stand for the truth of God, never compromising it. In attitude toward others be kind and considerate, but do not surrender God's truth (Phillippians 1:17). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Living In The Fear Of The Lord

One of the key verses in the Book of Proverbs is, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). Like so many of the Proverbs we find a contrast in two classes of people: those who "fear" the Lord and the "foolish" who do not.

But what does it mean to "fear the Lord"? Certainly it cannot have the meaning of "frightened of," as a child might be frightened of a large dog and runs away. This word like so many others can be used in more than one sense. Proverbs 1:7 uses the word "fear" as it is used to describe Cornelius and his family at Acts 10:2: "A devout man, and one that *feared* God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (emphasis mine throughout, CD). Obviously, it means "to reverence, be in awe of." In short, it is not the fear of a slave who has an unfeeling master who delights in handing out punishment. Paul insists that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear" (II Timothy 1:7a).

The Bible tells us many things about this "awe inspired fear":

1. *God desires that we have this attitude of heart:* "O that there were such an



CURTIS R. DOWDY

heart in them, that they would *fear* me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! (Deuteronomy 5:29).

2. *It is for our good:* "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to *fear* the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day" (Deuteronomy 6:24).

3. *There is reward:* "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that *feareth* the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13).

4. *Happiness is the result:* "Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that *feareth* the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments" (Psalms 112:1).

We can never be as wise and as knowledgeable as it is possible to be until we have this fear. This being the case we should:

1. *Seek it:* "For that they hated knowledge, and did not *choose the fear* of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproofs" (Proverbs 1:29,30).
2. *Learn it:* "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will *teach you the fear* of the Lord" (Psalms 34:1).
3. *Desire it:* "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy

servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who *desire to fear* thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer" (Nehemiah 1:11).

When one has come to the place of fearing the Lord he will:

1. *Turn from sin and live a holy life:* "Be not wise in thine own eyes: *fear* the Lord, and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3:7).
2. *Find assurance:* "In the fear of the Lord *is strong confidence:* and his children shall have a place of refuge" (Proverbs 14:26).
3. *Be satisfied:* "The *fear* of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall *abide satisfied;* he shall not be visited with evil" (Proverbs 19:23).

One can see that it is absolutely essential that he become one who "fears the Lord" for in doing so we will have learned the secret of LIVING SUCCESSFULLY. "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).

May we therefore have the wisdom to make Psalms 86:11, 12 our daily prayer: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will glorify thy name for evermore." — 1518 Highland Avenue Columbia, Tennessee 38401.

A Resonant Sound

WINFREY HENNESSEE

The skilled Italian violin makers of days gone by, were craftsmen, the likes of which the world shall never see again.

Nothing was spared in selecting the best wood, in order that the tone of the instrument might be true, sweet and mellow. It has been said that at least one craftsman roamed the woods until he found a choice tree. Then, after felling it, only that part of the timber which grew on the north side would be taken. Upon selecting the most likely piece as a candidate he would then tap it gently with some solid object. If the wood gave off the sound of the C note, then it was considered worthy of becoming a part of the violin.

To violin makers, not only must the instrument have a sweet vibrant sound, but must be flawlessly fitted together in order that it might become a valuable piece of art.

A true faithful servant in the Lord's church is much like a fine violin. Such people give off a sound of resonance in whatever they say, and in whatever they do. It is a great joy to watch one work who has become seasoned with age. When we watch this kind of worker it's very much like listening to beautiful music. Envy, murmurings, and gossip, which cause unpleasant vibration in many instruments in the church, are non-existent in the true Christian. On the other hand, there are many who claim to be true disciples of Christ who give off a raspy sound not unlike that of a violin with a loose fingerboard. "This people draw near me with their

mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me" (Isa. 29:13).

Like the violin makers, our Lord is very demanding in selecting leaders to carry out his will. The preacher must be fitted perfectly to the work in order to have pure harmony at a congregation. A "sound post" too far to the right or too far to the left can cause a world of difference in the tone. Discord has no place in a fine tuned instrument.

Also the elders must labor untiringly day after day in the face of criticism, never turning back and never giving up. Like the "bridge" which must be cut and sanded perfectly in order that it shall have a good relationship with the other parts of the violin, the elders must be likewise, in order that unity will abound throughout the congregation. If the "bridge" is not strong, many times it will give way and collapse under the strain.

The deacons must do their job well. Many times they labor under the poorest conditions, receiving only a slap in their face for their efforts. They might go for months with their work seemingly going unnoticed by anyone. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). But then, the linings inside the instrument which contribute greatly to the welfare of the violin are seldom seen by anyone who does not go looking for them. But if something should go wrong, all will notice.

The members of the congregation must also labor while the world points its finger. Those who like to put on a pretty front

soon tire out in their fight against the devil. Wood which has fancy markings on it (known as curly wood) when varnished and hand rubbed to a lustrous finish never fails to put on a display of firey beauty, but in time, does little to enrich the sound. "For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men....They have their reward" (Matt. 6:5).

After one has searched, carved, fitted, sanded and varnished, for weeks, months, or even years, never admitting defeat, even after many failures and disappointments, we are rewarded with a piece of workmanship of which we can be proud. The same is also true when we have the good feeling of being instrumental in bringing someone to Christ.

When we examine a fine violin in which the builder is not ashamed of his work, we will find his name and the year in which it was constructed when we peek through the right sound hole to the inside. A priceless piece of art is much to be admired. Our denominational neighbors who loudly declare there's nothing in a name should sometime try pricing a genuine Stradivarius.

Juvenile Delinquency

Some adolescents become bad eggs because they have been set on too long — or not long enough.

Losing The Saved

The responsibility of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and pleading with sinners to obey this call belongs to the church of the Lord. We are to persist in seeking the lost for Christ. The body of the Lord is to continue the great work which our Savior began while he lived on this earth. We should never grow weary in this challenge. However, there is also a need to recapture the saved who have become lost. This is indeed strange but it is a perpetual problem that plagues and perplexes the spiritual members of any congregation. Interested Christians spend a great deal of time and effort in bringing a lost soul to Christ and at the same time become disturbed when they witness the losing of the saved. In other words, we win a few and lose a few. If we could retain all those who have been baptized into Christ, our church buildings would be filled to capacity. Elders, deacons, preachers, and teachers become frustrated with the loss of members and ask, "Who is to blame?"



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

While there might be a sense in which many are to blame if the proper care has not been shown, the Lord himself dealt with this problem in the parable he gave regarding the sower who went forth to sow the seed as recorded in Luke 8:4-15. The seed (word) was not different as it fell into the various soils (hearts). The difference was in the soils (hearts). Many members, having no real depth in Christ, fall to the various temptations of Satan. Others permit the various cares and pleasures of this world to lure them away from maturity in spiritual matters. They find no time to meditate on God's grace, to pray, to study the scriptures, to attend the periods of worship, to visit the sick and to teach the sinner of the love of God.

How many Christians have wept silently as they have seen souls won by Satan in spite of manifested interest, love and concern. How disheartening to know that the Devil has outsmarted us. Our wayward brethren should observe the warning given in Hebrews 6:4-6, knowing that they are crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh and putting him to an open shame. Those who have wandered away from God as did the prodigal from his father's house in Luke 15 should come to their senses and repent of their sins before it is eternally too late.

The erring child of God is taught to repent of his sins and pray to God for the forgiveness of his trespasses (Acts 8:22; I John 1:8-10).—809 Perry Store Road, Opp, Al. 36467.

He Built A House

EARLENE ROSE

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. (Hebrews 3:4).

When he built his house, he spared not time nor cost. He hired the finest workmen, and no detail was lost To mar the mighty structure; for his house would be so fine That no other house could equal its beauty and design.

When he built his family, he had no time to spare To help them at their work and play, and mold their lives with care.

Today was much too busy; more money was his goal, And not a thought was given to each young precious soul.

A monument to money; so beautiful, yet cold. His children have pursued their lives, while he is growing old

In the house he filled with beauty from the floor up to the dome.

True, he owned a pretty mansion, but he never had a home. — 1701 20th Ave., Northport, Ala. 35476.

ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 14 - 18, 1982

DUB MC CLISH, DIRECTOR

STUDIES IN I CORINTHIANS

SPECIAL FEATURE: DISCUSSION FORUM - MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE
BOOK AND TAPES OF LECTURES AVAILABLE



ADL SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 AM Bert Thompson THE FIRST CORINTHIAN EPISTLE -- AN INTRODUCTION
10:00 AM Dub McClish WOE IS UNTO ME IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL (I Cor. 9:16-17)
5:00 PM Gary Workman WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT IS COME (I Cor. 13:8-13)
6:00 PM Doug Bickenbach BE YE STEADFAST (I Cor. 15:58)
7:00 PM Hugo McCord UNITY AMONG BRETHREN (I Cor. 1:10-17:3-19)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15

9:00 AM Maxie Boren GOD'S WISDOM VERSUS MAN'S WISDOM (I Cor. 1:18-31; 3:18-23)
10:00 AM Dan Billingsley ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES -- I COR. The Catholic State; Does Paul Condone Sexual Intimacy Between Those Engaged? (7:1-2, 36); Are Spiritual Gifts Yet Available? (12:8-11; 1:7-8); Women In The Assembly; Their Head-covering (11:5)
11:00 AM Hugh Fulford EVERYWHERE IN EVERY CHURCH (I Cor. 4:14-17; 11:16; 16:1)
11:00 AM Lois McCord (IN CHAPEL) THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN THE WILL OF GOD. NO. 1 (I Cor. 11:3, 8-9; 14:33-35)
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
1:30 PM DISCUSSION FORUM -- MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE: NOT UNDER BONDAGE (I Cor. 7:15)
Raymond Kelcy The Deserted Saint Is Free From The Marriage Bond And May Remarry Scripturally
Roy Deaver The Deserted Saint Is Not Free From The Marriage Bond And May Not Remarry Scripturally
3:30 PM Robert Taylor PUT AWAY THE WICKED MAN (I Cor. 5:1-13)
4:30 PM James Meadows DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN I CORINTHIANS No. Not To Eat -- Lord's Supper, Common Meal Or Both? (5:11); The Virgin-Daughter Or Lover? (7:36-38); Only In The Lord (7:39); How Far Must A "Strong" Christian Go To Avoid Offending A "Weak" Christian? (8:9-13)
5:30 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Windell Winkler IMMORALITY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (I Cor. 6:9-20)
8:00 PM Garland Elkins THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST -- FOUNDATION OF OUR HOPE (I Cor. 15:1-19)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

9:00 AM Roger Johnson DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN I CORINTHIANS Special: "Illumination" For Christians? (2:14-16); The Temple of God -- The Whole Corinthian Church Or The Individual? (3:16-17); Did Paul Expect The Lord's Coming In The Lifetime of Those Corinthians? (4:5) THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (I Cor. 14:1-5, 22)
10:00 AM J. Noel Merideth ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES -- I COR. Paul And The Second Coming (1:7; 4:5); Church Discipline And Corporal Punishment (5:5); Situation Ethics (6:12; 10:23)
11:00 AM Lois McCord (IN CHAPEL) THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN THE WILL OF GOD. NO. 1 (I Cor. 11:3, 8-9; 14:33-35)
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
1:30 PM DISCUSSION FORUM -- MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE: ABIDE IN THAT CALLING (I Cor. 7:17-24)
James Woodroof The Marriage That Exists At The Time Of A Person's Call To Christ Is To Be Continued With God's Approval
Roy Lanier, Jr. The Marriage That Exists At The Time Of A Person's Call To Christ Is To Be Continued With God's Approval Only If It Was A Scriptural Marriage To Begin With
3:30 PM Goebel Music THE GOSPEL -- GOD'S COMPLETED REVELATION TO MANKIND (I Cor. 2:6-16)

4:30 PM B. B. James

DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN I CORINTHIANS Does Paul Contradict Himself On Meat Offered To Idols? (8:8; 10:20-22); Woman's Veil, Shorn Head, Because Of The Angels (11:5-10); Regular Lord's Day Assembly Or Special Assembly? (14:26-35); In What Assembly May A Woman Pray Or Prophesy? (11:5; 14:34-35)
5:30 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Richard Black LEARN NOT TO GO BEYOND THE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN (I Cor. 4:6-13)
8:00 PM Hugo McCord A MORE EXCELLENT WAY (I Cor. 12:31; 13:1-13)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

9:00 AM Rex Turner, Sr. VICTORY OVER THE LAST ENEMY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (I Cor. 15:26, 50-57)
10:00 AM J. Noel Merideth ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES -- I COR. "Soul-Sleeping" (15:20, 51); Sanctification, "Second Work Of Grace" (1:1); The Holy Kiss (16:20); Will False Teachers Be Saved, Though Their Hearers Be Lost? (3:10-15)
11:00 AM Hardeman Nichols THE CHALLENGE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE (I Cor. 9:19-27)
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
1:30 PM DISCUSSION FORUM --MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE: COVENANT AND NON-COVENANT PASSAGES (I Cor. 7:10-15)
James D. Bales (Ed Sanders will read ms. but disclaims view) Thomas B. Warren God's Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage Laws Do Not Apply To The Alien Sinner, But Only To Those Who Are In "Covenant Relationship" With God (I.e., Christians)
God's Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage Laws Apply To The Alien Sinner, As Well As To Those Who Are In "Covenant Relationship" With God (I.e., Christians); "Is It The Case That No Accountable Person Living Today Will Or Can Be Saved?"
3:30 PM Richard Black A STUDY OF TONGUES--WHAT WERE THEY? (I Cor. 12:14)
4:30 PM Gary Workman IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME (I Cor. 11:23-33)
5:30 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Bert Thompson THE FIRST MAN, ADAM (I Cor. 15:45)
8:00 PM Rex Turner, Sr. THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN THE WILL OF GOD (I Cor. 11:3, 8-9; 14:33-35)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18

9:00 AM Jack Gray PUTTING THE POWER BACK INTO PREACHING (I Cor. 2:1-5; 4:18-21)
10:00 AM John Waddey ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES -- I COR. Paul's Opinions (7:7, 25, 40); Does The End Justify The Means? (9:20-22) Eating In The Church (11:22, 34); Baptized For The Dead (15:29)
11:00 AM Roy Deaver THE CORINTHIAN COLLECTION -- GOD'S FINANCIAL PLAN FOR HIS CHURCH (I Cor. 16:1-2)
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
1:30 PM DISCUSSION FORUM --MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE: THE RIGHTS OF THE GUILTY PARTY (Matt. 19:9)
The Guilty Party In A Divorce (I.e., The Fornicator) Has The Scriptural Right To Remarry
The Guilty Party In A Divorce (I.e., The Fornicator) Does Not Have The Scriptural Right To Remarry WITH WHAT MANNER OF BODY? (I Cor. 15:35-49)
3:30 PM Johnny Ramsey ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES--I COR. Baptism Was Not Important To Paul (1:14, 17); Man Must Have Special Illumination From The Holy Spirit (2:14); Do Our Works In The Body Affect The Destiny Of Our Souls? (3:15); Is The Personal Righteousness Of Christ Imputed To The Christian? (1:30)
5:30 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Johnny Ramsey SOME ANSWERS TO PRE-MILLENNIALISM'S ERRORS (I Cor. 15:22-28, 52)
8:00 PM Bobby Duncan STAND FAST IN THE FAITH (I Cor. 16:13)



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1982

NUMBER 42

"He Spake, And It Was Done"

God's word is powerful! "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:6-9). It should fill us with awe to read in Genesis one that God "said, Let there be light; and there was light!" Repeatedly after God said for a thing to happen, we read; "and it was so!"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The beloved late Brother N. B. Hardeman, when he was 80 years old, delivered the 1954 *Lectures to Young Preachers* at Abilene Christian College (now University). In one of them he recited the following poem about the creation. It is from, *The First Mortgage*, by E. U. Cook.

Away out there, alone and above,
Without a thing to make it of,
The WORLD was made without a flaw,
Without a hammer, or a saw;
Without a bit of wood, or stone;
Without a bit of flesh, or bone;
Without a board, or nail, or screw--
Or, anything to nail it to!
Without a foothold, or a trace
Of anything at all but space!
The only thing the Lord could do
Was simply speak a word or two--
And then - - without apparent cause!--
A thing that was not, now then was!
And if the story told is true
The WORLD came boldly into view
And stood out there, alone, in space
Without a blade of grass, or trace
Of life, or living thing, or light--

A bare old WORLD, in darkest night!

Yes, "the word of God is quick and powerful . . ."

(Heb. 4:12). The gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). — 1000 Saint John Road Rt. 9 Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

"As In The Days Of Noah"

Genesis 6:13 reads, "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." The writer describes the earth as corrupt, contaminated, rotten, debased, perverted and depraved. It was filled with violence through and through. This condition brought God to the point of repentance that he had ever made man, causing him to determine man's destruction.



WAYNE COBB

The sin that corrupted the earth in Noah's day is still working destruction in our world today. Our land has become a land filled with violence. America, the "land of the free and the home of the brave," has become the murder capital of the world. Over 20,000 human beings are murdered every year in the United States. There has been a tremendous jump in vicious crimes, especially crimes involving teenage criminals. By any measurement, crime has become ominous. It has become dangerous for law abiding citizens to walk the streets in many of our cities.

Why do we have so much crime in this country? One of the main factors is the current court attitude which concerns itself with the rights of the guilty over the rights of the victims. The criminal justice system

has broken down. Crime experts estimate of all reported major criminal offenses, only 7 percent lead to arrests, only 2 percent to convictions, only 1 percent to prisons, and none to the death penalty. The chance of being punished for a serious crime in the U.S. is only 1 in 100.

Lenient court decisions have taken all the fear out of the law. There is absolutely no such thing as "swift, sure punishment" in our judicial system today. According to the *Birmingham News*, from December 1980 through March 1981, the Pardons and Parole Board released 560 convicts, 22 of them serving "life sentences." Of those paroled, 30 were convicted of second degree murder. They served an average of four years and nine months. The rapists paroled served three years, six months; robbers four and a half years; drug offenders were paroled after an average of one year, nine months of time served.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 describes our present situation: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." As long as our criminal justice (?) system fails to move quickly and effectively to punish evildoers, the crime wave will continue to grow worse. — P.O. Box 2161 Florence, Alabama 35630.

Prayers can't be answered unless they are prayed.

Very few old people are qualified to discuss juvenile delinquency. They've been away from it too long.

Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, fifteen cents per copy payable by the church; on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$4.00 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Editor's Pen
BOB DUNCAN

"Those Who Know It Best"

A beautiful old song we sometimes sing in our worship contains the following words in the third verse: "I love to tell the story, / For those who know it best, / Seem hungering and thirsting / To hear it like the rest. . . ." How true these words are! Those who are most familiar with the word of God are the ones who enjoy hearing it proclaimed the most.



BOB DUNCAN

Those who know the word of God best are the ones we can expect to attend the services of gospel meetings. Those who know less about the word of God and who need to learn more will likely stay at home and watch television.

Those who attend the Bible classes on Sunday morning and Wednesday night are the ones who generally know more about the Bible than others. The fact that those who need the Bible classes most are the least likely to come is a sad one.

Who attends Bible lectureships at our Christian colleges and at other places? Those who know more about the Bible. How many times has some gospel preacher attending a lectureship, upon hearing some particular speech, wished—Oh, how he wished—that the members of the church where he preaches could have been present to hear that speech?

If a congregation engages some good man to teach the members how to do personal work, who can we expect to attend? Why, those who are already the most effective personal workers in the congregation, of course. If it engages a man to teach on the subject of church leadership, who can we expect to attend? Why, those who are already doing the best job in a leadership role. If one should be engaged to teach a series of lessons on stewardship, who would attend and appreciate it most? Why, those who are already the best stewards in the congregation.

Why is it this way? There are two reasons: (1) Those who know the most about the Bible are the ones who can most enjoy hearing about it, just as those who know most about other subjects are the ones who can most enjoy hearing about these subjects. If a lesson on "The History of Stock Car Racing in America," was given this writer likely would not attend, for it would probably be dull subject matter for one who has never been to a stock car race. Even so those who know little about the Bible find Bible teaching quite dull.

(2) Those who know most about the Bible are those who more keenly recognize their need for increased Bible knowledge. A witch doctor of a savage tribe is not putting forth any effort to learn more than he already knows about modern medical techniques, for he simply has not the knowledge to be aware of his own ignorance. He thinks he already knows all there is to know. He would not likely be a candidate

for admission to any kind of medical school. So it is with those who do not take advantage of the opportunities that are theirs to further their knowledge of the word of God through attendance at Bible classes, gospel meetings and special lectureships. They think they are so mature in their knowledge that it would be a total waste of time for them to attend. After all, what could possibly be taught that they do not already know?

Open Or Closed Communion?

When visitors attend our periods of worship on the Lord's day, they quickly observe that we partake of the Lord's Supper as part of our homage to God. Some ask, "How often do you partake of the Lord's Supper?" The reply is that we partake of it each first day of every week (Acts 20:7). Another question is often asked: "Do you practice open or closed communion?" That is an interesting question. The fact being that the Bible does not use such terms, it behooves us to inquire as to those people who may and do participate in the communion of the Lord.

When Paul was addressing this particular subject in his first epistle to the church in Corinth, he wrote, "But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup" (11:28). Thus, whether an individual partakes of the supper is a personal matter in this regard. In the churches of Christ, there are no brethren standing by to inform people who may and who may not partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper. That responsibility is not in the realm of decision making by church leaders. It is an individual matter. In this sense, the church of the Lord does not practice open or closed communion. Each person must decide for himself/herself.

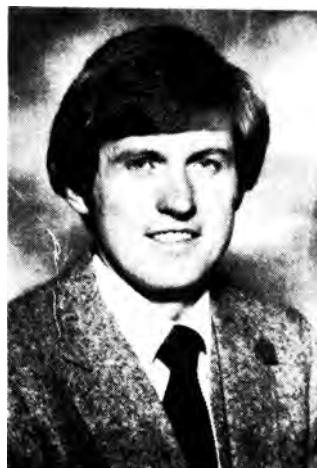
However, we must not construe this answer to mean that all commune with the Lord when they partake of the bread and of the fruit of the vine. To eat of the bread and have communion with the Lord may be in fact two different matters. Merely because one goes through the physical act of eating and drinking the Lord's Supper does not mean that the participator has actually communed with the Lord. The apostle Paul said that a man who discerns not the body of Jesus "eateth" and drinketh judgment unto himself" (I Corinthians 11:29). He also said that "whosoever shall eat the bread and drink of the cup



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

Why I Became A Christian

For every action we take, there is a reason. Sometimes our reasons are good, rational, sound judgments, and sometimes our reasons are not as rational as they ought to be. For example, when confronted with the decision to obey the gospel, each person has a reason for the decision he makes. On September 4, 1966, I decided to put on my Lord in baptism. Here are five reasons I made such a decision:



RICKY PHILLIPS

1. IN ORDER TO GO TO HEAVEN. There are several places (across this country and around the world) that I would like to visit. But none of them are as appealing as a home eternal in heaven. Heaven is a place of no sin, suffering, pain or separation. It is a place where only love rules. Man has always sought "Utopia," a perfect place where peace exists. This is what awaits the faithful Christian. I know it awaits me because Jesus said that he went to prepare a place for me in heaven (John 14:1-3). This is certainly a valid reason for obeying the gospel.

2. TO KEEP FROM GOING TO HELL. Just as there are some places I would like to visit, there are also some places where I would hate to go. Think of the worst place you can imagine. Hell is far worse than the limits of our imagination. Everything that is good about heaven is absent from hell. It is a place of torment, fire, darkness, and eternal punishment. Who will be in hell? Those who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:8). To avoid torment is also a good reason to obey.

3. TO BE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS. This is one of the greatest benefits of being in the Lord's body. I am not alone. God is with me, and I have fellow Christians to share my joys and

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 4

The Importance Of Possessing *The Mind Of Christ*

(No. 1)

All true religion is connected with Christ. Its doctrine he revealed. Its principles he exhibited. Its blessings he provided. Its duties he enforced. Its spirit he ever manifested. The Christian, then, is one who believes this doctrine, who is influenced by these principles, who enjoys these blessings, who discharges these duties, and who evinces this spirit. And so, this is recognized in our text, where the apostle says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). In reference to this mind, let us exhibit its nature, examine the means of its attainment, and evaluate the importance of its possession.



JOHN G. SHAVER

What is the mind which was in Christ Jesus? It was a mind distinguished for spiritual knowledge. He was the true light. He knew all things, and in him was hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

It was a mind of holy obedience (Heb. 5:8-9). He loved God's law. It was his delight. Every desire, purpose and thought was in pleasing conformity to the spotless mind of God.

It was a mind of pure and fervent devotion. The whole career of Christ was distinguished for this characteristic. He held the closest communion with God. He spent much time in prayer. All his miracles and discourses were connected with prayer. It was displayed when he was baptized, when he was tempted, when he was transfigured, when in the garden and when he hung on the cross. Yes, devotion was the element in which he lived, and in which he died.

It was a mind of unvaried meekness. He definitely excelled Moses in this. Under circumstances of the greatest provocation, when reproached, when classed with demons, when associated with publicans, harlots, and thieves, he displayed the most perfect self possession and composure. He never reviled his persecutors; he never railed. He never displayed unhallowed passion, or a spirit of revenge. He wept over his vilest enemies, and prayed for his murderers.

It was a mind of the greatest self-abasement. Though Lord of angels, God blessed forever, he became a servant, yea, the servant of servants. He affectionately served his enemies. He served the world, the poorest and vilest of mankind; he condescended to the lowest of offices; he washed the feet of his disciples; he avoided the praises and honors the people desired to confer upon him.

It was a mind of constant energy and activity. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will. He went about doing good. His whole ministry was one scene of constant energy and active engagement. His whole soul was devoted to it. His work and life terminated together.

It was a mind of unexampled benevolence, tenderness and pity. This caused him to engage in his redeeming work, and caused him to finish it. He loved mankind. His soul was absorbed in deepest interest for them. He gave his life for their ransom, and thus manifested to the world a benevolence beyond parallel and beyond description. His life was benevolence embodied and exhibited. His words, his thoughts, his miracles, his prayers, his death, all attest to the incomprehensibility of his pity and love. And how tender he was to the weakness and infirmities of mankind!

It was a mind of holy patience and resignation. He was never known to murmur one murmuring word. He was resigned to all his Father's

will. He freely drank the bitter cup for you and me.

These are some of the features that distinguished the mind of Christ. And this is the mind which should be also in all who are called by his name, and profess

to be his disciples. Let the mind of Christ be clearly examined and studied by his followers. Let it be constantly before our eyes, that we may always be looking to Jesus. Let conformity to it be the anxious desire of our hearts. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL 33566.

Why I Became A Christian

Continued from page 2

my sorrows. Jesus prayed that we all be one, as he and God are one (John 17:20,21). We, being many members, come together to form one body (I Corinthians 12:20). In this body we have fellowship, as we walk in the light (I John 1:7). We need each other, and this is a reason to become a Christian.

4. IN ORDER TO RECEIVE GOD'S BLESSINGS. God gives some blessings to both good and bad men, things such as sunshine, rain and other gifts of nature. Yet the blessings promised to the child of God are far greater than the normal blessings of nature. James wrote that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). If we seek first God's kingdom, he will supply all our needs (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19). He has promised to give us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3 Romans 8:28). With such benefits, how

could one refuse to become a part of God's family?

5. BECAUSE GOD TOLD ME TO. Jesus made clear the need for obeying his words. In Matthew 7:21, he said that we have to do more than call him "Lord, Lord," but we must do the will of his Father. In John 14:15, he said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Hebrew writer said that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:9). God has told us through his word what we are to do in order to be saved. Even if there were no other reasons or benefits, I would obey for this reason: God told me to.

There are many more logical and wise reasons to obey the gospel than to remain lost. As Christians, we have the responsibility to let the rest of the world know about these reasons. — P.O. Box 396 Oakman, Ala. 35579.

The Danger Of Things Becoming Common

I read that during the Watergate hearings, the Xerox company had several employees to watch them on television. They were to see if anyone requested a copy of any document. If the person requesting the copy said, "Xerox this for me," they were instructed to notify the person that in the future he was to say, "Make a copy of this on a Xerox machine." Why this watchfulness? The term "Xerox" is becoming synonymous with the term, "To copy." The reason the company was so careful is that a brand name that becomes synonymous with a product can lose its copyright. "Aspirin" was originally the brand name for medicine. It became so common, that the government took away the copyright, and all now call the pain killer, "aspirin."

Is there a danger with us spiritually? Do we become so accustomed to something that it loses its uniqueness? *God's name* is unique. The ten commandments strictly prohibited it's being taken in vain. The name which symbolized the nature of God, was to be kept holy, or separate. A Christian must be careful not to be influenced by the world's attitude toward God's name (and therefore his nature). The world has let it become common to them. Let God's name be used in worship and praise. Keep it from the common



ANCIL JENKINS

use of slang or profanity.

Worship is so much a part of the life of the Christian that it takes effort to keep it from becoming common. The experience may seem no different unless we recognize that we come into God's presence when we come together to worship. Prayer, communion, and the sermon should bring one to a closer relation with God. Let's strive to keep "Amazing Grace" from becoming no more than "Row, Row, Your Boat."

People are unique. God's lesson to Peter was that he should call no person "common." Man alone of God's creation possesses such stature. Man is unique, possessing a soul and bearing the image of God. Although he may be disturbed by a person's appearance or conduct, let us never forget he is precious in God's sight.

Keeping things that are unique from becoming common is one of the meanings of "holy" or "sanctified." Let us be careful to sanctify things God regards as holy.—1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Let's all bow our heads and pray as follows: "Lord, help me to admit it when I am wrong, and make me easier to live with when I am right."

There doesn't seem to be any justice. If you fill out an income-tax return correctly, you go to the poorhouse. If you don't, you go to jail.

What most people pray for when they arrive at church on Sunday is a parking place.

Juvenile delinquency would disappear if kids followed their parent's advice instead of their examples.

“Preacher Who Handled Snakes To Show His Faith Dies”

W. A. HOLLEY

Date line, South Charleston, W. Va. (AP) — “A rural minister who frequently showed his faith by handling snakes is dead after being bitten on the right wrist by a rattlesnake” (The Birmingham News, August 27, 1982). What a sad and melancholy report! A life thrown away because of ignorance!!

The Rev. John Lee Holbrook, 38, of Oceana, was “bitten by a rattlesnake during Sunday evening services at the Lord Jesus Church in Jesus’ Name, in Mullensville. Can a sensible person imagine snake-handling’s being a part of Scriptural worship? We recognize that singing, prayer, Bible study, the Lord’s supper and giving are Scriptural worship (Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 5:19), but where is the book, chapter and verse that authorizes “snake-handling” as a part of Bible worship? We challenge any preacher to find Bible authority for such a repulsive and revolting practice!! Ancient Israel worshipped a brass serpent but Hezekiah caused it to be destroyed (Number 21:4-9; II Kings 18:1-8).

Mr. Rogers, the coroner, said, “that Holbrook’s right arm, from the wrist to shoulder, had turned black, and there was some indication of internal bleeding.” Sometimes such a foolish practice as herein described is justified on the ground that Paul (Acts 28:1-7) was bitten by a “venomous beast” or viper (ASV), and “felt no harm.” This certainly was not the case with Mr. Holbrook.

Paul and Mr. Holbrook are in two different classes: Paul was an apostle endowed with supernatural gifts (Acts 19:1-7; 20:9-10). Mr. Holbrook had no supernatural gifts. When bitten by the viper, Paul’s hand did not swell up nor did he die as a result of the viper’s bite. Mr. Holbrook’s “right arm, from the wrist to shoulder turned black and there was some indication of internal bleeding,” which resulted in his death.

Mr. Holbrook was an unfortunate, misguided preacher, who died because he knew not the truth of God. Had he known the truth of God he would never have become involved in the foolish act of handling snakes as worship to God. In fact, he succumbed to the very same temptation in which Satan sought to entrap Jesus Christ, but which temptation Jesus resisted (Matthew 4:5-7). Jesus did not think that God would protect him if he violated God’s word. Evidently, Mr. Holbrook thought that he could tempt God and get away with it! The Devil wanted Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple with the expectation that God would intervene and thus save him from the fall. Mr. Holbrook wanted to let the serpent bite him with the expectation that God would not permit him to die — BUT HE DID!! Mr. Holbrook paid the supreme penalty for his ignorance!!

A woman, apparently, a member of Mr. Holbrook’s church said that Holbrook had routinely handled snakes as a demonstration of his faith. But Mr. Holbrook’s foolish act did not demonstrate his faith, rather it demonstrated his glaringly absurd lack of knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

The woman, who did not want to be identified when asked why Mr. Holbrook handled snakes in religious services, said, “We do it because the Bible tells us so.” She cited Mark 16:18 as authority for their practice. But neither this passage nor any other furnishes authority for “snake-handling in religious services” today. Mark 16:17-20 has

reference to the apostles. It does not refer to men in the twentieth century. Actually, the only example of a Christian’s being bitten by a serpent is Paul, which was not deliberate but accidental!

For the benefit of our readers we shall quote Mark 16:17-20. “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with other tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

Preacher, do you believe these words? Yes! Do they apply to you? No! No! Did these words apply to Mr. Holbrook? No, indeed! Had these words applied to him, he would still be alive, in all probability. God’s word did not fail, rather it was Mr. Holbrook’s misapplication that failed. Even those who claim miraculous powers today do not claim nor demonstrate all these signs or gifts. As a general rule, they limit their efforts to tongues and healing, although a few try to go beyond this and claim to demonstrate the power to take up serpents and to cast out devils.

If this Scripture (Mark 16:17-20) were applicable in Mr. Holbrook’s case, why, when it was apparent that he was in trouble, did not his cohorts lay hands on him and thus heal him?? Why did Mr. Holbrook die? we ask his supporters??

What is the meaning of these verses? They have to do with the miraculous age of the church when the New Testament in written form did not exist. At the first and for several years thereafter, when the word of God was in inspired men, it was necessary for supernatural gifts or miracles to be exercised by men equipped by spiritual gifts. For example, the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, thus making it possible for them, through the laying on of their hands, to confer spiritual gifts on others (Acts 2:1-4, 43; 8:15-19; 19:6). There were nine of these gifts (I Corinthians 12:7-11).

Why were these gifts given to certain ones? To make it possible to spread the truth with alacrity and ease (Acts 8:4-12); to show that

the preachers and teachers spoke by the authority of God (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4); to make it possible for the infant church to be edified (I Corinthians 14:1-3), and to spark the greatest possible interest in the men and the gospel that they preached (Acts 3:1-11).

Does the Bible teach that these spiritual gifts were/are to continue unto the end of the world? It certainly does not! It is strongly suggested that I Corinthians 13:8-13 be carefully read. Observe: “But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” Do these words mean that in heaven prophecy will fail? that in heaven all shall be dumb? and that all saved in heaven will be idiots? That is what some holiness preachers have argued with this scribe. For shame! What a heaven that would be!

According to logic, if holiness preachers claim the nine spiritual gifts today, they should be willing to demonstrate their powers. If these preachers can heal and speak in tongues, why do they not also claim supernatural knowledge, wisdom, and the power of prophecy? In such instances, they would be inspired men, able to speak and write their own Bible. In I Corinthians 12:7-11, we have listed nine spiritual gifts. In I Corinthians 13:8-13, Paul is writing about some things that shall “abide” and some things that shall be *done away*. These two references go together. We must understand one in the light of the other.

When did supernatural gifts cease? The answer is clear. When God’s divine revelation had been completely revealed and written in God’s Holy Book (John 20:30-31; Ephesians 3:1-6; Acts 1:16; II Timothy 3:15-17), miracles ceased!!

Inasmuch as there were but two unique cases of Holy Spirit baptism in apostolic times (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-45), and that miraculous gifts could only be received through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 8:17-17; 19:6; II Timothy 1:6), it follows that since there are no apostles on earth today, no spiritual gifts are being received. It is a shame that Mr. Holbrook and his kind have not learned this lesson.—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Open Or Closed Communion?

Continued from page 2

of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord” (I Corinthians 11:27). One may be a hypocrite through the week, eat the supper on Sunday and never commune with his Lord. An individual may harbor hatred in his heart, have his mind centered on carnal matters while eating the supper and never commune with the Lord. Rather, these persons bring guilt and judgment upon their very souls.

Furthermore, a person who has never been “born of water and the Spirit” cannot truly commune with the Lord in the supper, though he may eat of the bread and drink of the cup. When Jesus instituted the supper, he mentioned that he would not “drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day

when I drink it new with you in my father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29). The “church of God” which was in Corinth was instructed as to how to partake of the supper in a scriptural manner (I Corinthians 11:23-29). Therefore, he that is not in the church/kingdom cannot possibly scripturally and actually commune with the Lord, even though he may eat of the bread and drink of the cup. This act is a spiritual one. This wonderful privilege is for the Christians, children of God, members of the body of Christ. Therefore, the person who is not in the proper and right spiritual relationship with the Lord cannot enjoy the communion of the Lord while eating the supper.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-700)

Week forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1982

NUMBER 43

“Deathbed Conversion: How Real Is It?”

W. A. HOLLEY

The above caption was the title of an article printed in the (Jasper, Alabama) *Daily Mountain Eagle*, Friday, September 24, 1982. The article was written by Dr. James B. Crichton, Mid-South Bible College.

Dr. Crichton says, “Newspapers and magazines, religious histories and biographies, have all carried at some time stories of deathbed conversions...or ‘foxhole religion’.”

Dr. Crichton raises some interesting questions: “How good is deathbed conversion?” “Can a man get right with God in the final hour of his life?” But, tragically, the good doctor answers both questions incorrectly.

Luke 23:39-43, is used as a proof-text to support the idea that deathbed conversion is taught in the Bible. But this text falls far short of lending even the slightest support to any Scriptural idea of Biblical conversion. We shall quote the afore-mentioned text that you may see just what is said: “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Now, dear reader, there can be no doubt that the penitent thief was saved. But is this an example for us today? We think not! This event took place while Jesus Christ was still alive. As long as Jesus lived, he could dispense his blessing, with conditions or without conditions, as he saw fit.

We now quote a vital passage which will help the honest inquirer learn the truth regarding the doctor’s contention. “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of

force *after* men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth” (Hebrews 9:16-17).

What does the passage quoted above teach? It teaches that a will or testament does not go into force until after its testator is *dead!* Jesus is not living personally on the earth now! It is impossible for one now living upon the earth to put oneself in the same position occupied by the thief!

The thief lived *before* the cross; we live *after* the cross. The thief lived when Jesus was alive in the flesh; we live *after* the precious blood of Christ was shed upon the cross. The thief lived *before* the Great Commission was given (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-49); we live *after* the Great Commission has gone into effect. The thief lived *before* the church was established; we live *after* the church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection (Acts 2:1-47). The thief lived *before* men were commanded to believe and “repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38); but we (all accountable people) are divinely commanded to believe, repent, confess Jesus Christ and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. Jesus will not nullify his word (John 10:35).

Yes, the dying thief was saved; he lived *before* Jesus died, and so Jesus personally forgave his sins (Cf. Mark 2:10). Now, however, the Lord’s New Testament, sealed by his own precious blood which was shed in his death (John 19:33-34; Hebrews 9:12, 15-17), contains the conditions of salvation to which all must bow, if salvation is to be enjoyed (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

The good doctor has missed the mark! He would have done well to have practiced the proper division of the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15). Listen to him: “A man can be

made immediately right with God simply by turning to Christ as Saviour. And moreover, a man can be made fit for heaven apart from any good works or religious rites.” We ask, Where is the Scripture that so teaches? Can a man be saved without faith? Did not Jesus teach (John 6:28-29) that faith is a work? Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him.” Was Jesus wrong? Even a “Doctor” should know better!

We recognize that no man can be saved by “the works of the law” (Romans 3:20). Neither can any man be saved on the basis of his moral goodness (Romans 3:9, 23; 6:23). But there are works of faith demanded (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16:26; Galatians 5:6), and to which all sinners must submit!

More, the good doctor adds, “This dying thief was saved by God’s grace...through faith...plus nothing.” Just here, the writer of the article which we are reviewing contradicts himself. He says, “Here was a thief, guilty of capital crime. Furthermore, before he repented he had mocked Jesus.” What? Did not the author say, “This dying thief was saved by God’s grace...through faith...plus nothing” Just where does grace and repentance come in, if the thief was saved “through faith...plus nothing”? If one can be saved “through faith...plus nothing,” then James is a liar! “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). If one is justified “by faith only,” where does repentance, confession of Christ, and the blood of Christ come in? If one is saved by “faith only,” where does “God’s grace” come in?

The writer of the article says, “No man can earn heaven by good works or religious rites. We come to Jesus Christ with our need, not our prescription. We come to Jesus Christ with our sins, not our good deeds....” Certainly,

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation
Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

“Deathbed Conversion: How Real Is It?”

Continued from page 1

salvation cannot be earned; no one can be saved by works of human merit (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). But there are “works of God,” i.e., works which God commanded and which a sinner must do (John 6:28-29). As here indicated, belief is a work; so is repentance (Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10) and also baptism (Colossians 2:12 ASV). No, we cannot come to Christ with “our prescription,” but we must submit to the Lord’s prescription for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21).

The author also says, with regard to the thief, “the Spirit of God worked a miracle of grace in his heart; and in the last hours of his life, he turned to Christ and trusted Him as Saviour.” This is pure poppy-cock! The Spirit of God has never worked a miracle of grace in the heart of any sinner!! The Holy Spirit revealed the word of God to the apostles and to others, and that word was to be preached to sinners, so that sinners could believe and obey the truth and be saved (II Timothy 3:15-17; I Peter 1:22-25; Hebrews 5:8-9). If “the Spirit of God worked a miracle of grace” in the thief’s heart, why do we have the word of God? Since God is no respecter of persons, if he “worked a miracle of grace” in one person’s heart to save him, he would be under obligation to “work a miracle of grace” in the hearts of all sinners. If not, why not?? This would amount to universalism (Acts 10:34-35).

We know what Dr. Crichton says, but we also know what the Holy Bible says. We have far more confidence in what the Bible says than we have in what the doctor says. Let the honest reader remember that the thief lived and died under the law of Moses, which law does not apply to us. We live and shall die under the law of the New Testament, which law never applied to the thief. We close the discussion with a quotation: “Gashmu saith.” Ponder its meaning and make proper application.—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Al 35580.



Poison



BOB DUNCAN

At this writing seven are dead because of cyanide poisoning taken accidentally in what was the number one brand of pain reliever in America. And at this writing it is not known just how, or when, or by whom the cyanide found its way into the Extra Strength Tylenol. An even greater mystery to some is, Why? The nation-wide alarm over this matter is natural, and certainly is as it should be. Human

life is valuable, and the concern of a nation over this matter helps strengthen our belief that there is still a great deal of good in America and Americans.

We cannot help thinking how much “poison” has been mixed in with the gospel of Christ to create a deadly dose for those who receive it. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

The truth will make men free (John 8:32). Through the truth we are begotten to become sons of God (James 1:18). Obedience to the truth enables one’s soul to be purified (I Peter 1:22). The truth sanctifies (John 17:17). But just as an effective pain reliever becomes deadly poison when mixed with a little cyanide, truth mixed with error becomes a lie. And men cannot be made free by a lie. They cannot be begotten to become sons of God by a lie. They cannot be sanctified or have their souls purified by a lie.

Honesty and sincerity do not guarantee the desired results. We have every reason to believe that each person who died as the result of taking the pain reliever into which had been injected cyanide was honest and sincere in thinking the pain reliever was exactly what it was represented on the package as being. Each one was honestly and sincerely mistaken, though through no fault of his own. In religion, certainly one must be honest and sincere. But just being honest and sincere does not guarantee the desired results. Look at the emphasis on *truth* in the passages already cited. Jesus also said: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22,23). Paul, in II Thessalonians 2:10-12, makes it plain that those who believe a lie will be damned. One may be honest and sincere and still be wrong — *dead* wrong.

Most of those who esteem religious error as a matter of small concern do so because of what they mistakenly think of as confidence in God and his Son, Jesus Christ, who is the author of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9). What they fail to see is that, while the

gospel of Christ is pure and holy, as God has given it, it does not remain pure and holy when men tamper with it, and mix their doctrines with it. The people of our nation have confidence in the company which manufactures Tylenol, and in the parent company, Johnson & Johnson. But the fact these are reliable companies does not guarantee their products will remain harmless when some demented individual tampers with them after they leave the factory. We cannot blame the manufacturers of Extra Strength Tylenol for the evil effects of that product after it left the factory and some maniac mixed cyanide with it. We certainly could not expect the manufacturer to guarantee the product to be harmless, no matter what might be mixed with it after it left the factory. But some seem to think they can take the gospel as God gave it, mix whatever they want to with it, and God will see to it that it is productive only of good. The Bible teaches the very opposite. “For I testify unto every many that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18,19).

It is probably worth noticing that, in the efforts being put forth to avoid any further deaths from this poisoned product, very plain language is being used. The name of the product has been called over and over again, and the warning has been sounded abroad that certain packages have been known to be laced with cyanide, and that some have died. It is true that some have become quite alarmed, but that is exactly as it should be. Shouldn’t our warnings against the admixture of false doctrines with the truth be sounded clearly? Do you believe in calling names? Is it not in order to tell people plainly what poison doctrine will do? And we should hope they will become alarmed to the extent they will take care not to be deceived into believing a lie.

One final note is in order. Nation-wide, Extra Strength Tylenol has been banned from the shelves of the stores. I suppose this is a necessary precaution, at least until the mystery is solved and all danger is eliminated. No doubt, less than one in a million packages contains any poison at all. But for safety’s sake the good must be eliminated with the bad. Not so the gospel of Christ. The fact some have preached and taught poison doctrine does not mean one cannot be sure of the truth. All danger can be eliminated if each one will read his Bible and carefully observe all things, and only the things, that are taught therein.

Crime’s story would be shorter if the sentences were longer.

Do you remember the “good old days” when a juvenile delinquent was a boy who played the saxophone too loud?

All that the overwhelming majority of people are doing about juvenile delinquency is reading about it.

Be kind to everybody. You never know who might show up on the jury at your trial.

The Importance Of Possessing The *Mind Of Christ*

(No. 2)

In the former article we noticed the nature of that mind which was in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). Let us now consider the means of its attainment.

We can obtain like-mindedness with Christ by studying him as our model. We must ever keep him before our eyes, and be constantly recalling to ourselves the lovely and amiable traits of character which he possessed. We must make ourselves familiar with all the holy footsteps of his life, and meditate upon all the circumstances in which he was placed, and the spirit he manifested upon all occasions.

We can obtain the mind of Christ by practically conforming to his blessed example. Study and prayer will do much, but our knowledge and convictions must be embodied. We must really walk as he



JOHN G. SHAVER

walked, imitate him in his conduct, act towards friends as he did, towards the world as he did, towards the blessed God as he did. Imitate him in prosperity, and rejoice in spirit. Imitate him in sorrow, by patience and resignation to the will of God. Imitate him under reproach, and bless and pray for our vilest enemies. In this way we shall be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and be more fully and deeply conformed to his spiritual likeness.

Consider, in reference to Christ's mind, the importance of its possession. We ought to possess the same mind that was in Christ, first, on the ground of consistency. We bear his name and profess to be his disciples. If so, then we should resemble him, walk as he walked, and talk as he talked. Exhibit a spirit and conversation like his. Christ demands it, and the world looks for it.

Second, we should possess the mind of Christ on the ground of comfort and happiness. We cannot be truly happy without it. Our peace and comfort will be in exact proportion to it. We cannot have holy fellowship with him unless we be like minded with him.

Third, we should possess the mind of Christ on the

ground of usefulness. Christ's mind will not only make us happy, but useful, making us a blessing to those round about us. We shall then truly be the salt, light, and elevated city that God would have us to be (Matt. 5:13-16).

Fourth, we should possess the mind of Christ on the ground of safety. Without the mind of Christ we cannot be saved. Indeed, this is salvation, to have within us Christ's mind. And without this conformity we cannot meet for the celestial inheritance. Without it, were we admitted, we could not possibly enjoy it.

Fifth, we should possess the mind of Christ on the ground of future glory. The closer our likeness to that of Jesus, the greater our future dignity, the sweeter our felicity, the more abundant our reward. How desirable then to be deeply solicitous to possess the whole mind that was in Christ!

Learn the true test of vital religion, the possession of the mind of Christ. What need of fervent devotedness to God! How imperfectly is this possessed by the best of Christians! Brethren, let us strive more devotedly to possess the mind of Christ. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL 33566.

Portrait of a Preacher

"How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. 10:15). Such words may be strange to our ears, but God views preachers as "beautiful." If I were an artist attempting to paint a picture of a faithful proclaimer of God's word I would study the lives of great men of God from the Bible. Then I would draw a composite of them all.

Like *Jesus*, a preacher must be busy doing the Father's will (John 6:18). He must see his mission and purpose as seeking and saving the lost (Lk. 19:10). This is the essence of our work, and without it nothing else matters. From Christ we would want our portrait to reflect a life that is "holy, guileless, undefiled, and separated from sinners..." (Heb. 7:26).

Our man should have characteristics of *Isaiah*. He saw Jehovah in his majestic glory (Is. 6:1-4). He felt keenly his own unworthiness. He readily volunteered himself for God's service (Is. 6:8). Isaiah boldly proclaimed heaven's message to the leaders of his society (Is. 1:10).

Attributes of *Moses* should be in every man of God. He led God's people till his life ended (Deut. 24:7). He honored the Lord's law completely and always. Moses interceded with strong prayers for the erring nation and saved them from destruction (Num. 14:19-20).

From *Jeremiah* we glean two vital points. He was a preacher who could weep for the nation (Jer. 9:1). He found no joy in condemning their sins! He was a man of great compassion and sympathy for a lost and dying people. He chose to stay with the battered remnant rather than to enjoy the favor of a pagan court (Jer. 39:11-14).

Ezekiel offers us some important ingredients for our portrait. He was a hard-headed pre-



JOHN WADDEY

cher who refused to compromise his message before a stubborn, rebellious nation (Ezek. 3:7-9). Ezekiel knew how to visualize his message. Most of his sermons were acted out or illustrated with visual aids. Needless to say, he made a lasting impression on his hearers.

Daniel was a praying preacher (Dan. 6:10). This no preacher can do without. His only fault was his loyalty to God and the law (Dan. 6:5).

Michaiah cannot be neglected in our sketch. He was a fearless man who refused to alter his message for the mighty, even when threatened with imprisonment (I Kings 22:13-14).

From *John* the apostle we draw the example of a loving preacher. From being the son of Boanerges he became the disciple Jesus loved (John 21:20). John exhorted his fellow Christians to love, not just in word, "but in deed and truth" (I John 3:18).

In *Barnabas* we see an exhorting, encouraging preacher (Acts 4:36). He was helpful, being willing to lend a hand to his brethren (Acts 9:26-27). Barnabas was willing to go the second mile with a weaker brother and give him yet another chance (Acts 15:36-39).

No portrait would be complete if we left out *Paul*. He was a missionary preacher. He was a literary man who wrote at least 13 of our 27 New Testament books. Paul was a determined man willing to pay any price to achieve his goal (Rom. 15:19-20). He pressed on even when his life was endangered (Acts 14:19-21). Yet he was a humble preacher, viewing himself as the least of all the apostles (I Cor. 15:9).

We must include *Antipas* in our portrait. He was a faithful witness who was martyred for the faith of Jesus (Rev. 2:13).

Last we would draw a point or two from *Noah*, the preacher of righteousness (II Pet. 2:5). He would not accept failure. For 120 years he continued faithfully at his post, refusing to quit. He endured the shame and ridicule of his pagan peers. Noah saved his family!

To every young preacher I offer this portrait, imperfect as my sketch may be. As you carefully study the lives of these and other great men of God you will learn the meaning of "preach the word"; "do the work of an evangelist"; "fulfill thy ministry" (II Tim. 4:2-5). May we imitate their faith (Heb. 13:7).— 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

The Summer Sin

LOUIS EVERETTE RUSHMORE

Immodesty, though certainly not confined to any particular season, is especially a SUMMER SIN in which, unfortunately, many Christians also participate.

Both the apostles Paul and Peter addressed the subject of modesty with special reference to the attire of Christian women (I Tim. 2:7-10; I Pet. 3:1-6). However, men in general, and especially husbands and fathers too, should view with equal interest what the apostles by inspiration wrote.

Paul penned to Timothy: "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in

Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Tim. 2:7-10).

Peter likewise wrote: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not

Continued on page 4

The Summer Sin

Continued from page 3

the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quite spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (I Pet. 3:1-6).

Admittedly, the apostles' writings concerning modesty did not primarily refer to the nakedness characteristic of modern societies. First Century women were rather noted for lavishly attiring themselves with costly clothing and expensive jewelry to attract inordinate attention to themselves.

The words, though, which are translated "modest" are the Greek *kosmio meta aidous* or "seemly with modesty." *Kosmio* means well-ordered decorum or regular disposition

and in another form is used to depict the orderly arranged universe. *Aidous* means modesty with reverence.

Therefore, "modesty" pertains to the ancient custom of inordinate dress or to the modern custom of inordinate undress. With the present demonstration of immodesty (in the form of undress) we are concerned now.

Modern immodesty occurs when: (1) especially women do not attire themselves with an orderly and usual arrangement of clothing, (2) one's attire overshadows and discounts his or her "shamefacedness and sobriety," "professing godliness," and "good works," (3) a woman's attire demonstrates that she is neither in subjection to her Creator nor to her father or husband, (4) one's adornment and/or conduct has a corruptible effect on others (I Tim. 2:7-10; I Pet. 3:1-6).

The flagrant summer sin of immodesty is displayed by both men and women, by both sinners and saints, on the beaches, in public swimming pools, on the street, and in the public view around the home. Conventional swim suits, short-shorts, halter tops, and other revealing attire (1) is not an orderly and usual arrangement of clothes, (2) is not reverent toward God or man, (3) does not portray "Shame-

facedness and sobriety," "professing godliness," "good works," or "chaste conversation," (4) does not demonstrate subjection of women before God and men or of men before God, (5) does not effect the salvation of sinners (whereas Peter said the reverse could), (6) breeds additional sin, beginning with lust (Matt. 5:27,28).

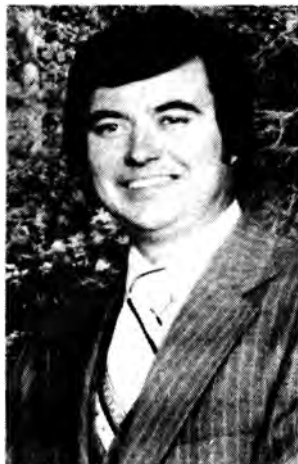
Immodesty, even though popular or socially acceptable, is first itself sin. Secondly, it breeds additional sin. Because all sin is equally repulsive before God (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8), Christians must not delude themselves into thinking they can indulge the least sin without suffering the consequences of the same.

The petition of our Lord should ever remind us that Christians are necessarily in the world but not of the world. "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:14-17). — 909 Gulf Road Waukegan, Ill. 60085.

When In Rome...

When Paul catalogued the atrocities of the Roman world nearly two thousand years ago, he mentioned a sin that is still quite alarming. "Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful..." (Romans 1:31). The word *storge* was the special Greek word for family love. However, *astorgos* translates our phrase above, "without natural affection." It was designed to represent an age in which family love was dying. Never was the life of the child so precarious as at this time. Children were considered a liability much of the time. When a child was born, the child was taken and laid at the father's feet. If the father lifted up the child that meant that he acknowledged it. If he turned away and left it, the child was literally thrown out. There was never a night when there were not thirty or forty abandoned children left in the Roman forum. Every night, children were literally thrown away. Even Seneca wrote: "We kill a mad dog; we slaughter a fierce ox; we plunge the knife into sickly cattle lest they taint the herd; children who are born weakly and deformed, we drown."

Times have changed very little. Child abuse is still a horrid sin and crime within society. Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect received by the Texas Department of Human Resources in 1979 numbered 39,476. Of these reports (involving 25,216 victims), 13,885 were valid. At least 1,510 children were sexually abused. Of the child deaths reported, 76 were definitely caused by abuse or neglect, and another 18 are suspected. The victims of child abuse and neglect range in age from



KERRY KNIGHT

infants to adolescents, and almost half are six years old or younger. These figures reflect only reported cases in one state of the union. A recent study on child abuse in Texas indicates that each year at least 8.5 percent, or 283,000 of the state's children are in danger of

being abused.

The old Roman world had gone so far in sin and vice that God gave them up (Romans 1:26). Let us pray that He hasn't given up on us.—12402 Pinerock, Houston, Texas 77024.

The Devil's Vocabulary

Have you seen any good commercials on TV lately? I wonder if you have listened to the words being used to sell the divers products offered through the modern sales campaigns in the media? Take a look at the most often used words and phrases:

SEXY: Definition — "Exciting or intended to excite sexual desires; erotic." This is one of the most abused and over-used words in our society today. It is used to sell everything from blue jeans to spark plugs. All we hear about is the sexy man, the sexy woman, and now even the sexy senior citizen! Have you heard anyone refer to the sexy Christian yet? Just wait, it most likely won't be long until you do. Can you imagine a faithful Christian wishing to be described with this word, considering the definition listed above?

SENSUAL: Definition — "Connected or preoccupied with bodily or sexual pleasures; Full of lust; licentious; lewd." I can find this word mentioned only two times in the Bible. In James 3:15 we find described the "wisdom not from above is earthly, sensual, devilish." In Jude 19 those who are sensual are such as have separated themselves from the Spirit. Why should a faithful Christian want to be classified as being "sensual"?

PROVOCATIVE: Definition — "Artificial, worldly



DOUGLASS SIMS

wise, polished, refined." The world uses this term to describe those who are not inhibited by such things as religion and morality. They describe a Christian as being "unsophisticated" or "unenlightened." The Bible tells us of the fate of those who are filled with the wisdom of the world while denying the wisdom of God. Would a faithful Christian rather be accepted by the world or by God?

BE THE ENVY OF: We hear this phrase being used to convince us to buy many things. We are urged to be the first one on our block to own something so the neighbors will be envious. Is this proper behavior for a Christian? We are not to envy others and certainly we are not intentionally to make others envy us! Envy is defined as a resentful dislike of another who has something that one desires. Envy involves jealousy, begrudging and covetousness. Why should a Christian want to cause such feelings in the hearts of others?

DO YOUR OWN THING: This is the motto of modern man. We are told to do as we please, without regard to morality, custom or good taste. This whole idea springs from one word, **SEFWILL**. It is defined as "Persistence in carrying out one's own will; stubbornness; obstinacy." Does this sound like a Christian?

I think it should be no problem to see that these words and phrases from the Devil's Vocabulary should not be used by Christians. Furthermore, we, as children of God should be careful about the danger of living in such a way as to be described by others with these terms. A Christian belongs to God, not the devil. — 303 East Ave. Cedartown, GA 30125.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

most noble Festus; but speak forth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

DATE 78

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1982

NUMBER 44

Third Annual Gus Nichols Words Of Truth Lectureship

W. A. HOLLEY

This wonderful period of intense Bible study is now history. The sessions continued from September 26 through 30, with services both morning and evening. It was a marvelous feast of good things for the hungry soul. Some nineteen speakers were used to present their best for the special benefit of their hearers.

"Honor to whom honor." It is altogether proper to report that this lectureship was utilized to heighten and enhance and to expand the storehouse of Biblical knowledge of hundreds of faithful Christians from over a rather wide area. We believe that untold good, in promoting *Scriptural Principles of Church Growth*, was done.

The theme was: *Scriptural Principles of Church Growth*. It is apparent that all who love the principles of New Testament Restoration today, can see the great need for, and appreciate the discussion of this topic. Many desiring to see the church of our Lord grow, have largely abandoned Scriptural principles and have resorted to human public relation programs to get the job done. But we are persuaded that gimmickry, or a magic wand, or some sleight-of-hand trick, cannot succeed!! It was stressed, over and over, that Scriptural principles used in the first century are the principles that must be used today!

One special feature was a class taught by sister Lois McCord for the ladies of the area. Her subject was: *The Power of Womanhood*. Her class proved so attractive it was necessary to move it into larger rooms to accommodate the increasing numbers who attended it. We are sure that her lessons made a profound impression on those who heard them.

During the week, there were several events of special interest, but we shall mention but two of them. There was an Appreciation Luncheon for the Elders. There was also an Appreciation Luncheon for Brother Camp. We believe that such men need to be honored because of their long and faithful service to the Lord Almighty.

All the speakers need to be complimented by

name, but space does not permit such. We shall mention but three of these men: Brother Camp, who discussed, *Preaching from the Old Testament*; Brother McCord, who expounded, *A Study of Words*; and Brother Wilhem, who laid out the *Principles of Scriptural Leadership* for all to hear. These speeches were simply superb, bearing the marks of supreme excellence. We are certain that those who had the privilege of hearing these great servants of Jehovah, thanked God and took courage.

We believe that the power and influence of this distinguished lectureship will long endure and be far-reaching. We are confident that such lessons will help stem the tide of modernism that poses such great danger in some areas of our brotherhood.

There was a wonderful spirit of cooperation from the area churches of Christ in Walker County.

For this cooperation we are deeply grateful. On the last day of these peerless activities, the ladies of the area prepared and served an abundant and delicious dinner which was duly appreciated by all.

The elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ deserve a word of appreciation for their planning and oversight of this great Lectureship. Even now there are plans under way for an even better Fourth Annual Gus Nichols *Words of Truth* Lectureship in 1983.

Brethren Duncan and Crosswhite deserve beautiful, full-flushed bouquets for their tireless and indefatigable and unflagging efforts in keeping everything moving smoothly — efforts which sometimes reached far into the night. To these brethren, we say, Thanks, very much. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Prayer Partners



FRANK CHESSER

One of the truly great privileges of the Christian is prayer. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice" (Psalms 55:17). "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).


An essential and vital aspect of prayer is intercession — prayer made in the behalf of others. Paul entreated the Romans, "strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30). In response to Israel's plea for his intercessory prayer, Samuel declared, "God

forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23).

One of the indispensable aspects of intercessory prayer is confession of sins. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). However, the sad truth is, both intercessory prayer and confession of sins have often been greatly abused by the modern day practice of "prayer partners."

There is nothing wrong with two people praying together and engaging in mutual confession of sin. Such is the clear assertion of James 5:16. Furthermore, Acts 8:18-24 constitutes a Biblical example of this very principle. Subsequent to Simon's sin and rebuke by Peter, Simon implored the apostle to, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 18:24). Undoubtedly, Peter responded to Simon's

Continued on page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$4.00 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Choice Of Moses

An impressive statement is made concerning Moses by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God"

(Heb. 11:24-28). In this passage we have presented to us a very astonishing instance of self-denial and devotedness to God. It is, indeed, a striking evidence of the power of faith, and is well calculated both to instruct and profit the contemplative mind. Let us notice, first, his renunciation. Second, his choice. And third, the principle by which he was influenced.

His renunciation respected those things which have ever been held in the highest estimation by the world. He renounced (1) the honors of a prince by "refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." There are few things more attractive than an honor such as this. What sacrifices many men would make to attain it! Ease, time, health, and even life itself are daily hazarded for such honors. Princely honor is the summit of human ambition. And yet the dignities of an Egyptian prince had no attraction for Moses, and he freely and cheerfully laid them aside. He renounced (2) the pleasure of a court. The courts of royalty usually abound with pleasures. Whatever can gratify the senses, or pander the imagination, may be expected there. The eastern palaces and courts were generally scenes of all that is luxurious, and gross, and dissipated. Hence, they are styled in the text, "pleasures of sin." They originate in sin, are fostered by sin, and invariably tend to the increase of sin. He renounced (3) the riches of a kingdom. And that



JOHN G. SHAVER

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"Doesn't God Forgive The Past?"

Sometimes the words which form the title of this article are spoken in an effort to argue that one presently living in an adulterous relationship, or one unscripturally divorced and contemplating marriage, may do so without sin. If it is true that God forgives all past sins when one obeys the gospel, then why does one's past have anything to do with whether or not he may now be scripturally married?

It is certainly true that those who genuinely obey the gospel of Christ are forgiven of all past sins. But this does not mean that a marriage relationship is automatically dissolved. If it did, then all husbands and wives who obey the gospel would, in so doing, automatically become unmarried. They could then set about to seek and to marry a new mate. Those who are married, and who obey the gospel of Christ, are still married. Their obedience to the gospel does not



BOB DUNCAN

dissolve the marriage relationship.

Suppose, for example, that a man decides he no longer wants to be married, and so he leaves his faithful companion. Should he decide to become married to someone else, Jesus tells us he thus becomes guilty of adultery. Please notice that Jesus did not merely say he sinned, but he said the sin would be adultery. What is adultery? It is cohabiting — living in a sexual relationship with one to whom one is not married. What is the point? Just this: Here is a man who is, in the sight of God, already married to one woman. But he is cohabiting with another. The fact he may decide to obey the gospel and ignorantly believe he can still live with the woman to whom, in the sight of God, he is not married, does not do away with his former legal marriage bond.

It is the nature of the sin of adultery which some seemingly do not understand, and their failure to understand causes them to ask, "Doesn't God forgive the past?" Certainly God will forgive the past, but one cannot persist in sin and have God's approval. And one who is married to one person, yet cohabiting with another, is persisting in sin. The fact God forgives the past when one obeys the gospel does not mean that one's marriage is dissolved.

The adultery of Matthew 19:9 is not the marriage ceremony; it is the cohabitation.

Morality Alone Cannot And Will Not Save!

There is the tendency among many people to equate morality with being a Christian. While it is true that every devout Christian is a good moral person, it does not follow that every good moral person is a Christian.

The moralist, separate and apart from Christ, is a sinner. The apostle Paul, quoting an Old Testament passage, stated that "There is none righteous, no not one." He further declared, "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10,23). It isn't that a man is born a sinner, he simply becomes one through violating the commands of God (1 John 3:4).

The moralist may be known for his sweet disposition, his kind words, his charitable deeds, his good citizenship and his participation in community affairs. But, if he has never obeyed the gospel of Christ he is in a lost condition. When a person as previously described passes from this life, his peers are apt to say, "Well, he was not a member of any church but he certainly was a good man, worthy of salvation."

The basic difference between a moralist who is not a Christian and a Christian who is morally clean is found in their relationship with God. The moralist exclaims that he deserves to be saved upon



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

his own meritorious goodness. The Christian admits his inability to save himself and submits to the will of God. He cries out, "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). If one moralist can be saved without the blood of Christ, why not two, then three and so on. If this be true, Christ died in vain. There was no need for his crucifixion on Calvary.

Surely, if any moralist could have been saved without the vicarious death of Christ, the man Cornelius would have been. It is rather doubtful that any living person would have been more moral in character than Cornelius. He was a centurion in the Roman army. This meant that he was a Gentile. He was a devout man and one that feared God. He was a benevolent individual and was habitual in his prayers to God. He is referred to as a righteous man and one who enjoyed an excellent reputation, even among the Jews (Acts 10:1,2,22). In spite of such high standards, Cornelius was instructed by an angel of the Lord to "Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house" (Acts 11:13,14). This morally upright person needed to hear the gospel of Christ in order that he might be saved. It is no different today. God is no respecter of person. He saves all men alike and in like manner — through the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:34; Ephesians 1:7). Jehovah requires faith, repentance, and baptism on the part of the alien sinner in order to receive remission of sins (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38) —

If we are saved, it is not by our own goodness but by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8). — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp, Ala. 36467.

Prayer Partners

Continued from page 1

request, making them partners in prayer.

James 5:16 includes three kinds of transgressions. First, it embraces a personal offense. The phrase, "if he shall hear thee," of Matthew 18:15 necessarily involves confession of sin and intercessory prayer. Second, it entails public sins in which the confession is made as public as the sin, thus often embracing the entire church. Some deny that James' inspired edict is broad enough to include such public matters. However, public acknowledgement of sin followed by a joining of hearts in prayer is "confess your faults one to another and pray one for another" in action.

It is not necessary, nor sometimes even right, for both parties in such circumstances to confess wrongdoing. When sin was confessed and prayer offered for Aaron (Deuteronomy 9:20), Israel (I Samuel 12), and Simon (Acts 8:24), were Moses, Samuel and Peter equally guilty, under the same condemnation and thus, also in need of confession? Third, James 5:16 involves some personal sin for which one might seek brotherly aid in prayer. This is one way to "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

In contrast to the Biblical picture, the modern day prayer partner relationship often demands that one must yoke himself to a fellow Christian, unlock and swing wide the door of his heart, bare his soul and reveal his innermost thoughts, desires

and motives with the implication that failure to do so robs him of reaching his spiritual potential. What is wrong with this practice?

First, it is an infringement upon the mediatorial work of Christ. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). If one must attach himself to a fellow Christian and proceed to divest his heart of every sinful thought, motive, and attitude in order to receive full benefit from the mediatorial work of Christ, something is drastically wrong with God's system.

One author suggested that if David had been involved in a prayer-partner relationship, the incident with Bathsheba would not in all probability, have occurred. This is a classic example of seeking to improve on God's arrangement. The truth is, the sin with Bathsheba could have been avoided had David been faithful in complying with God's directions as set forth in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, and God's regimen did not specify a prayer partner relationship. In like manner, the mediatorial work of Christ as arranged by God needs no assistance from man.

Second, it is an invasion of personal privacy. Christianity is indeed a "one another" religion. Christians are to "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), "exhort one another" (Hebrews 3:13), and "consider one another to pro-

voke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24). However, there is a world of difference in manifesting love and concern by seeking to aid a person with spiritual problems, and coercing, however gently, a fellow Christian to place his entire heart on exhibition. There are some things that constitute no one's business but one's own. Such things belong between a man and his God, and to reveal them to some equally finite and fallible being would do more harm than good. To trespass on another's heart is to transgress the will of God.

Third, it grants another person undue control over one's life. Consider a situation in which an individual lays bare his heart, fully disclosing his inner-most thoughts, intents, and desires until another frail and imperfect person knows him almost as well as he knows himself. Even common sense cries out with a loud voice, declaring such to be, at the least, unhealthy. Someone rejoins, "But God knows." That's just the point; we are not God. David petitioned God: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts" (Psalms 139:23), but he never made such a request of his fellowman.

Christians ought to know one another, rebuke, exhort, encourage, confess sins and pray for one another, but not seek to play God and be omniscient with regard to the lives of others. — Route 5 Thomson, Georgia 30824.

The Choice Of Moses

Continued from page 2

kingdom was Egypt, so greatly famed for its grandeur and treasures, and which for many years was the most distinguished nation on earth. Yet the treasure of this wealthy empire found no place in the heart of Moses. And mark, in reference to his renouncement of the honors, and pleasures, and riches of Egypt, that it took place at the period of maturity — a time when he was quite capable of judging and rightly estimating them. It was after he had spent a considerable portion of his time in the midst of them — a time when they might have been expected to have presented the greatest of attractions. And he renounced them when he was quite capable of enjoying them, not in the decline of life, when he had outlived them, but at the period of manhood, when he had come to years, when sense, nature, and carnal reason would all have concurred in his adoption of them.

Notice his choice. He made choice (1) of the people of God as his associates. These he preferred to princes, rulers and statesmen. These poor and shoddy people were chosen in preference to the great, and noble, and rich of Pharaoh's court. His choice may appear absurd to the eye and sense, yet it commends itself to the eye of faith! God's people are the wisest companions. Though they may not be wise in literary attainments, they are wise in true wisdom, in saving knowledge. The wisdom they possess is heavenly in its origin, saving in its influence, and invaluable in its price (Job 28:12-19). The people of God are the most honorable companions, for they are all the children of a king. They are the most safe of all companions (Prov. 3:23). They are the most useful companions because their conversation, their example, and their influence will prove beneficial to us. He made choice (2) of the afflictions of God's people. Though they were groaning beneath Pharaoh's cruel yoke, yet he preferred being one of them, to all the splendid advantages of the Egyptian court. God's people are an afflicted people. He made choice (3) of the reproach of Christ. The people of God as the descend-

ants of Abraham, were the expectants of the Messiah; and they were the worshippers of the true God, and, therefore, they were despised on account of their religion. Thus we perceive, he chose for his companions slaves instead of princes; and for his portion, afflictions and reproach in preference to the pleasures and riches of Egypt.

Notice the principle by which he was influenced. "By faith" he did all this. By credence to the promise of God. By believing implicitly what had been revealed to the patriarchs. By this he learned (1) rightly to estimate the things of this world. He was aware, with respect to honors, pleasures and riches, that they were unsatisfying in nature, uncertain in their possession, temporary in their duration, and often evil in their influence. By faith, therefore, he

esteemed them not. Then, his faith had particular reference to (2) the recompense of reward which God has so graciously and richly promised to his people. This, though future, was certain — though spiritual, was real. In its nature it was suitable, in its character, great and abundant, and in its duration, eternal. He preferred the soul to the body, God to the world, and eternity to time.

The world is divided into two classes. The pursuers of pleasures, honors, and riches; and those who are renouncing these, and, by faith, having respect to a future recompense of reward. The possession of love to both ways is impossible. Let the preciousness of the soul, the riches of heaven, and the joys of eternity decide your choice. — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL 33566.

The Proper Use Of God's Instrument

With hearts activated by the Holy Spirit through the word of God Christians possess the ability to lead the indifferent to springs of delight, the discouraged to the pinnacle of hope, and the calloused to realms of gladness and joy. The Christian's message, his hope, his deep emotions, and his perennial optimism, when conveyed to the human heart on wings of song, create a climate that no other vehicle affords.

The inspired psalmist has stirred the souls of countless multitudes with his inducements



R. W. GRAY

to praise God in song: "O praise the Lord, all ye nations: Praise him all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalms 117). "O come, let us sing unto the Lord . . . Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving . . . For the Lord is a great God . . . O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker . . . O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name: show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, and his wonders among all the people" (Psalms 95:1-6; 96:1-2).

New Testament writers appreciated the power of song and encouraged its usage as a means of teaching and admonishing, as well as an avenue of praise to Jehovah. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing

Continued on page 4

The Proper Use Of God's Instrument

Continued from page 3

one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16 — see Ephesians 5:18-20). "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise" (Hebrews 2:12 ASV). The God who made us and who gave us the power of speech and the capacity for praise in song has encouraged us to use the talent to his glory and the eventual blessing of our fellow man.

This writer has heard his brethren argue that if God had instructed us to employ mechanical instruments in the public worship of the church, we would be obligated to acquire the very best instrument or instruments possible in fulfilling those instructions. And why not? Would we presume that anything less than the very best would be pleasing to him?

But the Lord has not authorized the humanly devised instrument. The instrument to be employed was made by God himself. The human voice accompanied by the human heart is to provide the vehicle

upon which the admonitions and praise are conveyed (Ephesians 5:19-20). This is the best instrument available, being a product of divine design and creation.

Is the Lord pleased with half-hearted devotion to the matter of using the human voice to its fullest potential? A cappella music thrills the soul and lifts the spirit when correctly done. But not unlike the sound (or noise) of the humanly devised instruments, it lacks quality and beauty when poorly done. We are manifesting a spirit of inexcusable indifference toward the privilege of offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, to say the very least of it, when we fail to develop our singing potentials as individuals and as congregations of God's people. And while the praise in song should not have as its primary aim the gaining of the attention and/or admiration of those who visit our assemblies, we are remiss when we fail to develop our singing to the degree that visitors are favorably impressed with the devotion to skill that should be in evidence (I Corin-

thians 14:15-25). Congregational singing need not deteriorate to the point where the mice flee the building in fear, but when little or no attention is given the matter it can become meaningless noise rather than exhilarating praise.

It is the case, of course, that the message or language of the songs we sing is the first consideration, but the message may be correctly or incorrectly carried to the ears and hearts of the participants. God's people very desperately need to become aware of the attitude we display toward our singing. We cannot afford to neglect this great power for teaching the truth. Song leaders should receive the best training available to them. The churches could well afford to make this available to those who require it. Singing schools should be a regular part of the programs and budgets of our congregations. Too few are doing the work of men like Ralph and Joe Casey who have devoted their talents to the work of improving our singing. Think on these things. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

The church at Corinth suffered greatly because of the problem of factions. Paul wrote, "I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse . . . when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you . . . For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor. 11:17-19). Earlier the



JOHN WADDEY

apostle had pointed out that factions end in divisions (I Cor. 1:11-13). Also, he reminded them that factions feed carnality: ". . . for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal . . . ?" (3:1-5). The dictionary defines faction as "a party, combination or clique within a state; generally with the suggestion of contentiousness, self-seeking, or recklessness of the common good." A factious person is described as one "given to faction, raising dissensions or seditions."

Observation teaches us that *factionness is an attitude* toward brethren, toward the church and toward truth. It is an attitude that works against brotherly love, unity and true fellowship by promoting and encouraging separations and/or a divisive spirit. A factious person may be correct in doctrine and in the point he is contending for, and yet stand condemned for his bad attitude. When Paul condemned the factions at Corinth he included those who said they were "of Christ" as well as those who claimed to be of Cephas and Apollos (1:12).

Several examples of factions have been recorded in Scripture for our observation. Miriam and Aaron were factious toward Moses' authority. God punished Miriam by smiting her with leprosy (Num. 12:1-11). Korah, Dathan and Abiram assembled a faction against Moses and Aaron's priestly leadership. They were devoured by an earth fissure and fire (Num. 16:1-25). In the New Testament, John wrote of a brother Diotrephes who loved to have the preeminence and who spoke against John and sought to cast some brethren out of the church (III John 9-11). John threatened to come personally and deal with him. Salome the mother of James and John nearly caused

a factious situation among the apostolic band by asking a special position for her sons (Matt. 20:20-24).

Factions come in many varieties. Sometimes they erupt because of personal discord between two individuals. Such is seen in the sharp contention that led to the separation of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40).

It is common to see congregational factions such as Corinth had. They may arise over doctrinal matters such as false teaching (Acts 20:29-30). Sometimes they are related to moral issues. A factious woman named Jezebel tried to teach brethren in Thyatira that it was alright to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication (Rev. 2:20). Even in congregations, personal conflicts can sometimes create a faction. Jesus was careful to teach us how to avoid such (Matt. 18:15-18). Personal conflicts in a church may be of two kinds. Some are of innocent motive. They result from honest misunderstandings or lack of communication. They can however be malicious, deliberate attempts to hurt a brother, a preacher or eldership. We have all seen both kinds of problems. Either can be disastrous for a congregation. No words can adequately describe the evil of a malicious factionist.

There are different kinds of people who become involved in factions. There are those who promote and lead factious activities for personal ambition. Diotrephes is such an example. Then there are those who knowingly encourage factious people. The backers of Korah, Dathan and Abiram were of this kind. Notice they suffered the same fate as the leaders. Some folks allow themselves to be manipulated and used for factious purposes. Aaron was so used by Miriam. Paul warned of factious teachers who would deceive the hearts of the innocent (Rom. 16:17-18). Sadly, many factions are the fruit of a preacher's unscriptural conduct. Paul noted that some men preach Christ of envy and strife (Phil. 1:15). Truth should be preached in love (Eph. 4:15), but some preach truth in a vicious, divisive way.

Some causes of factious conduct. Factions often occur when brethren *rebel* rather than accept correction from their preacher or elders. Jealousy is a root cause of some factions. A brother may be resentful of another who has more influence or respect than he, or a better position. This is common among preachers. These unholy feelings lead some to promote self to the point of conflict. Like Diotrephes, some who *desire power or position*

will create strife to gain their ends. We have seen this in men who wanted to be elders, but were by-passed by the congregation. Factions have resulted from *a desire to protect one's practice, belief or position*. If a carnally minded brother feels threatened in the above areas, he often will go to work to stir up a faction against those who threaten him. It is seen most often in preachers who find themselves at odds with the elders. Determined to stay on their own terms, they solicit the sympathy of a group and a faction is born.

What should be our attitude toward factious brethren? Remember always that God hates those who sow discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19). Paul categorizes factions as a work of the flesh along with fornication, idolatry, and drunkenness (Gal. 5:19). They who do such things cannot go to heaven. The same apostle warned Titus that a factious man should be rejected after the first and second admonition (Tit. 3:10). He instructed the Roman brethren to mark them that cause divisions and turn away from them, since they serve not God but their own selfish interest (Rom. 16:17-18).

Let every heir of heaven give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). May we never be guilty of the awful crime of faction. May we likewise never be guilty of encouraging those who are. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Don't Drink

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The beloved late Brother N. B. Hardeman, quoted the following poem about the use of Alcoholic Beverages in his 1954 *Lectures to Young Preachers* at Abilene Christian College (now University):

How well do I remember!
It was late in last December,
When my mind began to flutter:
— I fell into the gutter!
And a hog came and lay down by my side!

While we lay there, in a puddle,
My mind began to muddle:
A Lady, passing by, was heard to say:
"You can tell a man who boozes
By the company he chooses!"
— And the HOG got up and walked away!

Upon reciting this, Brother Hardeman remarked: "Ain't that a *Classic!*" — 1000 Saint John Road Rt. 9 Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-76)

"I a
the

... speak forth
... mess."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1982

NUMBER 45

“Quit Ye Like Men”

A stickler for honesty whose business was real estate said to a prospective buyer, “This house has its good points and its bad points. One bad point is that there is a chemical plant one block north and a slaughter house three blocks south. A good point is that you can always tell which way the wind is blowing.”



R. W. GRAY

A gifted preacher was heard to say in reference to a brotherhood controversy, “I have my ears to the ground — I want to see which way the wind is blowing.” While *agape* demands we place the best possible construction upon a statement of this kind, it is the case of nonetheless that we are witnessing a lack of real conviction and/or backbone in a time when it is most needed.

The crying need is for men of the Book who have the courage of their convictions. The winds of change now blowing are not all for the better. It was never God’s purpose that we rise and fall with the tide of public sentiment, but that his people “stand,” having their loins girt about with truth (Ephesians 6:14). It is his will that the gospel change men and not that men compromise or change the gospel (Galatians 1:6-11).

The spirit of the pioneers is giving way to the spirit of permissiveness, compromise, and peaceful coexistence with sin and Satan. Too many hirelings are in the pulpits and elderships of the church of the Lord. To call upon these to unite in a common cause against sin is like linking spines of jelly with ropes of sand. Sensing that those in the pew demand of the seers that they see not, and of the preachers that they preach not hard things, many, in their determination that the boat not be rocked, stoop to do business with the devil (II Timothy 4:1-6).

In time of spiritual peril, and to a church in a city

known for its audacious permissiveness and immorality, Paul wrote, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong.” One translation has it, “be men of courage” (I Corinthians 16:13). The spirit of the age had permeated the church. It was about to be destroyed from within (I Corinthians 5:1-6). If men and women who knew the truth failed to stand fast the congregation would perish (Revelation 3:3).

God would not have us assume the role of a Diotrephes, nor to align ourselves with the witch hunters, but he needs men whose spiritual spines are strong enough to stand against the wiles of the devil. Too long now have we allowed ourselves to be intimidated by Satan and his crowd. It is time to lift up our voices like a trumpet and cry aloud. May the call

reverberate again through the land, “Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls!” (Jeremiah 6:16).

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor’s song.” — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga., 30344.

Publicity And Doctrine

RONNIE A. MISSILDINE


Many leaders in the Lord’s church are of the opinion that when dealing in “public relations” (any publicity the church might get outside its local membership), every effort should be made not to emphasize the distinctiveness of Christ’s true doctrine. They feel this will adversely affect people’s attitude toward the church, thereby closing doors that would otherwise have been open.

Believe me, there is some caution that needs to be exercised in this area. Too bluntly and harshly stated, even the doctrine of the love of God can turn people away. There must be a concerted effort toward “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Too many bad and negative attitudes have driven people from a desire to hear the truth. I know! I’ve seen it happen. This is not “soft-soaping” the gospel. Jesus Christ was straightforward, but his love always tempered his rebukes.

On the other end of the spectrum, however, are those who say, “no distinctiveness at all.” This attitude is just as far from Christ’s way

as the other end. There was no question about what he said or taught. It was clear, concise, and yes, *distinctive*. The church of today can do no less, especially in a crazy, mixed-up, religious world. The distinctiveness of Christ’s doctrine is the only way we can draw men to the one true way. It still remains that the gospel is the power to save, and the gospel is by all means distinctive. If there is no immediate and visible difference between the true church and denominationalism, then let’s close our doors, and merge with the Baptists and Methodists. There must be distinctiveness, and, if the Bible is followed, it will come in doctrine. We don’t have the right to be different just for the sake of being different, but the doctrine of Christ will set us apart.

So, when we publish the gospel, whether it be from the pulpit, the printed page, T. V., radio, fair booth, etc., let us be distinctive. Let’s do it in love, but let’s publish the doctrine of Christ.



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.


BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701
RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Our Greatest Need: Crucifixion



BOB DUNCAN

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

I am crucified with Christ describes the state of one who is serving the Lord. This phrase has special reference to the fact that the servant of

Christ is one who is not controlled by fleshly considerations, but by spiritual considerations. This idea is prevalent in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul. Romans 6:6 states: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." In Colossians 3:5 Paul wrote: "Mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." And in Galatians 5:24 he wrote: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Our greatest need in the church today is the need for crucifixion. If members of the church would crucify the flesh, most of our problems would be eliminated. Church members would never be guilty of "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revealings, and such like," for all these are the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Attendance problems, and problems concerning the contribution would be eliminated. Notice Paul's statement in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified... nevertheless... Christ liveth in me..." One in whom Christ lives certainly would not have to be begged and persuaded to attend the services. One in whom Christ lives certainly would not be stingy with his money. One in whom Christ lives certainly would not be reluctant to commit himself to participate in a visitation program designed to lead lost souls to salvation.

It is a fact that most members of the church have never crucified the flesh. Too many are motivated by fleshly considerations instead of spiritual considerations. They are more concerned with their social standing than they are with their spiritual state. They give more attention to prestige than to purity. Matters involving their economic status must come ahead of those involving their eternal destiny. Personal popularity is of greater concern than the proclamation of the truth.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..." (Galatians 5:22,23). One who has not crucified the flesh cannot enjoy the proper kind of love, joy,

peace, etc., for these are characteristics of the fruit produced by following after spiritual matters.

One reason many church members have never crucified the flesh is that they are deceived into thinking they can follow fleshly pursuits and still go to heaven in the after-a-while. Such simply is not the case. "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). It is strange that, while all of us acknowledge the law of sowing and reaping, some of us seem to think it does not apply to us. Others cannot gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, but we can! Those who so believe are deceived into thinking they can thumb their noses at God.

What we need in the church is a crucifixion. Have you really been crucified with Christ?

"13"

Recently on a flight with my wife and my parents we were assigned two seats on row 12 and two on row 14. I thought, naturally, we would be a row apart. To my surprise, we were right behind each other — there was no row 13. When we arrived at the airport, I was also surprised to find gates 12 and 14, but no gate 13.



ANCIL JENKINS

There is a good reason why. Some are so superstitious they would not sit on row 13 or leave from gate 13. This is not only true in airplanes and airports but also in many other places. There are many buildings with no 13th floor.

Why are we so fearful of the number "13"? This type of fear in a Christian is an indication of a lack of real faith. The lives of Christians are determined by at least two things. The providence of God is giving us opportunities for choice and our own will, which makes these choices. The Christian has a trust that allows him to accept anything and believe God will work with him in making it for his good. To believe that we are affected by numbers, ladders, or black cats is faithless. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

It isn't easy for an idea to squeeze itself into a head filled with prejudice.

Many great ideas have been lost because the people who had them couldn't stand being laughed at.

For Those Who Like To Sing

BOBBY DUNCAN

The following song was written by brother Eugene Pearson of Savoy, Texas, and is reproduced here with his permission. Most of the songs we sing were written by denominational writers. We wish more of our brethren would write songs for us to use in worship.

Brother Pearson is used widely as a song leader in meetings, and has led singing for several meetings in which we have preached in Texas. He is an outstanding Christian gentleman, and a dear personal friend. We think you will enjoy singing this song. He also has written several others.

The Evergreen Valley

Eugene Pearson Joyfully Eugene Pearson



1. Oft I dream of an evergreen valley, hidden deep in
2. Oh, 'tis said there's no sickness nor dying, no sorrow there
3. I have heard there's no sin in that valley, naught but peace and
4. Soon I'll go to that evergreen valley, where I'll rest my head

God's heaven above, where the Savior is waiting to welcome
to darken the day, happy hearts never broken by sorrow,
eternal bliss, and I'm trusting my Savior to keep me
the evergreen trees, I can bask in its wonderful beauty.

Chorus
The redeemed to that heaven of love,
No more tears to burden the day, I've heard pretty flowers
Are the joys of that valley I miss,
And for ever happy I'll be.

are blooming, sparkling dew robes their beauty so rare; And I'm told
it will always be Springtime in that land where there's never a care.

© Copyright 1981 by Eugene Pearson. All Rights Reserved.

Christ's Love For His Church

If we would have the mind of Christ, we must love what he loved and hate what he hated. As we think of Christ's love for the church, may we be inspired also to love the church. The answer to the following questions should help: (1) Why did Christ love the church? (2) To what extent did he love it? (3) Why do many today not love the church? (4) How can a man show his love for the church? (5) How much do you love the church?



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

WHY DID CHRIST LOVE THE CHURCH? He loved the church because of God's purpose for the church (Eph. 3:10-11). The church is a part of God's eternal purpose. No institution had such prior planning. The price paid for the church reveals his love (Acts 20:28). The church is exalted "in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:10-11; 1:20-23).

WHAT RELATIONSHIP DOES CHRIST SUSTAIN TO THE CHURCH? The church belongs to Christ (Matt. 16:18). It is his body (Eph. 1:22-23). That body is said to be in Christ (Rom. 12:4-5). He loves his body (the church) as man loves his physical body (Eph. 5:29). The church is the kingdom of Christ (Rev. 1:5; Acts 20:28). God, the Father, uses the church as his instrument to make known his will to man (Eph. 3:8-11). Christ therefore loves the church because of the divine purpose for it.

WHO IS THE CHURCH? The church consists of the saved (Acts 2:47). Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). Members of the church are said to be "members of his body, of his flesh and his bones" (Eph. 5:30). These facts reveal Christ's love for the church. The church is God's family (I Tim. 3:15).

TO WHAT EXTENT DID CHRIST LOVE THE CHURCH? Enough to give himself for it (Eph. 5:25). He purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). He is said to have sanctified and cleansed it by the washing of water with the word (Eph. 5:26). One could not say Christ had an indifferent attitude toward his church.

Since Christ purchased the church with his blood and his blood saves us, can we afford to be indifferent toward his church?

WHY DO MANY TODAY NOT LOVE THE CHURCH? Ignorance keeps many people from loving Christ's church. Many have confused the Lord's church with denominationalism! The word denomination denotes "a sect" or "a party." Christ's church is not a part of the party spirit (John 17:20-21; I Cor. 1:10-13). Denominationalism came into existence nearly 600 years after the church was established in Jerusalem. Christ established one church (I Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15). Because of confusing the church of our Lord with denominationalism, many have lightly regarded it.

THE SIMPLE ORGANIZATION OF CHRIST'S CHURCH TURNS MANY AWAY. The New Testament teaches a plurality of men, with certain stipulated qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) are to oversee the flock, feed the flock, discipline and guide the flock. Those men are referred to as bishops, pastors, shepherds, overseers and elders (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:10; I Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:5).

The command "feed the flock which is among you" (I Pet. 5:2) limits the authority of elders to the local church. Many are not content with the Lord's arrangement.

OTHERS ARE NOT IN SYMPATHY WITH THE

MISSION OF THE CHURCH. Its mission is to save the lost, edify the church spiritually and care for the destitute. It is not a glorified country club. We must be satisfied with its mission as revealed in the Bible.

HOW CAN MAN SHOW HIS LOVE FOR THE CHURCH? Ezekiel said of Israel, "They hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezek. 33:31). Love is much more than lip service. (1) Love for Christ is the first ingredient for a man to love Christ's church. The church is the bride of Christ (John 3:28-30; Rev. 21:9). (2) One cannot love Christ and not love his church. How can one honor Christ while dishonoring his body? (3) A person manifests his love by being a member of Christ's church. One must seek first the kingdom (church) (Matt. 6:33; Lk. 12:31-34), (4) by being subject to him who is head (Eph. 1:22),

(5) by being a faithful and devoted worker (Rev. 2:10), and (6) by supporting it with his giving as he prospers (I Cor. 16:2).

If you are not a faithful member of his church, you do not have the proper love.

JUST HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE THE CHURCH? Remember one cannot love the Lord without loving his church. May we ask you about your love for Christ? (1) Do you love him enough to believe with all your heart that he is the Christ? Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). (2) Is your love and faith strong enough to cause you to repent? (Acts 17:30). Remember repent means to change and bring forth fruits of change. (3) Is your love strong enough for you to be baptized into him for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Paul said, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). (4) Do you love the Lord enough to be a faithful and dedicated servant? — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Some Distinctive Peculiarities Of The Churches Of Christ

W. A. HOLLEY

In connection with the following words of exhortation there are seven Scripture references that need to be read, namely, Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18; Psalms 135:4; Ecclesiastes 2:8; Titus 2:14, and I Peter 2:9.

These references emphasize possession or possessions. The Jewish people were God's own peculiar possession. As an example, we shall use but one Old Testament scripture taken from those listed above to illustrate this point. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (Exodus 19:5).

In the New Testament we shall cite two passages, Titus 2:14 and I Peter 2:9, where the words "a peculiar people" are translated, "a people for his [God's] own possession" (ASV).

Thus, the word "peculiar" as used in the Bible does not have reference to cranks or fanatics or bigots; nor to irascible or fractious dispositions. On the contrary, those of us who are seeking to restore New Testament Christianity in the hearts of people who live in the eighth decade of the twentieth century, should manifest the warmest and most understanding spirit toward those whom we wish to win to Christ. We, as members of the church of Christ could gain much by being amiable, neighborly, and friendly toward those who might disagree with our views. We have no intention of suggesting compromise, even in the slightest, where truth is concerned.

What are some of the distinctive peculiarities of the churches of Christ? We shall note:

(1) We believe there is but one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God, the Father. We are certain that the Bible does not teach that different ways, different churches, different means of communication that reveal God's will to mankind, are Scriptural, and therefore right in the sight of God. To add to, or to subtract from, or to substitute for, what is taught in the Holy Bible is to sin against Almighty God!

Some wish to follow the infidel's method and thus cast the word of God out the window, as if such drastic action would change the mind of God (Romans 3:3-4). We need to understand that God's word is true, if everyone believes it; and that it

remains true, if none believes it. The genuineness and veracity of God's word does not depend upon men! So often men treat the word of God as if Satan were the author of it. We sincerely urge our readers to pursue the following Passages: Ephesians 4:4-6; Ezekiel 22:26; Isaiah 5:20; Revelation 22:18-19.

(2) The church of Christ today bears the marks of the original church of Christ as set forth in the New Testament. What are those marks? The church must be scriptural in origin, scriptural in doctrine, scriptural in practice, and scriptural in name. Does the church of Christ today meet this criterion? It most certainly does!

The church of Christ is scriptural in origin; it began on the First Pentecost after the resurrection (Acts 2:1-47), in the city of Jerusalem; it is scriptural in doctrine, for it teaches only the truth as revealed in God's sacred word; it is scriptural in practice, for it does only those things commanded by the Lord; it is scriptural in name, for it rejects all human names, wearing only those divine names revealed upon the pages of Holy Writ. To do otherwise is to turn the church into a human church! One cannot take Ford parts and make a Chevrolet. Ford parts will make only Fords! The seed is the word of God, not the doctrines and commandments of men (Luke 8:11; Matthew 15:9). The doctrines and commandments of men can produce only denominational churches, and not that church about which you can read in your New Testament.

(3) The churches of Christ are peculiar in that they subscribe to the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:3; I Corinthians 4:6; Jude 3). Be reminded that it is a gross presumption to add to or to take from Jehovah's revelation. The churches of Christ reject in totality all human creeds, human confessions of faith, and manuals designed to guide the human family in matters of religion. Jesus possesses all authority and to him we bow (Matthew 21:23-27; 28:18-20).

(4) Another distinctive peculiarity of the churches of Christ is that scriptural organization of the church. There are no popes, presiding elders, arch-bishops, cardinals, or the like. There are no earthly headquarters, no state-overseers, no synods,

Some Distinctive Peculiarities Of The Churches Of Christ

Continued from page 3

no associations, no conferences, or the like.

Among churches of Christ each local church is autonomous, thus having the right or power of self-government. For example, the church at Philippi was composed of "saints . . . with the bishops and deacons" (Philippians 1:1; Cf. Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; I Timothy 5:17; 3:1-13). Hence, each church of Christ undertakes its own duty and carries out its own responsibilities without any outside control. This is the Lord's arrangement and is one of his greatest safe-guards!!

(5) Another peculiarity, when measured by denominational practice is: The churches of Christ worship according to divine fiat . . . authorization . . . sanction. Sectarian churches worship as they please. Worship can be wrong and sinful (Matthew 15:9; Acts 17:23; John 4:21-24). Worship is not a spectacle! Those who worship God do not engage in pageantry, if they follow the scriptures, seeking to entertain or catch the eye with some dramatic display.

The way to impress God is through simple acts of obedience, faith, as set forth in the New Testament. God is a Spirit Being and as such cannot be worshipped with machinery, e.g., organs, pianos and orchestras.

Acts 2:42 and Ephesians 5:19 reveal those items of worship authorized by divine authority: Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, and singing. The Lord's Supper is to be observed each Lord's day (Acts 20:7). We are commanded to sing — no play mechanical instruments of music (Colossians 3:16). We are commanded to give as prospered — no to beg, use sales or road-blocks to raise money for the Church (I Corinthians 16:2). All prayers must conform to God's will (I Jno. 5:14).

(6) Another peculiarity of the churches of Christ can be seen in the fact that Bible names are worn to the exclusion of all human names. It is often argued that there is nothing in a name, but such is ridiculous in the extreme! Would you purchase a house and lot

without making certain that your name is on the deed? Does it make no difference whose name is signed on a check? What man would be happy to have his wife wear some other man's name? Sometimes God changed the names of those ancient worthies. If there is nothing in a name, why were those names changed?

The name of Jesus is so important that no man can be saved in any other (Acts 4:12). It is true that God promised Israel a new name which would be given within his house (Isaiah 56:5-6; 62:2; 65:15). God's house is his church (I Timothy 3:14-15). Isaiah's prophecies were fulfilled at Antioch, when the disciples were "called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). We suggest that Romans 16:16; I Peter 4:16; Acts 26:28 be read and digested. From I Corinthians 1:10-15, it can be seen that God condemns human titles. We urge you to believe and obey the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ today. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Two Differing Attitudes In Determining Doctrinal Matters

It was on October 31, 1517 that Martin Luther nailed his famous petition containing his ninety-five theses to the door of the Catholic Church building in Wittenburg, Germany. This action is looked upon by many as the beginning of the great Protestant Reformation period. Of course, there were other men like John Huss and John Wycliffe who helped to lay the foundation for the outstanding work of Martin Luther. Luther was a monk in the Catholic Church who desired to reform some of the corrupt practices of his religious affiliation. There is no real evidence to suggest that he ever desired leaving the Catholic Church. His primary objective was to point out doctrinal and moral corruptions and to reform such. Luther contended for the supremacy of the Word of God over the writings of mortal man. We owe this man and others of his day a great deal of gratitude for the contributions they made in pointing out the weaknesses of the apostate church.



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

There was a contemporary of Luther by the name of Ulrich Zwingli from Zurich, Switzerland. He was the lesser in influence of the two men. Perhaps the personality, the place, or the position of Luther contributed to this fact. There existed two differing attitudes in determining doctrinal matters in these two men. Luther possessed the attitude that all which was not expressly forbidden in the Holy Scriptures could be retained in the church. Zwingli held the view that all was to be forbidden in the church unless it was authorized by the Holy Scriptures. To illustrate the difference existing between the attitudes of Luther and Zwingli, it would be something as the following. If religious zealots entered a Catholic building in Wittenburg, Germany and began to tear down the images, Luther would have objected to such actions on the ground that the New Testament does not expressly condemn having images in the place of worship. On the other hand, Zwingli would have commended, if not the destruction,

certainly the action to remove the images since there was found no authority for such in the Holy Scriptures.

This difference in attitudes is still prominent today in the religious world. Often we hear people say, "Well, the Bible doesn't say that we should not have this or that in our worship." True. But, would it always make a difference if the Bible did specifically condemn a widely accepted practice? Jesus clearly taught that we should "call no man your father on earth," but, look at the millions who refer to their religious leaders as "Fathers." The New Testament authorizes singing in worship (See Ephesians 5:19). But, where does it condone the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship? We also have the authority to immerse believers into Christ (See Mark 16:16; Galatians 3:26,27). The Bible on the other hand does not address the subject of sprinkling non-believers (infants). We can safely use unleavened

bread and the fruit of the vine as elements of the Lord's supper (See Exodus 12:15-20; Matthew 26:17, 26-29). But, the Bible says nothing about using orange juice and hotdog buns as elements for the Supper. We read where the early church partook of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (See I Corinthians 11:20,23-29; 16:1,2; Acts 20:7). But, where is the authority to partake of the Lord's Supper on another day such as Friday?

Your attitude toward the Scriptures will determine what you do in religious matters. Would to God that we all might heed the exhortation given by the apostle Paul when he said, "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us YE MIGHT LEARN NOT TO GO BEYOND THE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN . . ." (I Corinthians 4:6). — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp, Ala. 36467.

Fruit In Old Age

Someone has said, "Old age is when you know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions!" It seems that as soon as a man acquires fairly good sense, his is considered an old fogey. Perhaps there is a measure of truth in George Chapman's sage remark: "Young men think old men are fools, but old men know young men are fools."

Old age should not bring remorse, but rejoicing; it should not be ridiculed, but respected. Listen to the wisdom of Solomon: "The glory of young men is their strength; and the beauty of old men is the hoary head" (Proverbs 20:29). And did not David, Solomon's father, say of the righteous, "They shall bring forth fruit in old age"? (Psalms



DALTON KEY

92:14).

Take a good look at the history books. The world has seen much accomplished by those of advanced years. Socrates gave the world his wisest philosophy at 70. Plato was still a student at 50; he taught at 60. Noah Webster wrote his monumental dictionary at the age of 70. Thomas Scott learned German after living fourscore years. And according to Longfellow, Goeth completed Faust "when eighty years were past."

Neither have men of God allowed age to stifle their usefulness. Moses was 80 when he stood before Pharaoh; Aaron was 83 (Exodus 7:7). "Paul the aged" (Philemon 9) was still useful, as he had yet to pen the books of Titus and First and Second Timothy. The beloved John, the apostle of love, penned by inspiration his gospel account, three epistles, and the Revelation letter, all when well advanced in years.

Don't let your age get you down. Do what you can and don't worry about what you can't. And above all, remember — there is fruit in old age. — Box 563, Liberal, KS.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

... but speak forth
... wisdom."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1982

NUMBER 46

The Works Of The Flesh

W. A. HOLLEY

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envying, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21, ASV).

The foregoing words were addresses by Paul to "the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:1-2). How did these people become members of the church that existed in apostolic days? The answer can be found in Galatians 3:26-27, which reads: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (ASV).

Hence, the members of "the churches of Galatia" could so conduct themselves as to prevent their entrance into heaven. The allegation that "once in grace, always in grace," is a false doctrine!!

Like a buried seed, sin can be concealed but for a short time. Sins committed in secret will most certainly work their way to the surface, thus declaring their story of transgression (Numbers 32:23; Galatians 6:7-9).

The evil thoughts are certain to betray themselves in sinful actions (James 1:13-15; Matthew 15:18-19).

Sow an act and reap a habit.

Sow a habit and you reap a character.

Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

—Charles Reade

The fifteen sins designated as "the works of the flesh," may be grouped into four classifications. We shall note:

(I) THE SINS OF IMPURITY:

1. Fornication refers to illicit sexual intercourse. In Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, fornication stands for, or includes adultery. All people should live pure, chaste, and holy lives. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Homosexual and lesbian relationships are strictly forbidden by the Lord (Romans 1:18-32). Be it remembered that God will not tolerate licentiousness, even

though men may endorse it.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence [not in passion of lust, ASV], even as the Gentiles which know not God" (I Thessalonians 4:3-5).

(2) "Uncleanness" includes whatever is evil in thought, in word, in look, in gesture, in dress, etc. Uncleanness is the opposite of all purity. In all probability the word "uncleanness" as used in Romans 1:24 and in II Corinthians 12:21, refers to unnatural practices such as sodomy and bestiality.

(3) "Lasciviousness" has reference to shameless conduct, thus denoting the absence of restraint, indecency in speech and in deeds. This lasciviousness is bold, open, shameless, and the flagrant breach of public decency; it is the last word in sensuality.

(II) SINS OF IRREVERENCE AND DISRESPECT:

(1) "IDOLATRY." We tend to forget that we were made in the image of our Maker—God Almighty! God has always forbidden men to worship idols (Exodus 20:1-7; I Corinthians 10:6-11; Colossians 3:5). "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ" (Ephesians 5:5). The Sacred Scriptures teach that it is entirely possible for one to replace God with an idol or idols in his heart (Ezekiel 14:4, 7). Thus the covetous man gives his heart to the object of his greatest desire rather to God, and hence is virtually an idolater.

(2) "SORCERY" or "WITCHCRAFT." This is the employment of evil spirits in service to man. "There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or one that useth divination, or one that practiceth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deuteronomy 18:10-11). Thus all forms of magic and sorcery, all

kinds witchcraft and witchery, all efforts at wizardry and alchemy, and all assertions of thaumaturgy should and must be avoided. All palm reading, fortune telling, and horoscope readings are sins against God Almighty!! All astrologers and stargazers, in their vain efforts to predict the future, stand convicted as sinners before God!! (Isaiah 47:12-15; Cf. Daniel 1:20; 4:7; 5:7). Christians, trust in God, not in fortune tellers!

(III) SINS AGAINST TRUE LOVE:

(1) "Enmities." This is the sin of private hatred or family feuds which reveal a deep seated ill will. A list of some synonyms will help the reader to understand better what enmity really is: hostility, antipathy, antagonism, rancor, and animus.

(2) "Strife." This is enmity at work, working Havoc, within the church, in the family, and in the community. Strife destroys all friendships when it is permitted to continue. Often, personality conflicts are allowed to wreak division within the body of Christ. Rather than stir up strife, let us still troubled waters (Philippians 1:27; 2:105).

(3) "Jealousies." Here we have condemned the feeling of resentment toward others, toward a rival, for the sake of one's own advantage.

(4) "Wraths." This is a sin of hot anger or passionate outbursts which always attend strife. We often say of a person who possesses this trait of character that he is "quick to fly off the handle."

(5) "Factions." The underlying idea in the words "faction, factious" is ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, and self-will. Hence, the spirit of factious partisanship, brother at variance with brother. We should learn that faction is the fruit of jealousy.

(6) "Divisions, parties, heresies." These words suggest dissension or discord, a standing apart from the body of truth and righteousness. The word "division" is used in Romans 16:17, where believers are enjoined to mark those who cause division, and to turn away from them. Hence, those who hold an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is sub-

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church; on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$8.00 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Works Of The Flesh

Continued from page 1

stituted for submission to the power of truth, leads to division and the formation of sects or parties. Thus, these erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage. Oftentimes, supporters of factions or heresies, will work harder for, and sacrifice more for their pet programs, than they will for God's truth and righteousness.

(7) 'Envy.' It is the feeling of displeasure produced by seeing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others. Pilate "knew that for envy" the Jews had delivered up Jesus Christ to be crucified (Matthew 27:18). Thus, this evil sense always attaches to this word! Can Christians afford to be guilty of such??

(IV) SINS OF INTEMPERANCE:

(1) "Drunkenness." In our day, it is the practice of drinking wine, beer, whiskey or other intoxicants for the purpose of becoming drunk. This sin goes back to Noah's day, and perhaps beyond the flood (Genesis 9:20; Cf. 6:1-8). Ancient history shows that drunkenness has been a common problem of man throughout the succeeding generations. Drunkards cannot enter heaven!

(2) "Revellings." This word indicates luxuriousness or daintiness in revelling such as would occur in the White House or the Governor's Mansion, or such as would occur in some barroom where people are drinking alcoholic beverages. Revelling, therefore, is any kind of carousals or riotous and unseemly conduct. It is defined as jovial festivity with music and dancing. It is associated with drunkenness (I Peter 4:3-5).

(3) "And such like." Included in these words are all other words, thoughts and deeds which proceed from evil passions similar to those described in the Holy Bible. The passage concludes, saying, "Of the which I tell you before, as I also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Al 35580.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

He Sold Out

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions" (Mark 10:22). The foregoing words bring to a conclusion the account of our Lord's meeting with the rich, young, ruler. And what sad words these are, for they tell us that the young man sold out to the devil. He was interested in eternal life, and came to the Lord asking what he might do to inherit it. But when the Lord put him to the test, he really was not as interested in eternal life as he had perhaps thought. When the Lord offered him eternal life in exchange for his releasing his hold upon material things, he refused. To put it another way, when the devil offered him the riches of this world in exchange for his soul, he sold out.



BOB DUNCAN

But let us not be too severe in our judgment of him until we have at least imagined ourselves in his same situation. What if our Lord said, "If you want eternal life, you will have to give up all your material possessions"? Would we be willing to do it? There goes the house, the cars, the bank account, the boat and motor, the vacation cottage, and everything else we might own. Would we pay the price?

"Oh," one might say, "but the Lord does not demand that of us." You are right, of course, but maybe not altogether right. Is it not a fact that the Lord required this of the ruler because he knew the ruler's heart was wrapped up in material things, and that unless he gave up these material things he could never really give his heart to the Lord? This is, without doubt, the thing Jesus had in mind when he said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Is it not a fact that many have held so tightly to one thing or another that they cannot really give the Lord his rightful place in their lives? Like the ruler, they know something of the value of eternal life, and would like to claim it for their own. But like him also, they have their hearts all wrapped up in other matters, and these matters are allowed to take top priority in their lives. Like the ruler, they bow before the Lord, call him "Good Master," and even inquire concerning his will for them. But like the ruler also, they give real allegiance to another master, and are willing to obey Christ only to the extent his commands do not require anything unpleasant, distasteful, or inconvenient.

The ruler is a picture of those in every age who know about Christ, who have an interest in the salvation he offers, who even take very significant steps in the direction of that salvation, but who, for whatever reasons, are not able to bring

themselves to place Christ at the top of their list of priorities. The only real difference is that the ruler did not deceive himself into thinking he was following the Lord while he held tenaciously to the things of the world. He did not pretend to be a disciple of Jesus when, in fact, his heart was all wrapped up in his material possessions. He simply turned his back on the Savior and walked away.

Are not the church rolls swollen with the names of those who want the salvation Jesus offers, but who obviously give a great deal more attention to other matters than they do to the religion of the Lord? Are they really deceiving themselves into thinking they are followers of Christ when, in fact, they have such little interest in his kingdom as to limit their religious activity to the period of worship on Sunday morning? When their giving represents no significant percentage of their respective incomes? When they give little more than a passing notice to such things as visitation? The ruler knew better than these that following Christ means doing so with the whole heart, and he simply did not pretend.

It seems significant also that Jesus did not follow after the ruler as he walked away, trying to persuade him to reconsider, or offering to compromise. This fact certainly could not be interpreted as a lack of love on the part of Christ. (Mark 10:21 says that Jesus loved him.) What else could Jesus say? He had set forth in clear language the terms upon which the ruler could have eternal life. Unlike some today who feel that people must be enticed with material things to become interested in following the Lord, Jesus made it plain that these things can actually be a hindrance to spirituality.

What kind of an attitude would have to characterize the rich young ruler in order for him to have eternal life? It would have to be the attitude that eternal life is worth whatever price has to be paid for it. Had that been his attitude, he never would have hesitated to do exactly what the Lord commanded him. Unfortunately, he did not feel that way about it and did not obey the Lord. In the final analysis, isn't that the very attitude that all must have in order to be saved, i.e., that eternal life is worth having at whatever cost? And is it not also the case that many have turned their backs on the Lord and walked away simply because they, like the rich, young ruler, are unwilling to pay the price?

Do we judge the choice of the ruler to have been a wise one? Or do we judge it to have been a foolish one? The answer is clear, but not nearly so important to us as the answer to the following question: What kind of choice will we make? Will it be wise? Or will it be foolish?

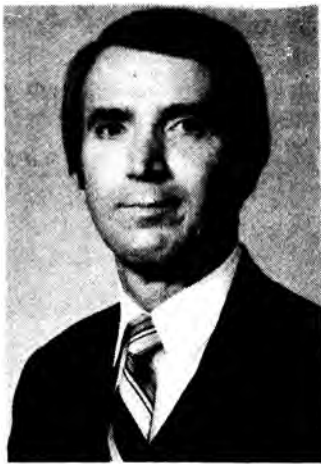
A popular preacher is one who knows where to draw the line between preaching and meddling.

Every Christian occupies some kind of a pulpit and preaches some kind of a sermon every day

Families that pray together stay together, and families that work together — eat.

Who Cares For The Needy?

It is a principle taught in both the Old and New Testaments that we are to take care of the poor and needy. This care is to include the "household of faith" and the stranger or outsider. In fact James writes that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). No one would deny this. However, I think we need to remind ourselves who bears this responsibility of caring for the needy.



NOBLE McKNIGHT

The New Testament places the care of the needy in a number of hands. Parents are responsible for the care of their children. Paul writes: "the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (II Cor. 12:14). In I

Timothy chapter 5 we are taught that one who will not provide for his own "hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). This same chapter teaches that relatives are to care for those who are their kinsfolk, that the church may be free to care for those who are without help, "widows indeed" (I Tim. 5:16). Jesus taught that children have a responsibility to care for their dependent parents. "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother' and 'Whoever curses father or mother, let him be executed.' But you, say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'What you would have received from me is Corban, that is to say consecrated to God, he is exempt,' you no longer permit him to do anything for his father and mother. Thus you annul God's word through your traditions which you have handed down" (Mk. 7:10-13). To shirk this responsibility by giving the money even for religious purposes would be to substitute for God's commands the traditions of men. Individuals comprising a household can minister to the needs of the saints. "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints)" (I Cor. 16:15).

The New Testament also lays upon the church the obligation to care for the needy. In Acts 6 the church relieved the needs of the destitute widows with a daily ministrations which was provided through the liberality of the early Christians in Jerusalem. Earlier in its history, the Jerusalem church had helped various needy persons. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:44,45). Paul had commanded the churches of Galatia to make collections for the poor and he gave the same command to the church at Corinth. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 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" (I Cor. 16:1,2). Since there are always those who are unable to assume their obligations, as well as those unwilling to assume them the church has a responsibility for constant help to the needy.

Let us all assume our responsibilities in this matter so that the church will not be overcharged. — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.

Contaminated Minds

Our nation was shocked at the news of Tylenol contamination in the Chicago area, resulting in seven deaths from cyanide poisoning. Such an act defies comprehension and no adjective is adequate to describe it. The fact that our society is plagued with sick minds is evidenced by subsequent contamination of Visine eye drops, Lavis mouthwash and certain soft drinks. These can hardly be acts of personal vendetta because the villains can hardly know who their victims will be. These are obviously malicious acts of mad-men with sick minds who are seeking to spread terror throughout the nation.



S. G. GRAY

The Johnson & Johnson Company is to be commended for hastily withdrawing all Tylenol in capsules, realizing that only a fraction of the bottles were contaminated; willing to lose millions in profits rather than endanger another human life. Indeed, one human life is worth more than millions. All sane people realize this.

As terrible as the act of poisoning Tylenol and endangering lives, more terrible is the act of mixing error with the pure word of God. In the first case physical life is endangered; in the second case spiritual life is endangered. Jesus said on one occasion, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Jesus is here pointing out the fact that a man's soul is of far greater value than his physical body. A contaminated gospel destroys souls for eternity. "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached

unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:7-8).

Truth and error simply do not mix. So dangerous is error in religion that the strongest warnings in God's word are warnings about false teachers. Jesus described false teachers as ravaging wolves appearing in sheep's clothing, and as blind guides (Matthew 7:15; 15:14). The apostle John describes false doctrine as "evil" (II John 11).

Likely the Tylenol episode will result in tamper-

proof bottling to protect the public from the contaminated minds in our society. God's word already contains precautions against being deceived: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Before swallowing anybody's doctrine, each of us should examine it carefully to be sure that it is pure. — P.O. Box 856 Washington, Ga. 30673.

Has God Become An Idol

JAMES M. ALLEN

Is it possible for those who confess the one true God, to make an idol out of God? This may well describe the condition in the church today wherein Christian people proclaim God's existence and hold him in reverence, then turn around and treat God as if he were an idol, not a real, living and active God to be taken seriously. This may explain the anemic condition that exists in so many congregations today.

We have made an idol of God. Somewhere along the way men have lost a fear of hell, and the availability of so many material things have led men to exchange that unseen future reward for that which can be seen and had now. As a result of this, the form of true religion is there but the hearts of the believers are not really in it, and they do not take seriously the threats and promises of God. There is no driving compulsion among the brethren to make known the name of Jesus, not even to those across the street, much less those across the sea.

We know that God exists but we just don't believe his threats and promises anymore. It is as if we had paid tribute to his existence but somewhere in the back of our minds we have come to think that God is only wood or stone. It is quite shocking to think such a thought, isn't it? Yet our irresponsible action, our letting his cause go down, and our

failure to follow his commands can but speak of nothing else.

Since 1965 the church of Christ has fallen from the fastest growing religious group in America to our present thirteenth place. This means that twelve other religious groups are growing faster than we are. Unless something is done to infuse new life and zeal into the body of believers, the church of Christ will fade out of existence by the half-mark of the next century. Where is the pride we once had in our great Bible knowledge? No group knew more about the scriptures than did we. Where is the zeal that once held great meetings, all day services with dinner on the ground and singing in the afternoon? Nowadays we complain if the preacher preaches for more than thirty minutes. Now we're out to beat the Baptists but only to the restaurant on Sunday, not over the scriptures. What I'm saying is that all of these changes have resulted in almost zero growth rate for the church. I'm afraid that it all adds up to our treating God as an idol. But he isn't! God is still living and active and he will accomplish his purpose on earth. Our treatment will continue and deliverance will arise from another source, but we'll fall along the way. Brethren, awake and arise while there is still time. — P.O. Box 512 Jacksonville, Ala. 36265.

Wisdom Of Old Sayings On Marriage

Leo Rosten reported some old Jewish sayings he learned as a boy. One of them was, "When two divorced people marry, four get into bed."

There is a lot of wisdom in that old saying and it indicates why the divorce rate may well be higher the second time around. One may always be comparing or fearing comparison.

This is just one reason why parents urge their children not to marry a divorced person.



MARTEL PACE

However, when one is divorced he should be able to better understand the problems another divorced person faces. Roy Lanier said, "Let the divorced marry the divorced!" There is wisdom in that. It may seem unfair, but life is very unfair when we have either made mistakes or wrongs have been done us. We pay dearly for past errors.

It is a fact that we never undo a single

If you need some kind of an excuse, see your preacher; he has heard more than anybody else.

No one can live in doubt when he has prayed in faith.

All forms of gambling are frowned upon by preachers — except marriage.

sin, although forgiven of it. We may well pay the consequences until our dying day. When a divorce occurs there is no way of ever overcoming all the heartache it causes. Isn't preventive medicine better? Marry a Christian! Marry another with real commitment to the Lord and to marriage! Marry for life the first and only time! — 3414 Elaine Dr. Montgomery, Ala. 36109.

Congress is a legislative body whose members make the laws and whose chaplain prays for the country.

Preachers and lawyers are paid for zeal, but fools dish it out for nothing.

If the church is ever to get on its feet, it must get on its knees.

The Most Neglected Commandment?

W. W. HAYES

What is the most neglected commandment among God's children? There are many responses to this question: (1) not giving as one should, (2) the practice of church discipline, (3) caring for the widows and orphans, (4) non-attendance at the worship and other gatherings of the saints, etc. The list would probably vary from locality to locality, as there are problems peculiar to each. As far as a universal command, it is my conviction that the answer is found in Hebrews 10:24: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works."

Yea, we do not provoke one another unto love and good works! When is the last time you encouraged your fellow Christian to help you in a good work? Have you asked anyone to

go with you to visit a delinquent member? Has anyone gone with you to visit the sick in the hospitals or in their homes? Incidentally, when is the last time you visited the sick? Have you encouraged those capable of teaching Bible classes or cottage meetings to do so? Who have you taken with you to help the widow, the orphan or the needy? Have you encouraged young people to become involved with other Christians in the work of God? When a preacher is hired, all of these things are expected of him by the membership. That is not what the passage says. Brethren, these are just a few of the examples of the business of God's kingdom which we should encourage each other to do. Hebrews 10:24 is just as much a command as the command to be baptized in Mark 16:16.

Why do I think this is the universally neglected command? Simply this: If we provoke each other to love and good works, none of us will have the time to neglect the other commands of attendance, visiting the sick and needy, or the many other activities required of Christians. There probably never would be a need for church discipline. Read it again: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." This is the reason for the rapid growth of the church in the first century. They had all things common, they helped one another, they preached publicly and from house to house, and the gospel was proclaimed to the whole civilized world in their generation. We can do it too.—1037 Linthicum Street Tarrant, Alabama, 35217.

Pop Goes Religion

Winfrey Hennessee

Most of us are familiar with a TV show which originates out of Nashville, Tenn. called "Pop Goes The Country". It seems that those who are supposed to know have seen fit to combine pop and country music into one. Some have even gone so far as to say they have been united in marriage. This statement is a little surprising, because some of these same people would not hesitate to proclaim the marriage system to be an absolute tradition, which has outlived its usefulness.

Most true country music fans would readily agree that the result has been disastrous. Such trash as we hear on the radio and TV these days would be unbelievable to our ancestors. Modern organs with their electronic keyboards eliminate the need for any talent whatsoever. Violins and banjos as we knew them are now useless, because they cannot be heard over the sound of the drums. Most of the singers' talents seem to be in the movement of their bodies, if we could call it talent. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians has a word which he uses for this, called revellings (meaning obscene songs and such like). He also says that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21).

We still have a few diehards who refuse to play this kind of music, but nothing can change

one's mind like the promise of a large sum of money. Well-to-do people have been known to become "blind" and "deaf" overnight because of a few dollars.

As we look about us, we are reminded that country music is not the only thing which is disappearing from the American scene. Now and then there is talk of a drive-in church where those who wish can partake of the Lord's supper without getting out of their car. (Makes one wonder if there would be a menu posted nearby — and would we be able to order up a cup of fellowship)? I suppose very little time would be taken in order to attend a church like this, but of course that is part of the plan.

Many preachers who claim to be good servants of the Lord have altered their sermons to conform with these modern times. Galatians 5 must not be mentioned because it condemns dancing and drunkenness. After all, this is the twentieth century, you know.

It seems that instead of the world's conforming to God's laws, man is trying to make the Bible conform to the world. The Apostle Paul told the Romans, "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" (Rom. 12:2).

Were it not for the power of God, a hand-

ful of good gospel preachers, and a few righteous people who love the Lord, religion would already have gone the way of country music. — P.O. Box 185, McMinnville, TN 37110.

These Three

EARLENE ROSE

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. — I Corinthians 13:13.

Faith, hope, and charity,
How beautiful these three;
Faith — that there is tomorrow,
And hope — that I might see

The dawning of tomorrow,
And know God's love for me.
Faith, hope, and charity,
How beautiful these three. — 1701 20th Ave., Northport, Ala. 35476.

The judgment of a man on a subject on which he is prejudiced isn't really worth much.

Prayer can keep us out of trouble a lot easier than it can get us out of trouble.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, r.
the Words of Truth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1982

NUMBER 47

The Spirit Is The Main Part Of Man

(Gus Nichols 1892-1975)

(We are indebted to brother Flavil Nichols for transcribing this material of his father's from a tape recording. This week — November 16 — marks the seventh anniversary of the passing of brother Gus Nichols. "His works do follow him." — Editor)

We used to sing:

Each one in life is building a temple of his own.
Choose well the foundation, wisely the corner-stone.
For earth's mightiest works shall perish and decay;
The piles of brick and granite, the years shall sweep away.

But SOULS live on forever — in joy, or misery.
And CHARACTER is destined to last eternally.

We are right now building character. The SOUL is somewhat like a great skyscraper, and the body is like the scaffolding round about it. During this lifetime we are working, not on the scaffolding — not polishing and painting up the old scaffolding round about — but we are working on the SKYSCRAPER! We are working on CHARACTER. We are working to build GREAT souls of our SOULS! The soul is to grow and develop, and become mature, in God's sight.

SOULS don't die: "Fear not them which kill the BODY," said Jesus, "but are not able to kill the SOUL" (Matt. 10:28). They may put the BODY in a furnace, and burn it into ashes; but the SOUL does not burn into ashes! At death, it leaves that body, and "returns to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). "Absent from the body," said Paul, it is "present with the Lord!" (II Cor. 5:6). "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (verse 8). "For to me to live is Christ" — benefitting to the cause of Christ; "to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

To a Christian, death is not a great tragedy: "... to die is GAIN!" "What I shall choose, I wot not" (I don't know); "for I am in a strait" (spelled S-T-R-A-I-T, meaning in a difficult, position; it does not mean, not crooked; but it means a difficult, or a perplexed, state or position): "I am in a strait betwixt two" — two desires. What are they? He said one of them was to "depart, and be with

Christ." Well, what do you think about that option, Paul? He says, "It is far better." In the American Standard Version, he says it "is very far better." So, it is not just "better," but it is "far better!" And, it is not just "better," or "far better;" it is "very far better" than the other choice!

Paul said there are two alternatives; what is the other one? "To abide in the flesh, which is more needful to you." But the first is "better," "far better," and "very far better" than to "abide in the flesh," and be a great Apostle, be a great preacher of the gospel unto the civilized world of his day!

You have a SOUL that is not going to die. Your heart or spirit is not going to get any change at all — not now, nor forever! — except that change it gets in conversion, and in Christian growth and development. That is all!

But someone may say, "O, we'll get a great change in the resurrection!" Bless your heart, there is not a verse in the Bible that even *hints* at the idea that the SPIRIT will be resurrected! For it does not die! It does not go to the graveyard! Solomon said, "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, then . . ." — that's DEATH! — "THEN shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:6-7).

So, all the change the soul, or spirit, of man will ever get will have to be obtained right here in this life, in conversion. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). God thus proposes to blot out our sins, *provided* we meet the terms, meet the conditions. His stipulated conditions are not for the purpose of PAYING FOR SALVATION! These conditions do not EARN salvation! Salvation is "by grace" (Eph. 2:8-9)! But the conditions are for the purpose of making *us* better, and getting *us* fit for heaven.


Now, if there were nothing to be done, other than for God to just raise bodies from the grave and pop them into heaven, then he would be populating heaven with sinners!

The BODY can't live until the SPIRIT gets back into it. James says, "The *body* without the SPIRIT is dead" (Jas. 2:26). It is found "dead" when

the SPIRIT leaves it; and it will *stay* "dead" until the SPIRIT comes back into it. This is why, "Them also that sleep in Jesus will God *bring with him*" (I Thess. 4:14). Paul wrote about "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all his saints*" (I Thess. 3:13). And Jude quotes: "Behold, the Lord cometh *with ten thousands of his saints*" (Jude 14). He must bring these SPIRITS back before there can be a resurrection of the body! But, when one's SPIRIT enters into the body, it will be that same SPIRIT that left that body down here.

The SPIRIT is the intelligent part of man (I Cor. 2:11). That is the part that must be "converted." Remember Jesus' statement: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" but he told Nicodemus (who thought only of a NATURAL birth) that he was not talking about that kind of a birth. Jesus then said, "That which is born of the Spirit" — of the Holy Spirit, in other words — "is S-P-I-R-I-T." It is the *spirit* of man that is born again! Materialists tell us that the SPIRIT of man is no part of the "man." Well, if that were so, then it follows that (1) that which is no part of "man" gets the new birth — and (2) the "man" is not born again! Yet Jesus said, "Except a MAN be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3). Jesus also said that it is the SPIRIT that gets the new birth. If the SPIRIT is no part of "man" and yet the "man" must be born again, then when he gets the birth of the SPIRIT, the "man" still is not born again! But that isn't so! The SPIRIT is the main part of "man."

God has promised "eternal life" in "the world to come" for those who obey him (Mk. 10:30). He will raise our bodies from the graves (Jn. 5:28-29), and take us to heaven. When the clouds begin to fall on the casket of one of my loved ones, I'm not going to feel like an infidel! I am going to say, "The God who holds this whole earth up in space (Job 26:7), can take care of this little job, the resurrection!" Just as surely as a grain of corn can rot and perish, go back to dust — and yet a new life come up out of it, God can also raise us from the dead, and can "Change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21).



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Joy Of Repentance

RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

When repentance from sin is mentioned we usually think of the sorrow that accompanies the broken and contrite heart (Matthew 5:4; II Corinthians 7:10). And this certainly must be at the core and foundation of repentance. Without godly sorrow true repentance cannot be. We need to teach clearly the necessity of having the contrite spirit.

But a problem arises when we fail to teach further about the fruit of repentance — its last result. That fruit is great and unspeakable JOY! Certainly not joy over having committed a sin requiring repentance, but joy over the confidence of knowing that that sin has been forgiven by God. Too often we equate God's forgiveness to our poor excuses for forgiveness. Our memory keeps the sin active in our minds; also we have had those of our brothers who have been asked to forgive and they refuse. But GOD IS NOT LIKE THAT! When he forgives he forgets. Read Isaiah 55:7. The repentance is by all means necessary, but if it is true and genuine, God forgives — even ABUNDANTLY!

With that true fact and promise in mind, shouldn't we have JOY over forgiveness? No matter what sin or sins we may have been guilty of, if we truly repent we will be forgiven. The conscience is now clear and guilt-free, if we allow it to be.

So, we rejoice in our own forgiveness. Oh, yes, we remember our sins and their wages (Romans 6:23) just enough to keep from doing them again. But we, along with Paul, joyfully say, "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). — P.O. Box 4171 Warrington, FL 32507.

Those who are so perturbed over the present divorce rate evidently do not understand the law of supply and demand. There are more lawyers in this country than there are preachers.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Why Can't We See It?



BOB DUNCAN

We have reached the point in the history of the church when a great number of gospel preachers have yielded to the pressure to preach no more against such sins as dancing, smoking, social drinking, and the wearing of immodest apparel. Pressure, I say, not necessarily from elders who have asked their preacher not to mention these matters, but from a large segment of the members who, feigning culture and dignity, let it be known to the preacher that they consider it uncultured and undignified to mention these things specifically from the pulpit. Some have implied that references to these by the preacher — especially references to immodest apparel — reveal an impure mind, and that those with pure minds could not possibly find very much wrong with a woman's appearing in public in shorts, in a swimsuit, or in such attire as normally characterizes cheerleaders and majorettes. Many preachers have been intimidated by such implications, and have stopped mentioning this sin in their sermons.

In a recent episode (maybe a rerun) of the popular television comedy series, *The Jeffersons*, some young women were hired to work in Charlie's bar, and the costumes they wore covered their bodies about like a one piece swimsuit or the average majorette uniform. The wives of the men on the program were incensed, and immediately began to coerce their husbands (who became partners with Charlie in the operation) to get rid of these girls. The very idea! Why would these women pay any attention to such dress? Are they impure in their thoughts? Are they uncultured and undignified to bring up such matters?

At one point one of the ladies on the program referred to the girls who were working at Charlie's bar as being "naked." She subsequently explained that they were "half naked." Preacher's have been sharply criticized and taken to task for using this same kind of language in describing the same kind of situation. Why? If people of the world can recognize nakedness or half-nakedness when they see it, then why shouldn't Christians? (*The Jeffersons* are definitely people of the world.) And if the people of the world can call nakedness what it really is, then why should Christian people pretend that nakedness is not really nakedness?

One of the things the wives objected to was the fact that these girls were being exploited, that is, their being dressed as they were attracted customers, and made the business very lucrative. But this was considered by the wives as being an unethical use of the girls for the monetary advantage of the men. What a shame! But though these people of the world could see that, many of my brethren would not be able to do so. Is it all wrong for women to dress in revealing clothing to work in a bar, but all right for them to dress in the same kind of clothing to go to the super market, or to the swimming

pool, or to march in front of the band, or to lead cheers at a ballgame? If so, would someone please tell me why?

Mind you, please, that the stir among the wives on *The Jeffersons* did not arise because the girls in Charlie's bar were wearing topless uniforms or even bikinis. They were instead uniforms that covered top and bottom about like the normal one piece swimsuit or the average majorette uniform. It is a sad day when those redeemed by the blood of Christ accept and defend standards of dress which would cause a stir even among those who are very worldly.

Yes, I know *The Jeffersons* is purely fiction, but the attitudes represented in the program are real.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9,10).

Dear sister, the next time you dress in your revealing attire to go out into public, stand before a full-length mirror, and ask yourself if what you see is truly that "which becometh women professing godliness." If you will be honest, your judgment will coincide with that of the wives on *The Jeffersons*.

"Be Ye Thankful"

Could we ever adequately express our thanks to our heavenly Father for all the good things he has given us? With all our problems in America, is there any other place on earth you would rather live?

We occasionally sing the hymn, *Count Your Many Blessings*, name them one by one. We should practice that exhortation daily. Man is prone to take good things for granted. Ere long we get to feeling that life, health and provision are ours by right or dessert. It often takes an experience like Job's to make us realize that the Lord gave and the Lord can take away his gifts (Job 1:21).

At a time in history when things look rather dark and dreary, when the news reports have the whole world scene draped in black, Christians need to look up unto him from whom all blessings flow (Ps. 121:1). And though the situation may seem rather bleak to mortal eyes, he who rules the nations is working all things together for good to them that love him (Rom. 8:28).

In the words of David, "Fret not thyself" (Psalms 37:1). In the words of Paul, "Be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.



JOHN WADDEY

"Buying A Bottle In Alabama Will Be As Easy As ABC"

W. A. HOLLEY

The foregoing caption was the glaring headline in the Birmingham News, Section 9, Sunday, June 7, 1981.

Mr. Joe Broadwater, who heads the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, thinks that the sale of alcohol should be made more modern and attractive. He wants to get away from "stores in out-of-the way places." He is moving "these liquor stores to well-lighted locations with plenty of parking, such as shopping centers." Efforts are being made to change the old stores into "self-service," like the modern-day supermarket.

Mr. Broadwater is extremely proud of his accomplishment thus far. "We are now operating more stores with fewer employees. We have 116 fewer workers than when I came here, and we have gone from 124 to 133 stores," he said. He claims that he is "operating a business which made from whiskey sales a profit of \$51.4 million last year."

Mr. Broadwater wants his customers to be happier. "We have a different type of shopper. Our shoppers want parking . . . We have more and more women shoppers. They don't like the old type stores," he said. When Mr. Broadwater took over the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, there was only one self-service store. Now there are 23 self-service stores. Seven more will open this month, and 10 more are being converted to self-service, according to this report. It is said that within two years 90 per cent of Alabama's liquor stores will be self-service.

As an example, in Montgomery, Mr. Broadwater's folks took over a "huge store that was once a supermarket located in Normandale Shopping Center, and turned it into what is now the state's largest self-service liquor store."

In short, Mr. Broadwater is selling alcoholic beverages. He wants to sell more and more, in increasing volume. The store employees are now wearing gold smocks, and each wears a large name tag. Mr. Broadwater said, "We want people, especially in the self-service stores, to be able to recognize our employees. We are in business of service."

Recently, the Birmingham Post-Herald ran a rather long series of articles devoted to dangers of drunken drivers. The state of Alabama needs (?) to increase the sales of alcoholic beverages. In this fashion crime in all its forms can also be increased. We can be blessed (?) with more murders, more divorces, more people (both men and women) can fill the jails and penitentiaries, more wrecks on our highways, more crippled and maimed victims of alcohol. How hypocritical it is for public officials to urge restraint in the consumption of alcohol and then go on, through artful advertising, urging and persuading our people to purchase more and more alcoholic beverages!!

Authorities inform us that alcohol is today's number one social problem. In the United States there are 10 million alcoholic addicts. It is said that the alcoholic beverage industry spends \$500,000,000 each year on advertising. At the near end of the year, during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year period, the liquor industry alone spends \$30 million to entice the weak and gullible to consume its wares. This fact explains why Christmas day, or one of the two days preceding it, usually is found to have the worst record of vehicle accidents for the year.

It is often said that the Prohibition Period was a failure. In an effort to deceive the general public, the liquor industry wants us to think of illegal whiskey, black-markets, gangs of outlaws, and the like. What is the real truth regarding this matter??

During the Prohibition Era, from 1919 till 1933, what happened? (1) Crime decreased 54 percent.

(2) The death rate due to liquor decreased 43 percent. (3) Ninety-seven of the 98 Keely Alcoholic Clinics closed for lack of patients. (4) Insanity due to alcohol decreased 66 percent. (5) All 60 Neil Cure Clinics closed for lack of patients afflicted with alcoholism.

What has happened during the Post-Prohibition Era thus far? (1) Drunkenness has increased 350 percent or more. (2) Crime has spiraled until we have no space in which to incarcerate criminals. (3) 50 percent of all traffic accidents are alcohol related. (4) There are now 10 million or more alcoholics living in our nation. Of this number 3.5 million are 14 to 17 years of age.

Let us look at an example of what the legal sale of alcohol does: In Pennsylvania, of the 17,069 accidents in which drinking was the cause, the State Police found that 797 persons were killed and 15,729 injured. This means 75 percent of the highway deaths can be blamed on drunken driving. In face of this appalling toll, the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board has expanded its roving patrols, the targets being bars and tavern owners selling liquor to minors and intoxicated persons. It was said that minors hold only 12 percent of the licenses but account for 26 percent of the deaths.

We add for your consideration these facts: There are three bars for every school in the United States.

More, seventy percent of today's teenagers have had alcoholic beverages. One in five persons, 13 to 15 years of age, is a drinker. Alarmingly, five percent of all teenagers get drunk at least once a week, every week. The number of teenagers arrested for drunken driving has more than tripled in the last twenty years. Could these shocking facts account for the appalling and dreadful and macabre report that six hundred and fifty teenagers commit suicide each week in the United States of America??

One myth that needs to be exploded is: That the sale of liquor pays its way, and adds extra dollars for the construction of schools and highways, and other projects deemed to be desirable by various local and state officials. Such is just not the case!! Note, a total of federal, state, and local revenues from alcoholic beverages came to \$11,127,800 for the year. The Health and Human Services Department of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism give these figures for the same year for alcohol-related expenses such as the loss of production, health, medical, accidents, etc., as \$68,617,579,000. The liquor industry cannot and does not pay its way!! Factually, legal liquor sales costs each citizen \$616 in losses for every dollar that was collected from taxes. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Love And Responsibility

Once, while attending a local social event, I heard a very talented humorist and actor say in a serious mood that love and responsibility were just about synonymous in his thinking. The more I thought on that statement, the more I agreed with his conclusion. The word *love* is certainly misunderstood, misused and misapplied so often today. The extreme would be that type of love which permits sexual promiscuity without the responsibilities of family ties. But, the Bible love speaks of giving — of responsibility. If I truly love my wife and my family, I will shoulder certain responsibilities which God has placed upon me as a husband and a father. If I love my neighbor, I will do him good and not evil (Romans 13:8-10). Actually, love demands obedience. Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If I am a Christian, I will fulfill my responsibilities. After all, love motivated God to give his Son and his Son to give his life (John 3:16; 15:12,13).

To the same degree that love fills my life will I respond to my obligations as a Christian. Those deeds done only out of demand and not desire tend to take away from the beauty of holiness. As my love for God matures, so will my life in Christ Jesus. As a Christian, I should act out of a heart of love. I should not think in terms of just complying with a strict set of rules, but, because I am a child of God I will desire to live in harmony with his will. How much do I pray? How much do I give of my talents, my money and my time to the Lord? How much do I study and meditate on his word? How much kindness and concern do I manifest toward my fellowman? Do I speak of Jesus often? When you answer



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

these questions, you will begin to have some idea as to your love for God.

For approximately four years, I discussed with a brother in Christ the need for attending the Wednesday evening Bible study period. He kept demanding a verse that stated, "Thou shalt attend Wednesday night Bible Study." I kept responding, "Love requires it." I am happy to say, when that brother began to mature in his love for the Lord, he became an habitual attendee to this period of Bible study. Yes, I believe that love and responsibility are kindred in nature. — 809 Perry Store Rd. Opp, Ala. 36467.

Worship

God has always required man to worship him. Cain and Abel worshiped God. "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offspring" (Gen. 4:2-4). If we only had this passage, we would of necessity draw the conclusion God is a respecter of persons. Several passages say he does not show partiality with persons.

In speaking about the acceptance of the Gentiles as subjects of the gospel. "Then Peter opened his



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Continued on page 4

Worship

Continued from page 3

mouth and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Since God is not a respecter of persons, how do we harmonize these passages?

The writer of Hebrews wrote, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain . . ." (Heb. 11:4). As we continue to read, we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

Paul tells us the origin of faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Therefore, Abel acted by faith. Cain's worship was will worship. Instead of worshiping as God directed, he worshiped as he himself wanted to worship.

The Jews, under the law of Moses, gathered at Jerusalem three times a year to worship. They celebrated three feasts. They were: (1) the feast of unleavened bread or the Passover, (2) the feast of harvest or Pentecost and, (3) the feast of ingathering. All males had to appear before Jehovah three times a year (Ex. 23 & Lev. 23).

Jesus lived and died under the law of Moses. He first went up to Jerusalem to worship at the age of twelve. He was regular in his worship at the temple.

The woman at the well said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" (John 4:20-21).

Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). The mountains were where Jeroboam had led the ten northern tribes of Israel and set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel and commanded God's people to worship them. These were the same people who were carried away into Assyrian captivity. They intermarried with other nations. They therefore lost identity as the people of God. They became the Samaritans (neither Jew nor Gentile).

The Jews of the nation of Judah continued to worship at Jerusalem as commanded by God. They knew what they worshiped.

A change was coming. Jesus said, "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Much of the Jewish worship was pure ceremony. God would not accept worship that came from the emotion of man. As it was in the day of Cain and Abel, and Nadab and Abihu (who were slain for getting fire from the wrong place for the Altar), God demands that worship be according to truth.

When the church was established in Jerusalem, we read, "And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). They continued stedfastly. They were not haphazard in their worship. They were regular as clockwork. They studied the doctrine of Christ as a part of their worship. They gave of their means as they prospered. They partook of the Lord's supper (breaking bread) to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and to proclaim his second coming. They prayed to God together.

Worship means to venerate or reckon venerable. To venerate means, "To regard with respect, reverence, or heartfelt deference (The American Heri-

tage Dictionary of the English Language).

The day of this special worship service of Acts 2:42 is the first day of the week. Paul traveled "from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the Disciples came together to break bread . . ." (Acts 20:6-7). In verse 16 we learn Paul was in haste to get to Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost (the first day of the week). The Lord's supper is the center of worship in the Lord's Church.

Studying God's word in worship to him is an important item of worship. A knowledge of God's word is necessary to produce faith in us. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). A balanced gospel must be proclaimed. In Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus he stated, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). We must preach to develop the whole man. The needs of the church must be met in our preaching.

THE TRUTH MUST BE PREACHED WITHOUT ADDITION OR SUBTRACTION. The wise man, Solomon, wrote, "Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Prov. 23:23). Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP A TEACHER OR PREACHER IS NECESSARY. The preacher has a grave responsibility. James warns, "My brethren, be not many masters [teachers, WEK], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1). One who teaches the gospel must have faith in God and his word. He must

have an uncompromising spirit. He must be emotionally strong.

Even in the first century, there were those teaching another gospel. Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye received let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9). It did not take long before there was a departure from God's revealed will. In this passage both the false teacher and those who accept the false teaching are condemned.

John wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). There are those today who say, we should not divide over doctrine. Doctrine is not important; what is important is our faith in Christ. The passage just read teaches it is necessary to have the doctrine of Christ in order to have the favor of God and Christ.

Paul commended the Bereans because they "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The preacher must preach the truth and the hearer must accept only the truth. — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

Practical Christianity

I am indebted to Charles Hodge for the story of two men in a hot-air balloon who got lost in the clouds. They broke through them and found themselves over a golf course. One shouted to some of the players, "Where are we?" The man on the golf course said, "In a balloon." The man in the balloon concluded, "This guy is a lawyer. What he said is absolutely correct, but of no practical value."

We must strive to avoid this in our Christianity. It must be both correct and practical. We need to be correct. There is truth of God that is revealed and can be known. There is the call of the Scriptures for us to know truth, and to obey it (Hebrews 5:8-9; John 3:36; Galatians 6:2).

Yet truth that does not enrich life and make us a blessing to others is of little value. If it adds no meaning to life, it is only a keepsake and a curiosity. Besides saving our souls:

CHRISTIANITY SHOULD ENRICH OUR LIVES SOCIALLY. Jesus grew in favor with man as He grew physically. The early church had the respect of the people. There will be alienation and persecution if one lives godly. Yet this must come from our following God's truth. It must never come from our wrong attitudes, or wrong relationships with others.

CHRISTIANITY SHOULD ENRICH A PERSON MATERIALLY. A Christian should find more pros-



ANCIL JENKINS

perity than the non-Christian. He will be more honest. His gain will not be wasted. He will be a diligent worker, not a man-pleaser. He will work with a goal different from the non-Christian. These are principles taught by Christ and his word.

CHRISTIANITY WILL ENRICH A MAN PHYSICALLY. Our bodies are not our own. We use them to glorify God. We do not harm them by improper use of chemicals. Worry and anxiety should not be the part of our life that it is to the non-Christian. A Christian should live a longer and healthier life.

CHRISTIANITY WILL ENRICH US MORALLY. A Christian should be a better employer or employee. Children should receive a different treatment from a Christian father or mother. A Christian friend should be the finest of all.

What better way of life holds promise for a better life now, and a glorious future? — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Preachers who formerly gave lectures on women's clothes have been compelled to turn to other subjects. There just wasn't enough material.

You're prejudiced when you weigh the facts with your thumb on the scales.

It is strange that in our prayers we seldom ask for a change in character, but always a change in circumstances.

Prejudice is a wall of fear built on the sands of suspicion surrounding the city of insecurity.



Words Of "h

(US

"I am not wise,
the Words of Truth and soberness.

but speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1982

NUMBER 48

The Distinctive Church

JOHNNY RAMSEY

The very nature of the New Testament church argues loudly for its distinctiveness in contrast to the individual, to business concerns or secular, educational societies. The church of Christ is not in the culturing, educating, body-building business. The church, embraced in God's eternal purpose, is pre-eminently a soul-saving organism! At times I have thought that some of us are somewhat akin to those who shouted "Hosanna" (save us, we pray) as Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem (Mark 11:9). The Savior greatly disappointed them, however, when they realized he had come to save them from sin and not the Romans! Is it not enough for us today that the blood-bought church of the Lord offers salvation from sin and a closer spiritual walk with our Redeemer? It shall ever be pre-eminently true that the church is "the pillar and support of the Truth" (I Timothy 3:15). The glory of Ephesus, where Timothy labored, was the beautiful marble temple erected to the worship of Diana. This wonder of the world had, as its major attraction, 127 marble pillars that formed a colonnade around the building. Following this background, Paul tells us the glory of the church is evinced in the bulwark of righteousness — the pillar and support of truth.

We find another very pertinent passage on our subject of *distinction* in church and individual action in I Corinthians 11:20-34. In this context the inspired writer speaks of events that take place in the assembly, when the church comes together, and things that can best be done "at home" or in another sphere. Paul could send greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and also to "the church that is in their house" (Romans 16:5).

Even the United States Government has, in the past, made a distinction in this regard. The Government taxes me, *as an individual, but it does not tax the church*. Jesus made it clear that there is a difference in the spiritual kingdom and civil government in Matthew 22:21 and John 18:36. In Romans 13 we read of another divine institution, *civil government*. Under the Old Testament economy

Jehovah ruled through a *Theocracy*, a combine of spiritual-civil power. But, in the gospel era, he separated these powers. Regardless of one's view of carnal warfare and a Christian's participation therein, we all must agree that there is a vast distinction between individual action and church action in regard to civil government. Even those who ardently believe that members of the church can bear arms and go forth in carnal combat wilfully to slay the antagonist do not affirm that the church of Christ ought to train soldiers, buy uniforms and supply ammunition for the front-lines in warfare. In fact, brethren have awakened to the fact that where carnal combat wages, there we as the church, ought to be with the gospel! Unless we are willing to have "a church of Christ brigade" on the battle field and make provisions for such in our "church budgets" we must believe — regardless of our position on a Christian's responsibility to Government — that there is a distinction between church action and individual action.


One of the most enlightening studies concerning the church revealed in the Bible is to discuss from a Scriptural viewpoint just what the church is and what it is not!

Negatively, according to the New Testament, the church is not a physical building. Christ died not the brick and mortar, wood or stone. The church is a spiritual house made up of living stones (I Peter 2:5ff). The church is not a political regime (John 18:36) but it is a divine monarchy with Christ as King in a spiritual reign in the hearts and lives of men. The church is not a glorified social club catering to the betterment of civil rights or urban renewal. It is a divine fellowship of mutual concern where God's servants find companionship, spiritually, with all others who keep his precepts (Psalms 119:62). The church is not a denomination where human doctrines find a haven of safety. It is composed of "the called out people" who belong to Christ Jesus with eternal ties of love. The church is an army with the Master as the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10). It is the

body of Christ with the Redeemer as the head of the body (Colossians 1:18). Who ever heard of a body with just one member or an army with just one soldier? All of the figures of speech referring to the church bespeak concerted, united action and not primarily individual action. These very illustrations of what the church is and what it is not boldly affirm the distinction between church action and individual action. The church, however, is pre-eminently a soul-saving, spiritually-enlightening organism. Children needed playgrounds in the first century, but Christ died to provide the church — the highway of holiness — so that even those who couldn't find a place to play could one day find a place in Heaven. When we divert the energies and monies of the local congregation into welfare programs we truly prostitute the purpose of the church of the Lord. We search in vain for Biblical authority for several projects brethren are pushing upon the church today. It might be good for individuals to build and maintain a rest station for winos on Skid Row but the church my Lord died for is not an adjunct of Alcoholics Anonymous. The church, as the bulwark of Truth, is commanded to preach the only message calculated to convert such sinners. Why should we be diverted from a major thrust — which only God's church can espouse — the actual and absolute cure of all sin — by the perilous schemes of brethren who evidently have never learned the purpose and work of the church in the first place! You, as an individual, might see fit to serve on some committee to curb alcoholism, but the church of the Lord has a far greater, wider scope of service on behalf of all derelicts and misfits — the salvation of their souls. There is a distinction between church action and individual activities.

Perhaps the real answer to the problem before us, in this discussion, is for each church, under the oversight of its elders, to be so busily engaged in the Master's work that the full talent of every member is developed, used, and active. God would thus be glorified in the church (Ephesians 3:21) and we would

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are per year All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Sarah



BOB DUNCAN

If Abraham is the father of the faithful, then Sarah is the mother of the faithful. In fact, Peter wrote that Christian women are daughters of Sarah (I Peter 3:6).

The study of Bible characters is a profitable study. Observe a few things about this great woman of the Bible, and profit therefrom.

Sarah was a woman of faith. "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised" (Hebrews 11:11). We call the eleventh chapter Hebrews the "Roll Call of the Faithful," and here is her name along with that of Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and others. Her faith enabled her to go with her husband when he left his homeland to go into the land of Canaan. Can you imagine what would happen in most households if the husband walked in one day and said to his wife, "We're moving out of the country. I don't know where we are going or what we are going to be doing, but we are moving. Get packed"? Sarah left relatives and friends and her native land to go she knew not where. All she knew was that this is what God had commanded her husband to do, and if she ever one time questioned it, the Bible makes no mention of it. And she was already

past retirement age.

Whether Sarah knew about the offering of Isaac in Genesis 22 until after it was over with we are not told. If she did, her faith is seen in her willingness, along with that of Abraham, to conform to the command of God, even though Isaac was her only son. She was a woman of faith.

Sarah was obedient to her husband. "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (I Peter 3:6). It is fashionable in these days for women to declare their independence and assert that it is unjust for them to be subject to their husbands. What the Holy Spirit said about the matter in such passages as Ephesians 5:22-33 is treated as if it were put in the Bible by the devil himself. And some of the bitterest, most unhappy women in this world, and those with the ugliest disposition are those who are championing the cause of so-called "women's lib." Sarah would not have made a good member of N.O.W. She didn't have the disposition for it.

Sarah was human, and had her faults. In order to "assist God" out of what she considered a difficulty for him, she proposed a plan whereby Abraham would have a son by Hagar. When her own son Isaac was born she later became bitter against Hagar. On one occasion (Genesis 18:12) she even laughed at God's promise that she would bear a son. When Abraham lied about his relationship to Sarah, she corroborated that lie. All these things demonstrate she was a human, like we are. But she was also a woman of great faith, and one who is mentioned more than once in the New Testament as an example for women today.

The Distinctive Church

Continued From Page 1

have that "peace that passeth understanding."

"A charge to keep I have
A God to Glorify
A never-dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky. . .

To serve the present age
My calling to fulfill
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!" — Box 235 Rowlett,
TX. 75088.

The Thief On The Cross

W. A. HOLLEY

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

Many religionists use the thief as an example of how one can be saved before and without baptism. But one cannot be saved as the thief was. Why? Because one cannot put oneself in the same position occupied by the thief. Jesus was then alive and could bestow his blessings as he saw fit. It is obvious that while a testator lives he may change or ignore the terms of his will or testament and dispose of his property, with or without conditions, as he may wish (Hebrews 9:15-17). But, after, *after* the death of the testator the terms of his will or testament are in force, and the terms or conditions of said will or testament cannot be changed! Jesus died, his will went into force on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, and since that time, every sinner who becomes a child of God, must do so according to the conditions of Jesus' last will and testament!! To this rule there can be no exceptions!!

The honest reader will want to know that the thief lived and died under the Old Testament. He, therefore, died before the New Testament went into force (Hebrews 9:15-17). Thus, he died before the

New Testament was established (Hebrews 10:9-10). Hence, the thief was never subject to the conditions of the New Testament! The Old Testament was in force until Jesus died on the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). Thus, the terms of salvation divinely set forth in the New Testament never, never, never applied to the thief, but it does apply to all sinners living today.

Possibly the thief may have been a backslider (Luke 3:21; Mark 1:4-5), but his salvation granted by Jesus before the New Testament went into effect, bears no relation to what sinners must do to be saved after the New Testament became operative. He may have received remission of sins, but even so, his salvation at the hand of Jesus, during his personal ministry, would have no effect on how sinners are saved today (Mark 1:4-5; 2:10; Luke 3:3). Thus, baptism was for the remission of sins, but Jesus seems to have made an exception to the general rule. The thief lived and died under the Old Testament.

When Jesus said to the thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," the thief had never heard of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; such had not then occurred. The thief knew nothing of remission of sins in the name of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 10:43; Cf. 4:12). The salvation of the thief was one thing, but the salvation

of a sinner living under the New Testament is quite another! Who would argue that a sinner can be saved today knowing nothing of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection? Who would contend today that a sinner can be saved apart from that remission of sins through the blood of Christ? (Revelation 1:5; Romans 6:3-4). The thief on the cross had never heard of Jesus' shed blood.

When Jesus said to the thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," the Great Commission of our Lord had not been given (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). The thief never heard of any such thing! Is it Biblically correct to teach that a sinner can be saved while he ignores the Great Commission?? If so, the sinner can be saved while he rejects the counsel of God (Luke 7:29-30).

Thus, the thief lived and died before the terms of gospel salvation were bound upon mankind, and for all time to come (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-47). It should be noted that the thief lived and died before the beginning of the church of Christ, and the beginning of obedient faith as expressed in the Lord's plan of salvation (Acts 11:15; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38).

After the establishment of the New Testament,

Continued on page 3

The Thief On The Cross

Continued from page 2

there are thousands of instances where people were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. Never do we read of where any one offered the excuse that the thief was not baptized, saying that it was unnecessary to submit to Jesus' command of baptism. Is it honest to ignore all these cases of conversion and go back before the Great Commission to the thief?? Even a tyro should know something about the proper division of the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

We shall illustrate the foregoing point. The Pentecostians and the Samaritans (Acts 2:36-38; 8:5-12), were baptized forthwith, but they did not try to avoid the Lord's command of baptism by saying, "We want to be saved without being baptized, like the thief was saved."

The Eunuch, Cornelius and his household never thought of offering the thief as an excuse in an effort to avoid the Lord's command of baptism (Acts 8:36-39; Acts 10:47-48). The Jailer, the Ephesians, and the Corinthians made no effort to envoke the

example of the thief, in an attempt to circumvent the Lord's command of baptism (Acts 16:30-34; Acts 18:8; 19:1-5). None of these offered the excuse that the thief was not baptized, so we need not be!! Why work so hard trying to get around passages concerning which there is no room for misunderstanding? It is so much more safe to believe and obey (Hebrews 5:8-9; John 3:16, 36, ASV.). Why take any chances?

Many seem to have become wedded to "death-bed" salvation; somehow God will waive all conditions of salvation in the hour of death, and save one contrary to his stated will, seems to be the concept of thousands. We do not contend God would not hear the prayer of an erring child of God in the hour of death. What about the man who has neglected a life time of opportunities, lived in disobedience to the word of the Lord, deliberately planning to live for the Devil up unto the last moment, trusting to repentance in a dying hour? For such an one the Bible offers no hope! (Psalms 66:18; Proverbs 28:9; John

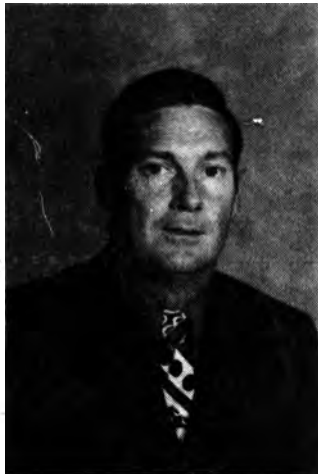
9:31; 8:21, 24).

This preaching of salvation from deathbed repentance is a dangerous doctrine indeed!! It has the tendency to encourage sinners to postpone, put off, delay, obedience to the gospel during one's life of opportunity. For this sort of thing there is no warrant in the Scriptures. Men need to be warned of the danger of hardening the heart and postponing obedience to Christ's gospel. Likely, the person who hardens his heart against the warnings of God can find no place for obedience in a dying hour. "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-13; 12:15-17).

Dear readers, why not obey the gospel today. It is easy so to do. From the heart, believe what Jesus has said, repent of your sins, confess his wonderful name before men, and be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24: 46, 47; Acts 2:36-38).—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Al 35580.

Gems Of Numbers

The great book of Numbers, which is the fourth book of the Bible, was written by Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. The book of Genesis has been studied by many people, but I am afraid that many have not studied and received as much information from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy as they should have. I hope this article will motivate each reader to put more time in studying this good book.



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

The book of Numbers gets the title by numbering God's people who left Egypt. Many thousands of people aged twenty years and older made the exodus from Egypt. Sadly many, many of this number failed to enter Canaan because of unbelief. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19). We could well ask the question, is the sin of unbelief going to keep me and you out of heaven?

"And when the people complained it displeased the Lord. . . ." (Numbers 11:1). This verse condemns many today for many in the church complain or murmur about everything. There are some today who complain about true gospel preaching, the decisions that elders make, and just about any good thing the church endeavors to do. These people hurt the church, but most of all, they are hurting themselves. Complainers today have the characteristic of loving themselves more than they do anything else. These complainers want to be on top, but cannot be, so they try to bring people down where they are. How serious is the sin of complaining? It is so serious that Paul warned against it and gave the following admonition concerning complaining: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (I Corinthians 10:10). Paul also said, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14). Complainers cannot build up the church, but only bring misery and misunderstanding.

Numbers chapter thirteen contains a wonderful lesson on faith. Moses had sent out 12 men to report

on the land of Canaan. Only two, Joshua and Caleb, had faith in God. The other ten, who did not have the faith that they needed, felt that Satan was stronger than God. They had forgotten the great power of God at the Red Sea, the supplying of manna, and all the other provisions that God had given to them in the past. How strong is your faith when it comes to attendance, teaching, and giving? What was the result of faith for Joshua and Caleb? "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land. . . save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Numbers 14:30). Will the lack of faith keep us out of heaven? We must have an obedient, saving faith if we are going to heaven.

"Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee. . . ." (Numbers 21:7). This is a great lesson on confession. It takes a big person to admit he is wrong. It is not easy to confess that one is wrong; for many think too highly of themselves to acknowledge error in their lives. But if we are to go to heaven, we must confess that we have sinned. James said, "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). We must believe that we do wrong; for unless we believe this, we will not confess our sins.

John taught that we deceive ourselves if we say that we do not 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 1:8-9);. Yes, we need to be big enough to admit that we have sinned and need God.

Many people today cheat on their fellow men. There are those who cheat on their married partners, and since man cheats against man, man thinks he can cheat on God. There are those who believe that since they can cheat on others that it is alright with God. This is the doctrine of the devil. In Numbers 32:23 we read, "and be sure your sin will find you out." We cannot do wrong on earth and get by with it in the day of judgment. "Evil pursueth sinners" (Proverbs 13:21). "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him. . ." (Isaiah 3:11). "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us: and as for our iniquities, we know them" (Isaiah 59:12). Reader, you can be sure that your sin will find you out.

Let me encourage you to read this good book, as there are many valuable lessons that can be learned to make us better servants for God today in the twentieth century.— P. O. Box 97, Nettleton, Ms. 38858.

"And They Proclaimed To Every Man In His Own Language"

By Ricky Phillips

The above title does not come from Jerusalem in 33 A. D., but from Chicago in 1982 A.D. After the senseless deaths of seven people by cyanide-laced Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules, Mayor Jane Byrne took immediate steps: All Tylenol products were removed from the shelves and a full-scale awareness campaign was begun. In a matter of days, leaflets and brochures were printed and distributed in several languages, including English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese. Chicago is made up of people from many nations, and the city wanted to be sure each person knew of the great danger, regardless of

his language.

Men and women of every nation are faced with a problem FAR MORE devastating than cyanide in a pain reliever. Each person faces the guilt of sin, which can condemn a soul forever in torment. If the city of Chicago had not made every effort to alert its citizens to the immediate danger, it would not have fulfilled its responsibility toward those citizens. We have the prevention AND cure for sin-caused eternal destruction. Is our responsibility toward all of

Continued on page 4

Miracles Or Fraud

The religious broadcasting media of our nation today is being dominated by a group of professional religious racketeers who have very little regard for truth and honesty. To illustrate the nonsense that is being carried on in the name of Christ and the extent to which human belief is expected to stretch these days, listen to this. Recently on television a preacher was telling how a young boy was brought to him with a bad case of tonsillitis. The preacher told how he laid his hand on the boy and prayed. The boy coughed and spit out his tonsils. One would think that it would be unnecessary to discuss such fraud, but such religious trash as the above incident is growing in popularity and taking our nation by storm.



WAYNE COBB

The influence of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement is now being felt in every corner of the religious community. Who would have thought a few years ago that we would be reading of "healing services" among the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Catholics? Faith healers are now found in every nook and cranny. Unfortunately, the charismatic influence has also touched the Restoration Movement. There is within the church today an element vainly seeking signs and affirming their belief in modern miracles as claimed by Oral Roberts, Ernest Angley, and others.

There is an obligation resting upon those of us who love the truth of God and the souls of men to expose these religious racketeers. Jesus warned that false religious leaders were coming. He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravaging wolves" (Mt. 7:15). The apostle Paul spoke of those who would come and turn men away from the truth (Acts. 20:29, 30). The apostle John warned, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jno. 4:1).

The spectacular religious side show being carried on these days ostensibly in the name of Christ breeds skepticism and unbelief among those with little religious convictions. They assume that the Bible is the source of this religious non-sense which convinces them more than ever that they do not want any part of Christianity.

Much of the confusion in the religious world today is heightened by a misunderstanding of what a miracle actually is. Although the word "miracle" is often used, it is obvious that many fail to understand the meaning of the term. Some people call any unusual or extraordinary event which cannot be explained or understood a miracle. One sees the beauty of a sunrise or witnesses the birth of a baby and says, "it is a miracle!" These are not miracles; they are natural events. Another may survive a terrible accident or a serious illness and proclaim: "It was a miracle!" Merely because something cannot be explained is no reason to label it a "miracle."

The word "miracle" is defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as "an event or effect in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws; an extraordinary, anomalous, or abnormal event that is outside or contrary to natural laws which is brought about by superhuman agency." A miracle is something that the established laws of nature could not do in their ordinary course and operations. That

which God does through natural law is not miraculous.

There are many examples of true miracles in the Bible. The creation of the heavens and the earth from nothing was a miracle (Gen. 1:1-3). Moses' rod becoming a serpent and then a rod again was a miracle (Ex. 4:1-4). Jesus walking on the water (Mt.

14:25-31), stilling the winds and waves (Mt. 8:23-27), and feeding the multitude with five loaves and two fishes (Mt. 14:15-21), were all outside the established laws of nature and thus rightly called "miracles." The miraculous is God working apart from his established processes.—P.O. Box 2161, Florence, AL 35630.

The Need For Moderation

Paul admonishes, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5). The word "moderation" is here translated from an original word suggesting pliability or reasonableness. Paul is urging us away from radicalism and extremism; we are rather to be moderate, reasonable in all things.

Most human judgments are biased, based upon human experience and conjecture. Because of this, many errors in judgment are made



DALTON KEY

by all of us. Because

we see only the side of an issue with which we are personally acquainted, we often make a hasty judgment and declare war upon all other viewpoints. We may not, we need not, agree with all sides to a particular issue; we should, however, attempt to understand all sides.

When truth is at stake, compromise is out of the question. The white flag of surrender must never be raised before the ever present enemy of religious error. However, we should be careful to define clearly the differences involved before blindly firing the first shot in battle.

Religious moderation has always been a scarce virtue. The spirit of extremism has ever been the more popular course. Perhaps a healthy dose of the former would do much in curing the scourge of the latter. — Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

It Does My Heart Good To Hear This

Dear Martel:

We have had several responses lately and your lessons in the meeting were mentioned by some as being encouraging and instructive. One lady responded at Memorial Baptist Church last Thursday night, stating that she was not sure of her salvation and wanted to clear up some doubts. The preacher told her to call on the name of the Lord and she said she would be glad to if she just knew how. He



MARTEL PACE

told her to say "Lord, save me." She said she thought there was more to it than that. Finally, they voted to admit her (with plans for baptism on the following Sunday night). She called me Friday morning and we studied for four hours (using my notes on your lesson on "Calling On The Name Of The Lord"). At the end of the study she was ready to be baptized correctly and did so. Her husband, though not yet with us officially, has resigned his offices and duties at Memorial and is coming with her. He has agreed to study with me. I think it'll take awhile with him, but at least he is willing to talk. On and on the stories go of persons searching for the New Testament way. I'm greatly encouraged and excited about it all.

Best to you and yours.
In Him, John Dale (Signed) Minister, 7th and Poplar Church Murray, Ky.

"And They Proclaimed To Every Man In His Own Language"

Continued from Page 3

mankind any less than that of the city of Chicago toward its citizens? Shouldn't we be as fervent in our warnings, regardless of a person's race, income level, or nationality? Jesus 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).—P.O. Box 396, Oakman, AL 35579.

If some children are as bright as their parents think they are, they should be looked at through sunglasses.

Some proud folks are always letting off steam.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, mc
the Words of Truth

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1982

NUMBER 49

Miracles Or Frauds

Part II

There is a great deal of confusion today over whether or not believers can perform miracles today. Were miracles intended by God to be a part of gospel preaching throughout the entire Christian dispensation? In discussing the question of miracles today we need to understand clearly the real issue. So much of what is written and said only clouds and evades the real issue involved.



WAYNE COBB

First, the real issue is not whether God has performed miracles in the past, but is he performing miracles today? *Second*, it is not a question of prayer for the sick. It is right to pray for the sick, but it is a mistake to think that God can only answer prayer by a miracle. We are taught to pray for our daily bread, but we do not expect our daily bread to drop out of the heavens as an answer to our prayers. We realize through the natural law of seedtime and harvest God has certain natural laws in regard to the sick and the power to work through these laws to accomplish his will. *Third*, the real issue is not a question of the power of God but what is his law or divine will in the matter. It is not what God is able to do, but what does God do?

When we are studying any Bible subject, we ought to ask ourselves in the words of Paul, "What saith the scriptures?" (Rom. 4:3). A question in religion is not settled right until it is settled by what the Lord has said. What is the teaching of the Bible on the subject? Where is the scripture which teaches that God promised to heal the sick miraculously after the apostolic age?

To understand whether or not miracles are performed today we must understand the purpose of Bible miracles. So many entirely miss the purpose of the miracles performed by inspired men. While Jesus performed many miracles of compassion and mercy, the purpose of his miracles was never simply to show

compassion. The great purpose of his miracles was to establish the fundamental truth of Christianity — that he is the Christ, the Son of God. The miracles done by Moses were to show that Moses was from God, and the miracles done by Jesus were to prove his claims of being the Son of God and confirm the truthfulness of his teaching (Jno. 20:30,31). Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was from God because of the miracles (Jno. 3:2). When John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask him if he was the Messiah, Jesus pointed to his miracles (Mt. 11:2-6). Peter used the miracles to point to God's approval of Jesus (Acts 2:22). Jesus demonstrated his power over nature, disease, and death to prove his claims.

When Jesus sent out the apostles to teach all the nations, he endued them with power to work miracles. These inspired men established the authenticity of the gospel message they preached by miracles. Miracles were their credentials (Mk. 16:17, 18; Heb. 2:3,4). The people saw the miracles and knew their message was sent from God.

Miraculous powers were necessary both to reveal God's word and to confirm that word, but when the revelation ceased there was no more need for the confirming miracles. We have no more confirmers today because we have no more revealers. Therefore, miracles, signs, and wonders have served their purpose and have passed away. We today have the confirmed word in written form. To ask for other signs than the miracles written in the New Testament is to reject the word of God.

It was never God's will to have miraculous power to continue in the church indefinitely. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul foretold of the cessation of miraculous gifts. After discussing the miraculous gifts in the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to Corinth, Paul emphatically states in the next chapter that these gifts would "cease," "fail," and "vanish away" (I Cor. 13:8-10). Paul declares, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:10). When the last word of the New Testament was penned that which "is perfect" had come and the partial revelations ceased. Then only the non-miraculous gifts remained — faith, hope, and love (I Cor. 13:13). The miraculous gifts served their purpose and ceased in

the church.

Again, Paul wrote of the termination of miraculous powers in the Ephesian letter. When Christ ascended "he gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8) and these gifts were to continue "till we all come in the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13). "The unity of the faith" refers to the complete revelation of the faith or gospel. With the complete revelation in written form, the system of truth — the unity of the faith — was realized and the miraculous ceased. At the completion of revelation, there was no longer any need for miracles to confirm the message. The miracles had served their purpose and ceased to exist.

When men claim miraculous gifts today they deny the power and validity of the gospel. Once the gospel was confirmed as from God, it was forever and eternally confirmed as his word. No man today can work miracles by the power of God. — P.O. Box 2161 Florence, Ala. 35630.


Back To The Bible

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Jesus tells us in John 8:32 and 17:17 of the necessity and glory of Truth in the divine realm. We must know the Word of God if we would truly be free. One of the besetting sins of modern society is a lack of knowledge in the Bible's contents. It really is no marvel that so much ungodliness runs rampant in our streets because a lack of Spiritual emphasis will always bring chaos into our lives. Men have forgotten Christ and the bulwark of righteousness he provides. In Proverbs 14:34 the inspired penman boldly affirmed: "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

Americans desperately need to get back to the Bible in our homes. Last year this nation alone contributed 1,500,000 divorces to an already degraded world scene. In both Malachi and Matthew we learn that "God hates putting away," and let not

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Back To The Bible

Continued From Page 1

man put asunder what God hath joined together!

We need to get back to Bible teaching regarding proper respect for authority. Holy Scripture informs us to pay taxes, obey the rulers and to pray for those in authority (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1, I Timothy 2). This is the only way to stop the rioting, protesting and anarchy in our cities today. The Bible alone has the answer to our dilemma. Let us have the courage to return to its sacred teaching.

You and I certainly need to return to God's Word for moral purity and holiness. In an age of nudity, filth and sensuality all of us must return to the modesty, integrity and spirituality of New Testament Christianity (Philippians 4:8). Church councils may sanction homosexual preachers but the Bible clearly rebukes such sinfulness (Romans 1:27; I Corinthians 6:9). It is long overdue but still we plead for all men everywhere to return to the wholesome purity Jesus stressed in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart."

There is a genuine need for each one of us to go back to the Bible for God's plan of redemption. In Acts 22:16 and Galatians 3:27 we clearly see the necessity of being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. Bible baptism is immersion in water "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 3:16 and 28:19).

Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 to build his church. We must go back to the Bible for that glorious body over which He rules as head (Colossians 1:18). — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

You can kill men and cripple nations, but you cannot kill a good idea.

It does a man no good to sit up and take notice — if he keeps on sitting.

Very few people have learned to use ignorance intelligently.

Worry kills more people than work. Some people play it safe by doing neither.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"I Won't Do It"

An actor in a television commercial has been seen numerous times by millions of people endorsing a certain video game set, pointing out its superiority over its competitor. In a subsequent commercial, this same actor feigns disgust because the maker of the product he has endorsed is offering a fifty dollar rebate. He says people should buy the product because of its superiority, and not because of any rebate. He walks away, shaking his head, and saying, "I won't do it!" As he does so, the circus takes his place in front of the camera. The impression that one is supposed to get from this second commercial is that this actor feels it lowers his dignity and the dignity of the product he is advertizing to offer a rebate, and to attract attention to the product by circus antics.



BOB DUNCAN

Have the people of the world learned something that some brethren need to learn? It is appalling to observe the circus atmosphere surrounding some of the efforts of brethren to attract people to attend their gatherings. Side shows, helicopter rides, rides in hot air balloons, and all sorts of gimmicks are being used by brethren. Is it because the gospel itself is not very attractive, or is not really very valuable? Have we not taken the cutting edge off of the gospel by surrounding it with such a circus atmosphere, and using all sorts of gimmicks?

It certainly is not a sin for brethren to engage in recreational activities together. Participating in athletic competition is not wrong. But we are making a mistake if we think the gospel can be enhanced by gilding it with a great amount of social or recreational hullabaloo. Is the gospel all that distasteful? My mother would mix castor oil with orange juice, and give it to us children. The very fact she mixed it with orange juice declares it was unpalatable. (And mixing it with orange juice didn't really help.) What does all our gadgetry surrounding the preaching of the gospel declare to the people we are trying to save?

We do not dispute the fact that the gospel of Christ, just as it is, is not very popular with the masses. Most of them would prefer something which appeals to the flesh. But this is not a new problem. Look at Paul's words: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:18,22). Even the apostles saw in their day that the plain gospel of Christ was not very appealing to the masses. How did they deal with this problem? By the use of gadgets and gimmicks? No, but by preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, "unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:23,24).

The church is not popular with the masses because

it is the church of Christ. The world hated Christ (John 15:18), and the world has not changed. If we set about to make the church popular we will do so by weakening the gospel of Christ — a cost far too great to pay. The church is not popular because it admits of no rivalry. It is not one among many, but is the only one. If a man can be saved without believing what I preach, then I should quit preaching. One who does not believe what he preaches is the world's only hope should quit preaching. Christianity is not popular because it involves a crucifixion — not merely the crucifixion of Christ, but our own also. Three passages in the book of Galatians emphasize this fact: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (2:20). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (5:24). "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (6:14).

This crucifixion is a stumblingblock to many, for it means the putting to death of the old man of sin, and living a new life. Most people are unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to conform their lives to the gospel of Christ. And so some think they have to wrap the gospel in some kind of tapestry which will appeal more to the desires of the flesh.

"I won't do it." How about you?

Loved, No Matter What

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The story is told of a young school boy who was about to be expelled from school. In spite of repeated spankings and scoldings the young boy seemed unable to stay out of trouble. Finally, the teacher went to the principal to demand that he be expelled. And as they were meeting, out the window they saw the boy throwing paper down in the school yard.

"That's it," said the principal. "This disobedience can't be tolerated!"

Grabbing the boy by the arm they pulled him to where the paper had been thrown down. As the teacher picked up the paper her eyes glanced across it. Suddenly her hands began to tremble and her eyes



RAY DUTTON

Continued on page 3

Was Simon The Sorcerer Sincere?

The conversion of Simon the sorcerer, when discussed, provokes much disagreement as to his sincerity when he was baptized. In the context of Acts 8:1-24, we learn of the labors of Philip in the city of Samaria. The great theme of this inspired man's preaching was Christ (v. 5). The response by the people: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (v. 12). We can conclude that in preaching "Christ," Philip taught the people about the kingdom or church of God, the precious name by which we are saved, and how to become redeemed. This is in evidence by what the people did. Jesus instructed his apostles prior to his ascension: "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). The Samaritans believed and were baptized; thus, they were saved from their sins as promised by the Lord. The individual Simon was specifically mentioned as responding to the preaching of Philip: "And Simon also himself believed; and being baptized . . ." (V. 13).



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

The reason why the conversion of Simon is questioned is because of his actions following his baptism. This man had deceived the people of Samaria by his practice of sorcery. He was esteemed highly by his followers. They said: "This man is that power of God which is called Great" (V. 10). However, the people could distinguish between the genuine miracles of Philip and the so-called magic of Simon (vs. 6, 7, 12). In fact, Simon was greatly impressed with the miracles done by Philip (v. 13). When the apostles, Peter and John, came from Jerusalem and prayed for the new disciples, laying their hands upon them in order for these Christians to receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, Simon sought to purchase this power "that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit" (vs. 14-17). Of course, he sinned, as is pointed out by the

apostle Peter. Simon stood in a condemned condition (vs. 20, 21). This action by Simon the Sorcerer is the basis of much disagreement as to his sincerity in responding to the preaching of Philip.

Those advocates of the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, that is, once saved, always saved, would insist that he was insincere, the reason being that a true Christian would not, in fact, could not, have committed such a sin. Those religionists who propose a second blessing of grace would declare that a true convert to Christ is given power to live above sin, thus the apparent need to say that Simon the Sorcerer was not sincere.

We offer the following observations in order to help us reach the right decision regarding the sincerity or the insincerity of Simon at the time of his conversion.

First, if we believe and understand that all the Samaritans who believed and were baptized were saved, should we not by the same reasoning accept the conversion of Simon who believed and was baptized (vs. 12, 13)? Are we ready to assert that the Lord saved the Samaritans but not Simon, even though they all responded in the exact same manner to the preaching of Philip?

Second, if Simon had been hypocritical, surely Philip, Peter, or even Luke, the inspired historian and writer of the book of acts, would have made mention of the fact; however, there is no indication whatsoever that any of these men of God doubted his obedience to the gospel of Christ. When Peter said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God," he had reference to Simon's transgression in offering money for the power possessed by the apostles (v. 21).

Third, notice closely what the apostle Peter instructed Simon to do in order to obtain forgiveness

of God for his sin: "Repent therefore of this wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (v. 22). That statement is quite significant, the reason being, if Peter had perceived that Simon had not been truly converted, he would not have told him to repent and pray for the forgiveness of his sins. He would have required Simon to be truly penitent and to be baptized scripturally at this time. But he did not. He required of Simon repentance and prayer. An inspired man such as the apostle Peter never commanded an alien sinner to repent and pray for the remission of sins. Likewise, an erring Christian was never required to be baptized a second time. This should be sufficient proof that Simon was a fallen Christian and not an insincere sinner who needed to obey the gospel in order to be saved.

Fourth, can we not discern that the Holy Spirit has given to us in this example of Simon a case of a Christian's sinning after being saved by the gospel of Christ? There are numerous warnings in the New Testament for the Christian to "take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). Satan simply tempted Simon in his weakness, the desire to have the pre-eminence and prominence among his fellowman by a continued display of power. The fallen disciple understands that he can be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ of his sins when he repents and prays to God. John informs Christians to confess sins to God and he will "cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:7-10).

We see, in the command given by Peter to Simon to repent and pray, God's second law of pardon for the erring Christian, not the insincerity of an imposter posing as a saint.—809 Perry Store Rd., Opp, Al. 36467.

Silly Excuses

ANCIL JENKINS

The following came in a recent bulletin. These are reasons people reported for being in an automobile accident.

1. The pedestrian had no idea which way to go, so I ran over him.
2. The other car collided with mine without warning me of its intentions.
3. I had been driving my car for 40 years when

I fell asleep at the wheel and had the accident.

4. As I reached an intersection a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision.

5. I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment.

6. The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.

7. An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished.

This is amusing, yet also enlightening. Some people have problems expressing themselves clearly. Others just fail to understand the reality of the situation. Yet we hear excuses that make no more sense than some of these. These are the excuses given to justify one's spiritual activity, or lack of it.

"I DON'T REALLY HAVE TIME." This is no excuse. It is just a polite way of saying there are things that one deems more important than spiritual activity. We find the time to do what we feel is important.

"I DON'T HAVE AS MUCH TIME AS----- DOES." This is also nonsense. We all have the same number of hours in our day. It is not how much time we have, but how well we use that time.

"LATER. . ." This is the most dangerous excuse one can give. It makes one think he had made a commitment. It satisfies the conscience. There is the relief of escaping today's decision

Loved, No Matter What

Continued from page 2

glistened with tears. A heart that had recently been filled with anger and frustration was now humbled with guilt and remorse.

There on that crumpled scrap of paper a message had been scrawled by the hand of a little boy who needed much more than spankings and scoldings. A troubled child had written the words: "Whoever finds this, I love you."

Like this child we reach out in our fumbling ways to give love to others in hope of receiving the same. But often we end up being rejected because of our imperfections and failing. What we need and what God offers is an unconditional love. (Salvation is conditional, but not love.) As our text clearly reveals, God loves us in spite of our failings. He loves us **NO MATTER WHAT**. When all others have turned against us and abandoned us, God and his love are still there.

The Gospel is the greatest love story ever told. It is the story of a love so deep and so strong that nothing

could destroy it. What else but such a love could cause the sinless Son of God to speak the words of Luke 23:34. Through the blood, sweat, tears, and agony of the cross the love of Jesus for mankind moved him to pray for those who had falsely accused him, spit on him, and cursed him. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

In my own life the single greatest drawing power of the Gospel is this "love, no matter what" For I know there is at least one who loves me even when I'm unloveable. There is one who will not forsake me even though I may forsake him.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I Jn. 4:10).

And in response to this overwhelming and compelling love we cannot help but "love him, because he first loved us" (I Jn. 4:19).—2236 Pup Run, Helena, Al. 35080.

Continued on page 4

Does Baptism Remit Sin?

We each have a pressing need for the remission of our every sin. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). As a result of a sinful life we should have nothing to look forward to but eternal punishment and agony. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). But through Christ and obedience to the gospel we can have our every sin removed and look forward to an eternity with God.



RONNIE LOWE

But does baptism remit my sins? Does baptism wash away my sins? Does baptism purge my conscience? The answer is an emphatic "No!" What then does remove my sins? The song writer answers this way: "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." God through Peter puts it this way: "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:18, 19).

Hence, the blood of Christ remits my sins. For "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). But the blood of bulls and goats (of mere animals) was not sufficient to remove the sins of a human being made in the image of God (Hebrews 10:4). Only the blood of Christ has the power to do that (Hebrews 10:10). Jesus said his blood was "poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). It is the blood of Christ that does the remitting, but when does this happen? Did it happen at the point of the shedding? Did his blood remove the sins of the whole world, both past and future, all at one time? No, for our sins are removed at the point of baptism. In order to receive forgiveness for their part in the crucifixion of our Lord, Peter told those on Pentecost to repent and be baptized "for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

Likewise, it is the blood of Christ that washes away our sins. The sinful soul is like the well-tracked beach, but the Christian soul is like the beach following the lowering of the tide when there is no sign of humanity ever having been there. The sinful soul is stained with sin and there is only one thing that can wash that stain away. Only the blood of Christ can do that cleansing. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). John writes, "Unto him that loveth us and washed us of our sins by his blood" (Revelation 1:5). But when does the blood perform its cleansing function? Paul had his sins washed away when he was baptized (Acts 22:16), and so can we.

It is also the blood of Christ that purges our conscience. Even though our conscience is not fool-proof, a clear conscience is essential to the peace of mind we all ought to have. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14). But when does his blood cleanse our conscience? Listen to Peter's answer: "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter 3:21).

Baptism does not remove our sins, but it is an indispensable part of having those sins remitted.

Through God's grace, the blood of Christ was shed upon the cross of Calvary. Through our faith, we respond to that gift by being baptized to come into contact with that saving blood. Don't let anyone tell you that baptism is not essential to one's salvation, for it is the only way to contact the blood of Christ in order that his shed blood will remove our every sin. — 202 Mesquite, Ranger, Texas 76470.

Bro. Charlie Wheeler Passes

Early Monday morning (October 4) Bro. Charlie Wheeler lost his six-year battle with cancer. His funeral was held in the building of the Midway Church of Christ on Tuesday afternoon, with burial in the adjoining cemetery.

Bro. Wheeler was the grandson of the late C. A. Wheeler, well known gospel preacher, who spent most of his life in this area, and who taught and baptized Gus Nichols. Bro. Charlie was baptized by the late W. A. Black 51 years ago. He began preaching the gospel in 1955 and has preached at several places in this area, such as: Shiloh; Tubbs; Deason Hill; Liberty; Crossroads; Enon; Whitson



PERVIE NICHOLS

Place; and some churches in Lamar County. For the past several years (until a few months before his death) he worked with the Mount Hope church (here in Walker County), teaching classes and preaching there on Sunday mornings.

He and Sis. Wheeler were members of the Midway Church of Christ. They attended Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights. For years (until about a year ago) Bro. Wheeler taught the adult auditorium class on Wednesday nights.

Being a native of Walker County, I have known him (and most of the Wheeler family) for many years. I have always appreciated him for his work's sake. He was a student of God's Book, and did not hesitate to teach his convictions to the best of his ability. The church of the Lord suffers a loss in his passing.

Bro. Wheeler is survived by his wife (Willodene) of 42 years, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, 6 sisters, and 3 brothers.

Truly "... there is a prince and a great man fallen this day . . ." (II Samuel 3:38). — Rt. 3 Box 420 Jasper, AL 35501.

My Favorite Psalm

My favorite Psalm is the 119th. It is the longest Psalm in the book. It contains 176 verses, and David mentions the word of God in every verse with the exception of five. David gives nine titles to the word of God: (1) the law of Jehovah (v. 1), (2) his testimonies (v. 2), (3) his ways (v. 3), (4) thy precepts (v. 4), (5) thy statutes (v. 5), (6) thy commandments (v. 6), (7) thy righteous judgments (v. 7), (8) thy word (v. 9), (9) thine ordinances (v. 30). King David also shows us what the word of God can do for us. It can cleanse (v. 9), quicken (v. 25), strengthen (v. 28), confirm (v. 38), defend (v. 42), comfort (v. 50), instruct (vv. 98,99), enlighten (v. 105), assure (v. 114), uphold (v. 116), give peace (v. 165), and deliver (v. 170).

How can we describe the beauty of Psalm 119? Spurgeon said this Psalm "might well be called the holy soul's soliloquy before an open Bible." Its only subject matter is the word of God. David refreshes his soul at God's oasis. Psalm 119 is loaded with comfort. It is a hidden treasure chest full of golden nuggets. It is water for the thirsty, bread for the hungry, shelter for the destitute. It will deliver you from sin (v. 11), give you understanding (v. 169), cleanse your ways (v. 9), and be your meditation all the day long (v. 97).

Those who fill their sermons with death bed stories, what Dr. so-and-so says, the wisdom of the world, need to sit down and read Psalm 119. It will fill you with power in preaching the word. It will make you fill your preaching with a "thus saith the Lord." The word of God is what shall save men's souls (Ps. 119:9,25,107; Jas. 1:21; I Pet. 1:22). The sinner will



GEORGE REED

be convicted in his heart when you unsheathe the word of God. God's people will be edified when they hear the scriptures. Illustrations are handy, but they will not save the soul.

The word of God is able to keep us strong. "Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction" (Ps. 119:92). How much time do you spend in studying God's word preacher, elder, and Bible class teacher? David said, "I will never forget thy precepts" (v. 92). Is the Bible the home of your soul? Is it your meditation at night? (vv. 55, 62). Does your heart stand in awe of his words? (v. 161). Do you love his words because they are very pure? (v. 140). Do you spend more time with the newspaper, magazine, or TV than the word of God? These are questions we all need to ask ourselves. "I opened wide my mouth, and panted; for I longed for thy commandments" (v. 131). Gospel preachers used to be known for their ability to quote the word. We are not seeing much of that any more, maybe because it is no longer the "in thing." We want to become like the churches round about us. And we have. But Psalm 119 still remains the same for those who come to drink from its never ending springs. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Silly Excuses

Continued from page 3

by postponing it. It is the best tool the devil has to keep us from being what we can be. If one is unwilling to set a specific date and hour he will begin obeying God — he has made a decision not to obey Him.

Excuses are for only one purpose. They satisfy the excuser. They do not explain to anyone. They do not satisfy God. — 1701 Gold Avenue S. E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1982

NUMBER 50

The One Moment In History When All Jews Lost Their Religion

DAN BILLINGSLEY

No one person in all of history has shown more love and concern for the Jewish people than the Lord Jesus Christ. His mission to Israel was the strongest possible declaration and demonstration of God's love and concern for the Jews (Matthew 1:21; 3:11; 11:28-29; John 1:11-12; 3:16,36). Likewise today, the church of Jesus Christ should manifest a strong interest in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to all men lost in sin, including the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5; 15:24; Luke 19:10; Mark 16:15-16). There should not be one "anti-Semitic" sentiment among those who follow the Lord! But at the same time, Christians must *never forsake* the New Testament teaching of God which declares that *all Jews in every generation* need to be converted to Christ (Romans 1:1-5; 3:20-31; 5:1-11; 7:1-4; 8:1-2; 10:1-21).

In a recent article entitled "Churches Recognize Judaism" (Dallas Times Herald, Saturday, Feb. 6, 1982), Larry Jerden, Staff Writer, states: "Texas conference opens relationship — Houston, — The Texas Conference of Churches on Friday adopted a position statement accepting Judaism as a 'valid and operative religion' and rejecting 'unwarranted' efforts to convert Jews to Christianity" The position paper says, "We reject the position that the covenant between the Jews and God was dissolved with the coming of Christ. The Jewish people today possess their own unique call and mission before God . . . dialogue, rather than proselytizing — efforts at conversion — is the proper relationship between the two faiths." The article continues, "Bruce Theunissen, director of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches, said, 'he would rather not get into how the statement relates to the role of Jesus Christ. Traditional Christian theology holds that Jesus is the only way to God!'"

While we can appreciate the desire to unite men before God and to have a common bond of love and fellowship, we must realize that all such unscriptural attempts as this only stiffens the resistance of the Jews to the Lord, and continues to alienate and harden them against New Testament salvation. Such

a denial of God's revelation does not help the Jews' dilemma; it serves only to harm these people more deeply.

God gives no authority to "The Texas Conference of Churches" (16 Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox denominations) to speak for him or negate his divine will concerning the Jews. The Scriptures of God teach that the covenant and religious system of Old Testament Israel *is not now* a "valid and operative religion." God plainly declares that he *ended* the covenant with the Jews at the death of Christ on the cross (Colossians 2:14; Romans 7:4; II Corinthians 3; Hebrews 10:9-10).

By the crucifixion of Jesus he completely fulfilled the promises and prophecies made to Israel (Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-45; 15:8). He forever abrogated the temple worship at Jerusalem (Matthew 27:51); the old sacrifice of the blood of goats and calves gave way to the "blood" of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:12-14); the priesthood of Aaron and the tribe of Levi gave way to the priesthood of Christ and the church (Hebrews 7:12); the "old" covenant of Moses gave way to the "new" covenant of Christ (Hebrews 9:16-17); the "law" gave way to the "gospel" (John 1:17; Romans 8:1-2); the "old birth" of the flesh of Abraham gave way to the "new birth" of the gospel (John 3:3-5; I Peter 1:21-25); the "kingdom of Israel" gave way to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ when Israel rejected Jesus, and at the cross, when God ended his covenant with the Jews, he cast them away as his holy nation (Romans 11:15). *This was the one moment in history when every Jew lost his Jewish religion!* The Jews could no longer approach God through Moses. They must come through Christ and his New Testament gospel today. There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, for "the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon his name" (Romans 10:12). (See also Matthew 4:17; 16:18; 21:43; Acts 2:41-47; 8:12; 19:8; 28:20.)

There is simply *no way today* that the religion of Israel can be a "valid and operative religion." Such teaching invites another complete rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ by the Jews, and a denial of

his authority and kingdom. One Jewish generation did this when they caused the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Matthew 27:22-23), and this, present generation of Jews *should not* be encouraged to reject the only hope which God provided (John 14:6; Hebrews 4:20).

The most inhumane hurt that anyone could heap upon Jews today is to encourage their continued expectation and trust in the Old Testament. The Jewish holocaust of the last fifty years will be nothing compared to the hell which God has prepared for those who reject Christ (II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:11-15). God promised the fathers of Israel when he gave them the covenant of Moses, that if they rejected him and did not keep their covenant, if they refused the new covenant with Christ, he would punish them among the nations, that they would become "a hiss and a byword" among the heathen (I Kings 9:6-9; Deuteronomy 28:37), and that they would perish forever in their unbelief. What a tragedy — to encourage another generation of Jews to commit complete spiritual suicide!

To every Jew who may read this article: Dear friend, please listen to Jesus! He loves you, and can give you all the promise which God made to Abraham. The "law and the prophets" are history; now the gospel is life and immortality through Jesus (II Timothy 1:10). You cannot, even by the most zealous faith and determination, resurrect the Mosaical system. It is dead! Gone forever! Please remember the words of our Lord to his generation of Jews, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24; 20:30-31; Mark 16:15-16). — 403 Welch Denton, Texas 76201.

If some Christians knew as little about their jobs as they do the Bible, they would have to be guided to their work benches every morning.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor

1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor

P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc. fifteen cents per copy payable by the church, on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Controversy Continues

The great debate over the origin of the earth continues. In fact, the controversy is coming to public light through the various media. The Christian has no fear in examining the evidence. The case for a creation by God has never been stronger.

For many years the "Steady-State Theory" was the accepted explanation for the origin of the earth. This held that the universe had neither beginning or end. Matter supposedly was created spontaneously to fill spaces left by expansion. This theory was proposed by Sir Fred Hoyle.

About sixteen years ago, two scientists of Bell Telephone Laboratories observed a faint radio signal from space that destroyed this theory. Their discovery gave some credence to a "Big-Bang" theory. This states that our universe is not eternal, but came into existence at some point in time. As time passed, this idea has come more into acceptance by scientists. Even Sir Fred Hoyle, who proposed first the "Steady-State" theory, has now accepted the "Big-Bang" theory.

This does not by itself prove creation. The "Big-Bang" theory still differs a great deal from the creation account in Genesis. God created the world out of nothing, at his word. The "Big-Bang" theory starts with matter and then sees a tremendous change.

However, we see man coming closer to the truth. Dr. Arno A. Pensias who was one of the first men to observe the radio signal from space said the following, "My argument is that the best data we have is exactly what I would have predicted, had I had nothing to go on but the five Books of Moses, the Psalms, the Bible as a whole" (New York Times, March 12, 1978). — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Do Deeds Determine Destinies?

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:15). It is alleged that this passage is teaching that only the evil deeds of the saints — not the saints themselves — will be burned. This allegation is made by those who insist that the child of God cannot so sin as to be eternally lost in hell. They say he can sin, and that his sins ("work") shall be burned, but he himself will not be burned, but will be saved.



BOB DUNCAN

Before examining this particular passage to determine the idea the Holy Spirit intended to convey to the reader, let us examine briefly the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. Those who believe this doctrine prefer to call it the doctrine of the security of the believer, but this is a misnomer. It is not a question of the security of the believer, but of the security of those who cease to believe and actually abandon their faith. Still others call this doctrine the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and under this title it becomes the *P* in the T-U-L-I-P of Calvinism. If any of Calvinism were true, then the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy would have to be true. Review it briefly with me. The *T* stands for *Total Depravity* — all are born hereditarily totally depraved. The *U* stands for *Unconditional Predestination and Reprobation* — God and Christ unconditionally and arbitrarily elected certain specific individuals to be lost and certain ones to be saved, and this number is so fixed that not one can be added to it or diminished from it. The *L* stands for *Limited Atonement* — Christ died only for those who will eventually be saved, and by the same token all those for whom Christ died will be saved, even without the preached or written word, or any conditions on their part. The *I* stands for *Irresistible Grace* — the idea that those unconditionally predestinated to salvation will be saved by an act of grace, and this act of grace will be irresistible. How could it be otherwise, if their salvation has already been unconditionally guaranteed? This brings us to the *P*, which stands for *Perseverance of the Saints* — the idea that all those saved will persevere unto the end, and that not one will be lost. This last point is demanded by the others. If one's eternal destiny were arbitrarily and unconditionally decided by God before the foundation of the world; if all for whom Christ died will be saved by an irresistible act of grace; then it follows that one saved according to such an arrangement would have to remain saved. Otherwise what has been unconditionally predestinated and fore-ordained would not come to pass. If it can be shown that it is possible for one saved person to become lost, then the whole Calvinistic system falls. Or if it can be shown that one person for whom Christ died will be lost, then the whole system falls. These two things we propose to show. While space does not permit even the mention of every passage which would normally be used in a discussion of this subject, we will mention some which we feel provide conclusive proof that the child of God may sin so as to be lost in hell.

Matthew 5:28, the latter part of the verse, states: "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Is it possible for a child of God to say, "Thou fool"? If it is, then it is possible for him to be lost in hell, according to this verse.

A second passage we will consider in this connection is Hebrews 10:28,29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" These words take the form of a question, but their implication is clear, that is, that punishment more severe than that provided under the law of Moses will be meted out to those who, having been sanctified by the blood of Christ, turn their backs upon him. And please notice that this passage is not talking about one who was never saved in the first place; it is talking of one who "was sanctified" by the "blood of the covenant."

The warning in I Corinthians 10:12 ("Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall") and the statement in Galatians 5:4 ("Ye are fallen from grace") both show that it is possible for the saved to fall from grace and be lost. Otherwise these passages mean absolutely nothing.

Two verses will suffice to show that it is possible for one to perish for whom Christ died. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died" (I Cor. 8:11). Calvinism says if Christ died for him, he will be saved by an irresistible act of God's grace, and cannot possibly be lost, be destroyed, or perish. The inspired apostle Paul says that one for whom Christ died may perish or be destroyed. I will accept what the apostle says about the matter!

Well, what about the statement in I Corinthians 3:15? Look at it again: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Does this say that one's sins shall be burned up? That his evil deeds shall be burned up? The very idea is absurd. How could one's sins be burned up? Once again it is the context which reveals the real meaning of the passage. The subject under discussion in the chapter is the subject of ministers by whom the Corinthians had believed (3:5). In verse 9 Paul called himself and other preachers, "labourers together with God," and he said the church at Corinth was "God's building." While preachers can be sure of the foundation (Christ) upon which they are building (verse 11), they cannot always be sure what kind of material their converts are made of. According to verse 12, they may be "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." Verse 13 tells us they shall try every man's work. Whether this is speaking of the fiery trials which would come, or whether it is speaking of the final judgment, makes little difference. The point is that all will be put to the test on an individual basis, and the personal salvation of the preacher does not depend upon the faithfulness of those whom he has converted. Naturally it is a great loss to him for those he has converted to be destroyed, but this does not mean he himself will be lost. This is the meaning of the passage.

The 1983 Fort Worth Lectures

The sixth annual Fort Worth Lectures, with the theme, "The Person and Life of Christ," is scheduled for the second week in January, 1983. This lectureship is recognized throughout our great brotherhood as being of tremendous benefit to all because of the relativity to the needs and concerns which face us. Some of the preceding years' topics were: "Premillennialism — True or False?," "The Holy Scriptures," "Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained," and others. The 1983 lectures promise to be no less inspiring and beneficial. The attendance to the Fort Worth Lectures is growing year by year as the quality of the program is becoming more widely circulated. We are looking forward to the 1983 Fort Worth Lectures with great anticipation.

I. PERTINENT DATA CONCERNING THE FORT WORTH LECTURES

(1) *Date.* January 9-13, 1983 — Sunday through Thursday.

(2) *Place.* The lectures will again be conducted in the facilities of the Brown Trail congregation, 1801 Brown Trail, Bedford (greater Fort Worth), Texas.

(3) *Theme.* "The Person and Life of Christ," promises to be one of the most interesting themes selected since the beginning of the lectureship.

(4) *Oversight.* While the lectureship this year has been planned by a "Lectureship Committee," made up of brethren Robert Bankes, of the Brentwood congregation, Tom Gardner, of the Midtown congregation and Eddie Whitten, of the Brown Trail congregation, it remains under the oversight of the elders of the Brown Trail church. Sister congregations of the Fort Worth area cooperate in this effort to make it possible.

II. EVENING SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Sunday evening, at the 5:00 p.m. hour, Avon Malone will speak on "The Blood that was Shed for Me." At the 6:00 p.m. hour, Bill Teague will be the speaker on the subject, "The Obedient Son" (I Corinthians 15:27). Robert Bankes will speak on "The Compassion of Christ" at the 7:00 p.m. hour.

Monday evening, Bobby Duncan will speak on "Jesus, the Fountain of Authority." Roy C. Deaver will speak on "Jesus Deals with False Teachers."

Tuesday evening, Bert Thompson will speak on "Christ, the Effective Energy Against Humanism;" and Johnny Ramsey will discuss, "Jesus, Our Friend."

Wednesday evening, the first topic will be, "Jesus' Power and Human Need," with Hulen Jackson as the speaker. Bill Humble will speak on "Jesus' Teaching on the Judgment."

Thursday evening, Rubel Shelly will discuss "The Historical Jesus." Hugo McCord will close out the lectureship with an all-scripture sermon entitled, "The Life of Christ." This has also been designated, "Youth Night."

III. DAYTIME SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Sunday: At the first lecture (9:00 a.m.), Dub McClish will speak on "Jesus Describes the Christian Life." David Roper will speak on "Christ's Relationship to the Scriptures."

Monday: John Waddey will discuss the topic, "Jesus, and His New Morality." James Willcutt will speak on "Jesus, The Suffering Servant." "Christ, and the Problems of the Home," will be the subject of Bill Cline.

Tuesday: Lynn Matheny will be speaking on "Jesus, the Good Shepherd." George Pledger will speak on "Jesus and the Use of Miracles." Gary Workman will speak on "The 'Jesus Only' Theory."

Wednesday: Robert Taylor will speak on "Christ, the King of the Kingdom." Claude Guild's topic will be "Christ, the Light of the World." Dick Sztanyo will speak on "Jesus' Incarnation and the Atoning Sacrifice."

Thursday: Gene Palvado will speak on the subject, "Jesus' Death and Burial." Roy Hardeman Deaver will speak on "Jesus, the Powerful Son of God." Norman Gipson will speak on "The Ethical Jesus."

IV. OPEN FORUM

There will be an open forum conducted daily from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Moderators will be: (Monday) Robert Bankes, (Tuesday) Johnny Ramsey, (Wednesday) Robert Taylor, (Thursday) Roy C. Deaver.

V. SPECIAL EVENTS AND FEATURES

(1) *Leadership Dinner:* On Tuesday, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., there will be a catered dinner enjoyed by all elders, deacons, preachers, Bible school teachers and their mates, with brother Leroy Brownlow as guest speaker on the subject, "The Challenge of Leadership."

(2) *Luncheons:* On Monday noon, Wyatt Sawyer will be featured, speaking on the topic "Who is my Mother and my Brethren?" Tuesday, at the noon hour, the annual "Honor to whom Honor" luncheon will honor E. R. Harper, with Willard Collins speaking. On Wednesday at noon, John Banister will speak on "Some Things I have Learned after 50 Years as a Preacher." Thursday noon, the popular feature, "Humorous Things that Have Happened to me as a Preacher" will be the theme. Lunches will be provided at the building for a nominal cost each day, and will be prepared by the ladies of the area.

(3) *Displays:* A large part of the building will be

prepared for display area, featuring various publishers, periodicals, benevolent homes, Christian colleges, mission endeavors, etc.

(4) *Ladies Classes:* There will be classes offered daily for the ladies, 11:00-12:00 a.m. The theme will be: "The Person and Life of Christ in the Elevation of Womanhood." On Monday, Mary Oler will introduce the theme with, "(Woman) In The Beginning." On Tuesday, Pat Suba will speak on "The Emancipation from Tradition." On Wednesday, Val Cardwell will speak on "Revealing of Truth to Women." And, Thursday, Thelma Banowsky will conclude the theme with "Challenging her to Highest Spiritual Service."

VI. LODGING

Free lodging will be provided in the homes of members of the church in this area for all of those who request it in advance. Or, if preferred, there are numerous motels available nearby. Fast-food restaurants are also available nearby; however, one main meal daily will be served at noon at the building at a nominal cost.

The lectures will be printed in book form and will be available at the lectures. Tapes of each lecture will also be available.

For further information, contact the Brown Trail church, 1801 Brown Trail, Bedford, Texas 76021, or call (817) 282-6526 or 282-3911.

The Soul Of Man

Man is an eternal soul. He is a triune being. Moses wrote, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Paul wrote: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23). The beast of the field has a body that is living. When the beast dies he no longer exists. He is dead forever. Man has a body that is living, but he also has a life or soul that will exist eternally.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

THOSE WHO TEACH THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION DENY THE ETERNAL SOUL. The theory of evolution, though popular, rests upon vague hypotheses, assumed data, and a religious faith without foundation. Wayne Jackson states: "The theory of evolution insists that life originally consisted simply of a 'blob' of protoplasm which, after millions of years, became bi-sexual resulting in man and woman" (Reason and Revelation, Vol. I, No. 8).

Jerry Adler points out in an article in *Newsweek* magazine: "In the fossil record, missing links are the rule: The story of life is as disjointed as a silent newsreel, in which species succeed one another as abruptly as Balkan prime ministers. The more scientists have searched for the transitional forms between species, the more they have been frustrated . . . Evidence from fossils now points overwhelmingly away from the classical Darwinism which most Americans learned in high school: that new species evolve out of existing ones by the gradual accumulation of small changes, each of which helps the organism survive and compete in the environment" (Adler, Jerry, "Is Man a Subtle Accident?" *Newsweek*, November 30, 1980, pg. 95). It takes greater faith to believe man came by chance than to believe an intelligent God created the world and man.

Many have rejected the Bible account of the origin of man. THEY THEREFORE REJECT THE ETHICS OF THE BIBLE AND REPLACE THEM WITH HUMANISM. They must have something to substitute in the moral void.

Corliss Lamont, humanist author, states, "Humanism believes that man has the power and potentiality of solving his own problems successfully, relying primarily on reason and scientific method to do so and to enlarge continually his knowledge of the truth."

"Humanism believes in a naturalistic cosmology or metaphysics or attitude toward the universe that rules out all forms of the supernatural and that regards nature as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of events which exists independently of any mind of consciousness" (*Humanism as a philosophy*. Philosophy Library, New York, 1949 PP. 19, 20).

A little observation reveals that the self-reliant man soon lowers his standards and falls. Therefore we rely upon Jeremiah's statement, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

We reject the evolutionary theory and humanism as doctrines destructive to a civilized society and to the eternal hope of man.

GOD CREATED MAN WITH THE RIGHT OF CHOICE. The devil tempted man to sin and man yielded (Gen. 3:1-7). Sin has continued until the present time. The gospel of Christ is the only thing that has an effect to elevate the lot of man upon this earth. Paul wrote, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).

Sin is so terrible, that forgiveness of sin demanded the gift of God's only begotten Son to die upon the Roman cross (John 3:16). Sin demanded eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46; II Thess. 1:7-10). But God extended mercy in the sacrifice of his Son upon the cross. His Son suffered the death upon the cross for the sins of mankind. We are informed by Paul, "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" (II Cor. 5:21). The salvation through Christ is

The Art Of Getting Along With Others

W. A. HOLLEY

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

"Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

"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).

These passages of timeless beauty and power would create a world of peace and harmony and graciousness, if they were but applied in the lives of men everywhere.

The word "art" as used in this treatise is defined as, "a system of rules or methods of performing particular actions . . . systematic application of knowledge or skill in effecting a desired result" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary).

Herewith, we submit some rules which, if sincerely applied, will enable you to find how to get along with others.

(1) Put forth your very best effort to cultivate a pleasing disposition (I Corinthians 10:33). It is not suggested that truth ever be compromised! A pleasing disposition attracts people, but a carping, fault-finding personality repels and drives away many who might have been won over. "He that hath friends must show himself friendly . . ." (Proverbs 18:24). In contending for the faith always leave the door open so that another opportunity can be had, if needed (Galatians 1:6-10).

(2) Learn to be tolerant, rather than abrasive. The devil has three swords which he urges people to use constantly: Sarcasm, caustic speech, and ridicule. Paul wrote, "With lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3). To illustrate: A lady was driving her car along a very crowded street when her car stalled. She tried and tried to start it but it just would not start. A man just behind her began to honk his horn . . . HONK . . . HONK . . . HONK!! This honking upset the lady no end. Finally, she got out of her car, walked back to the honking man, and said, "Sir, if you will go and start my car, I'll stay back here and honk your horn for you."

Another marvelous Scripture dealing with personal relationships is I Thessalonians 5:14-15, which reads, "We exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all" (ASV). Thus if disagreement arises, learn to differ without allowing hatred to fill your heart. There can be no doubt but that hatred has ruined many churches and many marriages — hatred that developed over minor things.

(3) To get along with others, you must learn to love people. We run into people everywhere we go. There is an element of stress and tension and pressure brought on by our association with others.

God loved the people of all the world. Even on the cross, Jesus prayed for those who crucified him (John 3:16-17; Luke 23:34). If we love only those who love us, there is no special reward; we are required to love even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-47). If we love our neighbor as we love ourselves, we are willing and ready to assist him in any good work (Matthew 22:34-40).

(4) To be courteous and polite toward others is a must! "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Peter 3:8). To be gracious, affable, cordial, diplomatic, thoughtful, considerate, are words close to the heart of a Christian. It is always wrong for a Christian to be impolite, rude, ill-mannered, overbearing, and discourteous toward

others. One of the best ways to disarm your enemy is to admit your mistakes (James 5:16).

(5) If you would get along well with others, you must make sure to control your temper. "Not soon angry," is one of the qualifications of elders. "All bitterness, wrath, and anger" must be cast aside (Titus 1:7; Ephesians 4:31-32). "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools," saith the preacher. Anger is one of the most destructive emotions possessed by human beings! Psychologists tell us that anger causes problems from hemorrhoids to upset stomachs. It is said that anger causes tension headaches; anger also contributes to high blood pressure and other diseases such as arthritis. What can one do about his anger? (1) He can recognize that he is angry; (2) he can determine what he is angry about, and if it is worth what it will cost him; (3) he can decide if what he is angry about is realistic; (4) he can try to correct the

problem causing his anger, thus changing the situation in so far as possible.

(6) If one would get along well with others, it is absolutely necessary to watch one's words. Words are powerful: they can do great good and they can accomplish great harm! Some words build up and some break down and destroy! One word can lead one to heaven while another can lead one down to hell (Proverbs 15:1; I Peter 3:10; James 3:2,6). We shall give account for every idle word we speak (Matthew 12:36-37).

(7) To get along with others you must make sure to follow the golden rule in all your relationships (Matthew 7:12). Moreover seek to settle all difficulties at once (Matthew 18:15-17). The longer trouble is allowed to hang on, the more difficult it is to settle. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

The Soul Of Man

Continued from Page 3

not without conditions.

SALVATION IS CONDITIONED UPON OBEDIENCE TO A FORM OF THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. The gospel of Christ is based on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4). These facts are essential for Christianity to have validity.

Paul tells of the salvation of the Romans and his own. He says, "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" (Rom. 6:3-4). We must die in the practice of sin as Christ died on the cross. We must be buried in the watery grave as Christ was buried in the borrowed tomb (Acts

8:38-39; Acts 10:47). We must arise from the watery grave to walk a new life. If you have not so obeyed, you need to act while you have time and opportunity.

THE SOUL WILL GIVE ACCOUNT OF THE DEEDS DONE IN THE BODY (II Cor. 5:10). Solomon stated, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Jesus asked, "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?" (Matt. 16:26).

HOW MUCH DO YOU VALUE YOUR SOUL? IF YOU WERE TO DIE TODAY, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY? — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

Hearing But Not Believing

One of the frustrations experienced by preachers of the gospel is knowing that the gospel has been taught, yet there have been no responses by the hearers to obedience. This may occur when sinners refuse to obey the gospel of Christ and/or when members of the church fail to comply with the teaching of Christ to mature in the faith. There can also be puzzlement in the teacher's heart when one family obeys and another family rejects the same teaching while being instructed privately in their homes. The same gospel is being taught but is bringing different responses. It is easy to become discouraged, blaming oneself for the failure to convert all the people being taught the way of salvation.

We must understand and come to realize that all who hear will not believe and obey the gospel. The hearer has a responsibility in the process of conversion. This principle is clearly taught in the parable of the soils presented by the Lord, recorded in Matthew 13:1-23. In the usage of the words of Isaiah, Jesus mentioned that there were those who would



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

hear but would not understand. The apostle Paul referred to this prophecy of Isaiah on various occasions in his work when Israel would not respond to the teaching of this inspired man (Acts 28:25-29; Romans 10:16-21).

While it is true that faith is produced by the hearing of the word of God (Romans 10:17), there are times when the gospel is heard but obedience to Christ is not the end result. Why? The answer can be found in the example of so many Israelites who failed to enter into the promised land. The writer of the book of Hebrews informs us that the glad tidings had been preached unto Israel "but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Hebrews 4:1-3). Earlier we learn that the reason why some did not enter into that rest was because of unbelief (disobedience) (Hebrews 3:18,19). Had they not heard? Yes, but the word of God had not been united or mixed with faith on the part of the hearers. And without faith, a person cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

The hearer of the gospel indeed has a great responsibility. If the heart is not receptive, there cannot be any faith. As food eaten cannot benefit the body if it is not digested, neither can the gospel of Christ save the individual unless it is united with faith. Sinners are exhorted to "receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). — 809 Perry Store Road Opp, Alabama 36467.



W

IF

Truth

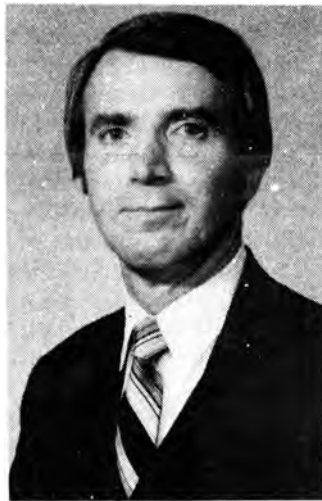
(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

The Christian And Law

There are those who assert that in this dispensation people are not under any law in the realm of religion. Those who so teach, usually do so in an attempt to deny baptism or some other command of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us examine this vital subject in the light of Bible teaching.



NOBLE MCKNIGHT

We are not under the edict given to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden

of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:15-17). You and I have never spent a day of our lives in the garden of eden. We have never been in the presence of a tree which contained the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, it should be obvious that this law was not given to us.

We are not under the precepts of the Patriarchy. There was law in the Patriarchal dispensation. Paul writes, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:13-14). Paul plainly declares that in the absence of law there is no sin. The book of Genesis makes it clear that there was sin during the time of the Patriarch. Therefore, there had to be law during this time. There was no written law but there was law. God would speak directly to the father and he would make known to his family the commandment given to him. You and I have never been commanded to build an altar and offer burnt sacrifices to God. That law was given to the Patriarchs.

We are not under the law given through Moses. God gave a law, from Mt. Sinai, to the descendants of

Jacob as they journeyed to the land of Canaan. Moses makes it very clear to whom this law was given. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgements which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deut. 5:1-3). This law was given to fleshly Israel. It was not given to us and God never intended for us to live according to its precepts.

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that the Law of Moses has been taken out of the way. It is no longer authoratative in the realm of religion. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). This is an obvious reference to the Law of Moses. It was taken out of the way when Christ died on the cross and no one is subject to it today.

We are not subject to the edict of Eden, the precepts of the patriarchy, or the law of Moses. Can we, therefore, conclude that we are under no law today in the realm of religion. Such does not follow and for very obvious reasons.

Paul writes that we are "under the law to Christ" (I Cor. 9:21). To the Romans he wrote,

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). Five chapters later he declared, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Paul wrote to the Galatians: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Surely then one can see that in this age we are subject to the law of Christ.

This law teaches what the alien sinner must do to become a child of God. He must hear the gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:13-14). He must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Jn. 8:24). He must repent of his sins (Acts 17:30). He must confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). He must then be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). At that time God will add him to the Church (Acts 2:47).

One must then continue to live his life in harmony with the teaching of the law of Christ. In the day of judgement, it is by this law that we shall be judged. Jesus said, "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" (Jn. 12:48). — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.

How To Enjoy Yourself

W. A. HOLLEY

"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," wrote the apostle Peter (I Peter 3:8). The apostle Paul suggests that certain things are necessary "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:1-6).

If you wish to enjoy yourself, how can you go about learning how to "love life and see good days?"

We prayerfully offer the following suggestions:


(1) Take a good, hard look at yourself. "Examine yourselves," saith the Scripture. What do you see? A person who is reasonable, happy, and satisfied? or a person who is frustrated, balky, and angry? Are you

afraid to think positively? As you survey your situation, do you see nothing but the bad things?

(2) Develop a burning desire to build a wholesome outlook upon life. It will not hurt you to put forth the greatest possible effort. Never withdraw into a shell and feel that there is no use in trying because you think that matters simply cannot be changed. You can do something for yourself (Matthew 7:7-12; Philippians 4:7-13; II Peter 1:5-11).

(3) You should remember that you are not alone, no matter what your encumbrances may be. If you are a Christian, the Lord will be with you to help you bear

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

Inconsistencies

ROGER JACKSON

Titus 3:10 in the KJV states, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject." For "heretick" the ASV uses "factious man" while the Interlinear Greek New Testament gives "a sectarian man." Evidently, Paul's intention is to warn the brethren about a man who would separate the brethren into little antagonistic groups (I Cor. 1:10-14).


I heard a preacher say just yesterday that he had never preached in a place where the divisions were over anything other than opinions. One he mentioned was over whether the brethren would build a restroom or buy an air conditioner. While I cannot say such a thing about myself, I must admit that this has been the case with me in the vast majority of cases I have witnessed. When a man considers his opinion to be more important than either truth or the unity of the brethren he will press it to the limits, until he is stopped. Such a man is an heretic, and the brethren ought to stand as one against him. If one loves the peace and unity God demanded of us, he will take a stand for it (Psa. 133:1-3).

These brethren not only misunderstand the texts they seek to employ, if they use any scripture at all, but in practice even violate them themselves and cannot or will not see their inconsistencies. It proves that nothing can blind us quicker than blind contention determined never to alter its course.

A man who did not believe in Bible school literature once asked brother N. B. Hardeman to explain a passage of scripture to him so that he could use that explanation in his class Sunday. Brother Hardeman suggested to the gentleman that he write the explanation down, mimeograph it and give a copy to each student. He stoutly refused! Now what is the difference, except that he wanted all the glory? Did not the Jerusalem elders and apostles write information down to be read to the church (Acts 15)?

We changed the order of services once where I preached so that we observed the communion after preaching instead of before. Then, rather strangely, an older brother began mentioning at each business meeting with all the men, that he knew we were doing things that were not scriptural. When I confronted

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"Paul, And Silvanus, And Timotheus. . ."



BOB DUNCAN

The words of the title of this article are the opening words in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. These men saw no need to attach to their names some high sounding title. On other occasions Paul introduced himself as "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ," or some similar words. Even in such cases the mention of his apostleship was to call attention to the importance and authenticity of the gospel he preached, and not to call attention to his own personal importance.

It is somewhat difficult in the denominationally oriented religious world in which we live for gospel preachers to avoid being called by the same titles which denominational preachers ascribe to themselves. We find ourselves almost daily in the position of wanting to correct some well-meaning person who has addressed us as "Reverend So-and-so," but wanting to make such correction without being ugly or offensive. Jesus taught: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matthew 23:8-10).

It is our judgment that even the word "brother" may become a title, if used exclusively of those who preach. For example, every member of a congregation may be called by his first name, except the preacher, and he is called, "Brother So-and-so." Or

the preacher answers the telephone at home, and some good sister on the other end of the line says, "Brother So-and-so, may I speak to Sadie?" Why is he *Brother* So-and-so, but his wife just plain Sadie? And many times letters we receive begin with the salutation: "Dear Brother [with a capital B] So-and-so." There's nothing wrong with calling each other "brother," but if it is not being used as a title, then why spell it with a capital B? In Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7 Tychicus is referred to by Paul as "a beloved brother," and in neither case did the translators think the word *brother* should be capitalized. Peter referred to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul" (II Peter 3:15), but the word *brother* is not spelled with a capital B, because it is not a title.

In the mail this week we received a brochure announcing a certain *seminar* sponsored by a church of Christ. The following titles (or descriptive terms, if you prefer) were among those used to introduce the speakers and class teachers involved in this seminar: (1) campus evangelist, (2) campus evangelist intern, (3) senior adult evangelist, (4) high school evangelist intern, and (5) single adult evangelist intern. Who are we trying to impress?

If the inspired writers of the New Testament held the philosophy some of my modern-day brethren hold, the first verse of First Thessalonians might read like this: "The inspired Apostle [spelled with a capital A] Paul, senior adult itinerant evangelist; and Silvanus, junior adult evangelist intern; and Timotheus, single adult evangelist intern; unto the church of the Thessalonians . . ."

These things we have mentioned are within the realm of judgment, but let us try to use the very best of judgment in such matters.

And now I'm going to have to bring this article to an abrupt end. Our minister of secretarial services has some letters for me to sign, and our minister of custodial care wants to vacuum my study.

How To Enjoy Yourself

Continued From Page 1

your burdens, and to overcome your handicaps or problems (Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5-6; Psalms 46:1ff; Romans 8:28).

(4) Picture yourself, in your own mind, as an active, likeable, loving, capable, helpful and cheerful person. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Try to see yourself as a ray of sunshine, not as a gathering storm. Hence, endeavor to build for yourself a new image.

(5) It is always best to try to look on the bright side of life. Of course, things may be bad, but not as bad as they might be. Even floods, storms, sickness, and hardships are certain to pass away. After the storms comes the sunshine. When you think seriously, it is a good morning every day. Repeat the following words, "This is a beautiful day: God and I will use it together. If problems arise, with the help of God, I will solve them. But, if my problems cannot be changed, by the grace of God, I will do my very best to

learn to live with them." Look up and see the starry sky; look down and see the loathsome mud!

(6) Learn from the past. All wise people do. Do not repeat the same mistake. Surely, life has taught you something. Why worry about things which never happen? Most storms which you spent so much time worrying about, never happened. Unbridled fear is a terrible master. So often the lions which we see along the way turn out to be kittens; many of our obstacles turn out to be blessings in disguise (Cf. Philippians 1:12-21; Matthew 6:24-34).

(7) You should take time to count your blessings. "Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your blessings, see what God has done," are words from a wonderful song which we often sing. You are richer than you think! "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one

Continued on page 3

The Thief On The Cross

Continued from page 2

there are thousands of instances where people were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. Never do we read of where any one offered the excuse that the thief was not baptized, saying that it was unnecessary to submit to Jesus' command of baptism. Is it honest to ignore all these cases of conversion and go back before the Great Commission to the thief?? Even a tyro should know something about the proper division of the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

We shall illustrate the foregoing point. The Pentecostians and the Samaritans (Acts 2:36-38; 8:5-12), were baptized forthwith, but they did not try to avoid the Lord's command of baptism by saying, "We want to be saved without being baptized, like the thief was saved."

The Eunuch, Cornelius and his household never thought of offering the thief as an excuse in an effort to avoid the Lord's command of baptism (Acts 8:36-39; Acts 10:47-48). The Jailer, the Ephesians, and the Corinthians made no effort to envoke the

example of the thief, in an attempt to circumvent the Lord's command of baptism (Acts 16:30-34; Acts 18:8; 19:1-5). None of these offered the excuse that the thief was not baptized, so we need not be!! Why work so hard trying to get around passages concerning which there is no room for misunderstanding? It is so much more safe to believe and obey (Hebrews 5:8-9; John 3:16, 36, ASV.). Why take any chances?

Many seem to have become wedded to "death-bed" salvation; somehow God will waive all conditions of salvation in the hour of death, and save one contrary to his stated will, seems to be the concept of thousands. We do not contend God would not hear the prayer of an erring child of God in the hour of death. What about the man who has neglected a life time of opportunities, lived in disobedience to the word of the Lord, deliberately planning to live for the Devil up unto the last moment, trusting to repentance in a dying hour? For such an one the Bible offers no hope! (Psalms 66:18; Proverbs 28:9; John

9:31; 8:21, 24).

This preaching of salvation from deathbed repentance is a dangerous doctrine indeed!! It has the tendency to encourage sinners to postpone, put off, delay, obedience to the gospel during one's life of opportunity. For this sort of thing there is no warrant in the Scriptures. Men need to be warned of the danger of hardening the heart and postponing obedience to Christ's gospel. Likely, the person who hardens his heart against the warnings of God can find no place for obedience in a dying hour. "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-13; 12:15-17).

Dear readers, why not obey the gospel today. It is easy so to do. From the heart, believe what Jesus has said, repent of your sins, confess his wonderful name before men, and be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24: 46, 47; Acts 2:36-38).—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Al 35580.

Gems Of Numbers

The great book of Numbers, which is the fourth book of the Bible, was written by Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. The book of Genesis has been studied by many people, but I am afraid that many have not studied and received as much information from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy as they should have. I hope this article will motivate each reader to put more time in studying this good book.



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

The book of Numbers gets the title by numbering God's people who left Egypt. Many thousands of people aged twenty years and older made the exodus from Egypt. Sadly many, many of this number failed to enter Canaan because of unbelief. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19). We could well ask the question, is the sin of unbelief going to keep me and you out of heaven?

"And when the people complained it displeased the Lord. . . ." (Numbers 11:1). This verse condemns many today for many in the church complain or murmur about everything. There are some today who complain about true gospel preaching, the decisions that elders make, and just about any good thing the church endeavors to do. These people hurt the church, but most of all, they are hurting themselves. Complainers today have the characteristic of loving themselves more than they do anything else. These complainers want to be on top, but cannot be, so they try to bring people down where they are. How serious is the sin of complaining? It is so serious that Paul warned against it and gave the following admonition concerning complaining: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (I Corinthians 10:10). Paul also said, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14). Complainers cannot build up the church, but only bring misery and misunderstanding.

Numbers chapter thirteen contains a wonderful lesson on faith. Moses had sent out 12 men to report

on the land of Canaan. Only two, Joshua and Caleb, had faith in God. The other ten, who did not have the faith that they needed, felt that Satan was stronger than God. They had forgotten the great power of God at the Red Sea, the supplying of manna, and all the other provisions that God had given to them in the past. How strong is your faith when it comes to attendance, teaching, and giving? What was the result of faith for Joshua and Caleb? "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land. . . save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Numbers 14:30). Will the lack of faith keep us out of heaven? We must have an obedient, saving faith if we are going to heaven.

"Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee. . . ." (Numbers 21:7). This is a great lesson on confession. It takes a big person to admit he is wrong. It is not easy to confess that one is wrong; for many think too highly of themselves to acknowledge error in their lives. But if we are to go to heaven, we must confess that we have sinned. James said, "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). We must believe that we do wrong; for unless we believe this, we will not confess our sins.

John taught that we deceive ourselves if we say that we do not 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 1:8-9). Yes, we need to be big enough to admit that we have sinned and need God.

Many people today cheat on their fellow men. There are those who cheat on their married partners, and since man cheats against man, man thinks he can cheat on God. There are those who believe that since they can cheat on others that it is alright with God. This is the doctrine of the devil. In Numbers 32:23 we read, "and be sure your sin will find you out." We cannot do wrong on earth and get by with it in the day of judgment. "Evil pursueth sinners" (Proverbs 13:21). "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him. . . ." (Isaiah 3:11). "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us: and as for our iniquities, we know them" (Isaiah 59:12). Reader, you can be sure that your sin will find you out.

Let me encourage you to read this good book, as there are many valuable lessons that can be learned to make us better servants for God today in the twentieth century.— P. O. Box 97, Nettleton, Ms. 38858.

"And They Proclaimed To Every Man In His Own Language"

By Ricky Phillips

The above title does not come from Jerusalem in 33 A. D., but from Chicago in 1982 A.D. After the senseless deaths of seven people by cyanide-laced Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules, Mayor Jane Byrne took immediate steps: All Tylenol products were removed from the shelves and a full-scale awareness campaign was begun. In a matter of days, leaflets and brochures were printed and distributed in several languages, including English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese. Chicago is made up of people from many nations, and the city wanted to be sure each person knew of the great danger, regardless of

his language.

Men and women of every nation are faced with a problem FAR MORE devastating than cyanide in a pain reliever. Each person faces the guilt of sin, which can condemn a soul forever in torment. If the city of Chicago had not made every effort to alert its citizens to the immediate danger, it would not have fulfilled its responsibility toward those citizens. We have the prevention AND cure for sin-caused eternal destruction. Is our responsibility toward all of

Continued on page 4

Miracles Or Fraud

The religious broadcasting media of our nation today is being dominated by a group of professional religious racketeers who have very little regard for truth and honesty. To illustrate the nonsense that is being carried on in the name of Christ and the extent to which human belief is expected to stretch these days, listen to this. Recently on television a preacher was telling how a young boy was brought to him with a bad case of tonsillitis. The preacher told how he laid his hand on the boy and prayed. The boy coughed and spit out his tonsils. One would think that it would be unnecessary to discuss such fraud, but such religious trash as the above incident is growing in popularity and taking our nation by storm.



WAYNE COBB

The influence of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement is now being felt in every corner of the religious community. Who would have thought a few years ago that we would be reading of "healing services" among the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Catholics? Faith healers are now found in every nook and cranny. Unfortunately, the charismatic influence has also touched the Restoration Movement. There is within the church today an element vainly seeking signs and affirming their belief in modern miracles as claimed by Oral Roberts, Ernest Angley, and others.

There is an obligation resting upon those of us who love the truth of God and the souls of men to expose these religious racketeers. Jesus warned that false religious leaders were coming. He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves" (Mt. 7:15). The apostle Paul spoke of those who would come and turn men away from the truth (Acts. 20:29, 30). The apostle John warned, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jno. 4:1).

The spectacular religious side show being carried on these days ostensibly in the name of Christ breeds skepticism and unbelief among those with little religious convictions. They assume that the Bible is the source of this religious non-sense which convinces them more than ever that they do not want any part of Christianity.

Much of the confusion in the religious world today is heightened by a misunderstanding of what a miracle actually is. Although the word "miracle" is often used, it is obvious that many fail to understand the meaning of the term. Some people call any unusual or extraordinary event which cannot be explained or understood a miracle. One sees the beauty of a sunrise or witnesses the birth of a baby and says, "it is a miracle!" These are not miracles; they are natural events. Another may survive a terrible accident or a serious illness and proclaim: "It was a miracle!" Merely because something cannot be explained is no reason to label it a "miracle."

The word "miracle" is defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as "an event or effect in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws; an extraordinary, anomalous, or abnormal event that is outside or contrary to natural laws which is brought about by superhuman agency." A miracle is something that the established laws of nature could not do in their ordinary course and operations. That

which God does through natural law is not miraculous.

There are many examples of true miracles in the Bible. The creation of the heavens and the earth from nothing was a miracle (Gen. 1:1-3). Moses' rod becoming a serpent and then a rod again was a miracle (Ex. 4:1-4). Jesus walking on the water (Mt.

14:25-31), stilling the winds and waves (Mt. 8:23-27), and feeding the multitude with five loaves and two fishes (Mt. 14:15-21), were all outside the established laws of nature and thus rightly called "miracles." The miraculous is God working apart from his established processes. —P.O. Box 2161, Florence, AL 35630.

The Need For Moderation

Paul admonishes, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5). The word "moderation" is here translated from an original word suggesting pliability or reasonableness. Paul is urging us away from radicalism and extremism; we are rather to be moderate, reasonable in all things.

Most human judgments are biased, based upon human experience and conjecture. Because of this, many errors in judgment are made



DALTON KEY

by all of us. Because

we see only the side of an issue with which we are personally acquainted, we often make a hasty judgment and declare war upon all other viewpoints. We may not, we need not, agree with all sides to a particular issue; we should, however, attempt to understand all sides.

When truth is at stake, compromise is out of the question. The white flag of surrender must never be raised before the ever present enemy of religious error. However, we should be careful to define clearly the differences involved before blindly firing the first shot in battle.

Religious moderation has always been a scarce virtue. The spirit of extremism has ever been the more popular course. Perhaps a healthy dose of the former would do much in curing the scourge of the latter. — Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

It Does My Heart Good To Hear This

Dear Martel:

We have had several responses lately and your lessons in the meeting were mentioned by some as being encouraging and instructive. One lady responded at Memorial Baptist Church last Thursday night, stating that she was not sure of her salvation and wanted to clear up some doubts. The preacher told her to call on the name of the Lord and she said she would be glad to if she just knew how. He



MARTEL PACE

told her to say "Lord, save me." She said she thought there was more to it than that. Finally, they voted to admit her (with plans for baptism on the following Sunday night). She called me Friday morning and we studied for four hours (using my notes on your lesson on "Calling On The Name Of The Lord"). At the end of the study she was ready to be baptized correctly and did so. Her husband, though not yet with us officially, has resigned his offices and duties at Memorial and is coming with her. He has agreed to study with me. I think it'll take awhile with him, but at least he is willing to talk. On and on the stories go of persons searching for the New Testament way. I'm greatly encouraged and excited about it all.

Best to you and yours.

In Him, John Dale (Signed) Minister, 7th and Poplar Church Murray, Ky.

"And They Proclaimed To Every Man In His Own Language"

Continued from Page 3

mankind any less than that of the city of Chicago toward its citizens? Shouldn't we be as fervent in our warnings, regardless of a person's race, income level, or nationality? Jesus 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). —P.O. Box 396, Oakman, AL 35579.

If some children are as bright as their parents think they are, they should be looked at through sunglasses.

Some proud folks are always letting off esteem.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, mc
the Words of Truth

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1982

NUMBER 49

Miracles Or Frauds

Part II

There is a great deal of confusion today over whether or not believers can perform miracles today. Were miracles intended by God to be a part of gospel preaching throughout the entire Christian dispensation? In discussing the question of miracles today we need to understand clearly the real issue. So much of what is written and said only clouds and evades the real issue involved.



WAYNE COBB

First, the real issue is not whether God has performed miracles in the past, but is he performing miracles today? Second, it is not a question of prayer for the sick. It is right to pray for the sick, but it is a mistake to think that God can only answer prayer by a miracle. We are taught to pray for our daily bread, but we do not expect our daily bread to drop out of the heavens as an answer to our prayers. We realize through the natural law of seedtime and harvest God has certain natural laws in regard to the sick and the power to work through these laws to accomplish his will. Third, the real issue is not a question of the power of God but what is his law or divine will in the matter. It is not what God is able to do, but what does God do?

When we are studying any Bible subject, we ought to ask ourselves in the words of Paul, "What saith the scriptures?" (Rom. 4:3). A question in religion is not settled right until it is settled by what the Lord has said. What is the teaching of the Bible on the subject? Where is the scripture which teaches that God promised to heal the sick miraculously after the apostolic age?

To understand whether or not miracles are performed today we must understand the purpose of Bible miracles. So many entirely miss the purpose of the miracles performed by inspired men. While Jesus performed many miracles of compassion and mercy, the purpose of his miracles was never simply to show

compassion. The great purpose of his miracles was to establish the fundamental truth of Christianity — that he is the Christ, the Son of God. The miracles done by Moses were to show that Moses was from God, and the miracles done by Jesus were to prove his claims of being the Son of God and confirm the truthfulness of his teaching (Jno. 20:30,31). Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was from God because of the miracles (Jno. 3:2). When John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask him if he was the Messiah, Jesus pointed to his miracles (Mt. 11:2-6). Peter used the miracles to point to God's approval of Jesus (Acts 2:22). Jesus demonstrated his power over nature, disease, and death to prove his claims.

When Jesus sent out the apostles to teach all the nations, he endued them with power to work miracles. These inspired men established the authenticity of the gospel message they preached by miracles. Miracles were their credentials (Mk. 16:17, 18; Heb. 2:3,4). The people saw the miracles and knew their message was sent from God.

Miraculous powers were necessary both to reveal God's word and to confirm that word, but when the revelation ceased there was no more need for the confirming miracles. We have no more confirmers today because we have no more revealers. Therefore, miracles, signs, and wonders have served their purpose and have passed away. We today have the confirmed word in written form. To ask for other signs than the miracles written in the New Testament is to reject the word of God.

It was never God's will to have miraculous power to continue in the church indefinitely. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul foretold of the cessation of miraculous gifts. After discussing the miraculous gifts in the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to Corinth, Paul emphatically states in the next chapter that these gifts would "cease," "fail," and "vanish away" (I Cor. 13:8-10). Paul declares, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:10). When the last word of the New Testament was penned that which "is perfect" had come and the partial revelations ceased. Then only the non-miraculous gifts remained — faith, hope, and love (I Cor. 13:13). The miraculous gifts served their purpose and ceased in

the church.

Again, Paul wrote of the termination of miraculous powers in the Ephesian letter. When Christ ascended "he gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8) and these gifts were to continue "till we all come in the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13). "The unity of the faith" refers to the complete revelation of the faith or gospel. With the complete revelation in written form, the system of truth — the unity of the faith — was realized and the miraculous ceased. At the completion of revelation, there was no longer any need for miracles to confirm the message. The miracles had served their purpose and ceased to exist.

When men claim miraculous gifts today they deny the power and validity of the gospel. Once the gospel was confirmed as from God, it was forever and eternally confirmed as his word. No man today can work miracles by the power of God. — P.O. Box 2161 Florence, Ala. 35630.


Back To The Bible

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Jesus tells us in John 8:32 and 17:17 of the necessity and glory of Truth in the divine realm. We must know the Word of God if we would truly be free. One of the besetting sins of modern society is a lack of knowledge in the Bible's contents. It really is no marvel that so much ungodliness runs rampant in our streets because a lack of Spiritual emphasis will always bring chaos into our lives. Men have forgotten Christ and the bulwark of righteousness he provides. In Proverbs 14:34 the inspired penman boldly affirmed: "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

Americans desperately need to get back to the Bible in our homes. Last year this nation alone contributed 1,500,000 divorces to an already degraded world scene. In both Malachi and Matthew we learn that "God hates putting away," and let not

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701


RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"I Won't Do It"

An actor in a television commercial has been seen numerous times by millions of people endorsing a certain video game set, pointing out its superiority over its competitor. In a subsequent commercial, this same actor feigns disgust because the maker of the product he has endorsed is offering a fifty dollar rebate. He says people should buy the product because of its superiority, and not because of any rebate. He walks away, shaking his head, and saying, "I won't do it!" As he does so, the circus takes his place in front of the camera. The impression that one is supposed to get from this second commercial is that this actor feels it lowers his dignity and the dignity of the product he is advertizing to offer a rebate, and to attract attention to the product, by circus antics.



BOB DUNCAN

Have the people of the world learned something that some brethren need to learn? It is appalling to observe the circus atmosphere surrounding some of the efforts of brethren to attract people to attend their gatherings. Side shows, helicopter rides, rides in hot air balloons, and all sorts of gimmicks are being used by brethren. Is it because the gospel itself is not very attractive, or is not really very valuable? Have we not taken the cutting edge off of the gospel by surrounding it with such a circus atmosphere, and using all sorts of gimmicks?

It certainly is not a sin for brethren to engage in recreational activities together. Participating in athletic competition is not wrong. But we are making a mistake if we think the gospel can be enhanced by gilding it with a great amount of social or recreational hullabaloo. Is the gospel all that distasteful? My mother would mix castor oil with orange juice, and give it to us children. The very fact she mixed it with orange juice declares it was unpalatable. (And mixing it with orange juice didn't really help.) What does all our gadgetry surrounding the preaching of the gospel declare to the people we are trying to save?

We do not dispute the fact that the gospel of Christ, just as it is, is not very popular with the masses. Most of them would prefer something which appeals to the flesh. But this is not a new problem. Look at Paul's words: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness . . . For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:18,22). Even the apostles saw in their day that the plain gospel of Christ was not very appealing to the masses. How did they deal with this problem? By the use of gadgets and gimmicks? No, but by preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, "unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:23,24).

The church is not popular with the masses because

it is the church of Christ. The world hated Christ (John 15:18), and the world has not changed. If we set about to make the church popular we will do so by weakening the gospel of Christ — a cost far too great to pay. The church is not popular because it admits of no rivalry. It is not one among many, but is the only one. If a man can be saved without believing what I preach, then I should quit preaching. One who does not believe what he preaches is the world's only hope should quit preaching. Christianity is not popular because it involves a crucifixion — not merely the crucifixion of Christ, but our own also. Three passages in the book of Galatians emphasize this fact: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (2:20). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (5:24). "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (6:14).

This crucifixion is a stumblingblock to many, for it means the putting to death of the old man of sin, and living a new life. Most people are unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to conform their lives to the gospel of Christ. And so some think they have to wrap the gospel in some kind of tapestry which will appeal more to the desires of the flesh. "I won't do it." How about you?

Loved, No Matter What

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The story is told of a young school boy who was about to be expelled from school. In spite of repeated spankings and scoldings the young boy seemed unable to stay out of trouble. Finally, the teacher went to the principal to demand that he be expelled. And as they were meeting, out the window they saw the boy throwing paper down in the school yard.



RAY DUTTON

"That's it," said the principal. "This disobedience can't be tolerated!"

Grabbing the boy by the arm they pulled him to where the paper had been thrown down. As the teacher picked up the paper her eyes glanced across it. Suddenly her hands began to tremble and her eyes

Continued on page 3

Back To The Bible

Continued From Page 1

man put asunder what God hath joined together!

We need to get back to Bible teaching regarding proper respect for authority. Holy Scripture informs us to pay taxes, obey the rulers and to pray for those in authority (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1, I Timothy 2). This is the only way to stop the rioting, protesting and anarchy in our cities today. The Bible alone has the answer to our dilemma. Let us have the courage to return to its sacred teaching.

You and I certainly need to return to God's Word for moral purity and holiness. In an age of nudity, filth and sensuality all of us must return to the modesty, integrity and spirituality of New Testament Christianity (Philippians 4:8). Church councils may sanction homosexual preachers but the Bible clearly rebukes such sinfulness (Romans 1:27; I Corinthians 6:9). It is long overdue but still we plead for all men everywhere to return to the wholesome purity Jesus stressed in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart."

There is a genuine need for each one of us to go back to the Bible for God's plan of redemption. In Acts 22:16 and Galatians 3:27 we clearly see the necessity of being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. Bible baptism is immersion in water "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 3:16 and 28:19).

Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 to build his church. We must go back to the Bible for that glorious body over which He rules as head (Colossians 1:18). — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

You can kill men and cripple nations, but you cannot kill a good idea.

It does a man no good to sit up and take notice — if he keeps on sitting.

Very few people have learned to use ignorance intelligently.

Worry kills more people than work. Some people play it safe by doing neither.

Was Simon The Sorcerer Sincere?

The conversion of Simon the sorcerer, when discussed, provokes much disagreement as to his sincerity when he was baptized. In the context of Acts 8:1-24, we learn of the labors of Philip in the city of Samaria. The great theme of this inspired man's preaching was Christ (v. 5). The response by the people: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (v. 12). We can conclude that in preaching "Christ," Philip taught the people about the kingdom or church of God, the precious name by which we are saved, and how to become redeemed. This is in evidence by what the people did. Jesus instructed his apostles prior to his ascension: "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). The Samaritans believed and were baptized; thus, they were saved from their sins as promised by the Lord. The individual Simon was specifically mentioned as responding to the preaching of Philip: "And Simon also himself believed; and being baptized . . ." (V. 13).



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

The reason why the conversion of Simon is questioned is because of his actions following his baptism. This man had deceived the people of Samaria by his practice of sorcery. He was esteemed highly by his followers. They said: "This man is that power of God which is called Great" (V. 10). However, the people could distinguish between the genuine miracles of Philip and the so-called magic of Simon (vs. 6, 7, 12). In fact, Simon was greatly impressed with the miracles done by Philip (v. 13). When the apostles, Peter and John, came from Jerusalem and prayed for the new disciples, laying their hands upon them in order for these Christians to receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, Simon sought to purchase this power "that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit" (vs. 14-17). Of course, he sinned, as is pointed out by the

apostle Peter. Simon stood in a condemned condition (vs. 20, 21). This action by Simon the Sorcerer is the basis of much disagreement as to his sincerity in responding to the preaching of Philip.

Those advocates of the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, that is, once saved, always saved, would insist that he was insincere, the reason being that a true Christian would not, in fact, could not, have committed such a sin. Those religionists who propose a second blessing of grace would declare that a true convert to Christ is given power to live above sin, thus the apparent need to say that Simon the Sorcerer was not sincere.

We offer the following observations in order to help us reach the right decision regarding the sincerity or the insincerity of Simon at the time of his conversion.

First, if we believe and understand that all the Samaritans who believed and were baptized were saved, should we not by the same reasoning accept the conversion of Simon who believed and was baptized (vs. 12, 13)? Are we ready to assert that the Lord saved the Samaritans but not Simon, even though they all responded in the exact same manner to the preaching of Philip?

Second, if Simon had been hypocritical, surely Philip, Peter, or even Luke, the inspired historian and writer of the book of acts, would have made mention of the fact; however, there is no indication whatsoever that any of these men of God doubted his obedience to the gospel of Christ. When Peter said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God," he had reference to Simon's transgression in offering money for the power possessed by the apostles (v. 21).

Third, notice closely what the apostle Peter instructed Simon to do in order to obtain forgiveness

of God for his sin: "Repent therefore of this wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (v. 22). That statement is quite significant, the reason being, if Peter had perceived that Simon had not been truly converted, he would not have told him to repent and pray for the forgiveness of his sins. He would have required Simon to be truly penitent and to be baptized scripturally at this time. But he did not. He required of Simon repentance and prayer. An inspired man such as the apostle Peter never commanded an alien sinner to repent and pray for the remission of sins. Likewise, an erring Christian was never required to be baptized a second time. This should be sufficient proof that Simon was a fallen Christian and not an insincere sinner who needed to obey the gospel in order to be saved.

Fourth, can we not discern that the Holy Spirit has given to us in this example of Simon a case of a Christian's sinning after being saved by the gospel of Christ? There are numerous warnings in the New Testament for the Christian to "take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). Satan simply tempted Simon in his weakness, the desire to have the pre-eminence and prominence among his fellowman by a continued display of power. The fallen disciple understands that he can be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ of his sins when he repents and prays to God. John informs Christians to confess sins to God and he will "cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:7-10).

We see, in the command given by Peter to Simon to repent and pray, God's second law of pardon for the erring Christian, not the insincerity of an imposter posing as a saint.—809 Perry Store Rd., Opp, Al. 36467.

Silly Excuses

ANCIL JENKINS

The following came in a recent bulletin. These are reasons people reported for being in an automobile accident.

1. The pedestrian had no idea which way to go, so I ran over him.
2. The other car collided with mine without warning me of its intentions.
3. I had been driving my car for 40 years when

I fell asleep at the wheel and had the accident.

4. As I reached an intersection a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision.

5. I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment.

6. The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.

7. An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished.

This is amusing, yet also enlightening. Some people have problems expressing themselves clearly. Others just fail to understand the reality of the situation. Yet we hear excuses that make no more sense than some of these. These are the excuses given to justify one's spiritual activity, or lack of it.

"I DON'T REALLY HAVE TIME." This is no excuse. It is just a polite way of saying there are things that one deems more important than spiritual activity. We find the time to do what we feel is important.

"I DON'T HAVE AS MUCH TIME AS——— DOES." This is also nonsense. We all have the same number of hours in our day. It is not how much time we have, but how well we use that time.

"LATER. . ." This is the most dangerous excuse one can give. It makes one think he had made a commitment. It satisfies the conscience. There is the relief of escaping today's decision

Loved, No Matter What

Continued from page 2

glistened with tears. A heart that had recently been filled with anger and frustration was now humbled with guilt and remorse.

There on that crumpled scrap of paper a message had been scrawled by the hand of a little boy who needed much more than spankings and scoldings. A troubled child had written the words: "Whoever finds this, I love you."

Like this child we reach out in our fumbling ways to give love to others in hope of receiving the same. But often we end up being rejected because of our imperfections and failing. What we need and what God offers is an unconditional love. (Salvation is conditional, but not love.) As our text clearly reveals, God loves us in spite of our failings. He loves us **NO MATTER WHAT**. When all others have turned against us and abandoned us, God and his love are still there.

The Gospel is the greatest love story ever told. It is the story of a love so deep and so strong that nothing

could destroy it. What else but such a love could cause the sinless Son of God to speak the words of Luke 23:34. Through the blood, sweat, tears, and agony of the cross the love of Jesus for mankind moved him to pray for those who had falsely accused him, spit on him, and cursed him. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

In my own life the single greatest drawing power of the Gospel is this "love, no matter what." For I know there is at least one who loves me even when I'm unloveable. There is one who will not forsake me even though I may forsake him.

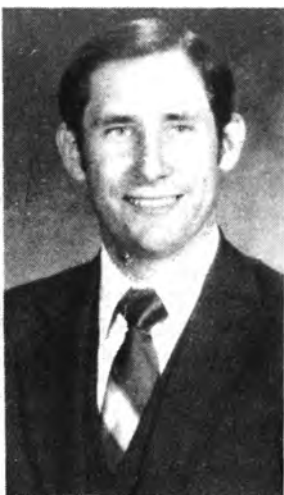
"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I Jn. 4:10).

And in response to this overwhelming and compelling love we cannot help but "love him, because he first loved us" (I Jn. 4:19).—2236 Pup Run, Helena, Al. 35080.

Continued on page 4

Does Baptism Remit Sin?

We each have a pressing need for the remission of our every sin. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). As a result of a sinful life we should have nothing to look forward to but eternal punishment and agony. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). But through Christ and obedience to the gospel we can have our every sin removed and look forward to an eternity with God.



RONNIE LOWE

But does baptism remit my sins? Does baptism wash away my sins? Does baptism purge my conscience? The answer is an emphatic "No!" What then does remove my sins? The song writer answers this way: "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." God through Peter puts it this way: "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:18, 19).

Hence, the blood of Christ remits my sins. For "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). But the blood of bulls and goats (of mere animals) was not sufficient to remove the sins of a human being made in the image of God (Hebrews 10:4). Only the blood of Christ has the power to do that (Hebrews 10:10). Jesus said his blood was "poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). It is the blood of Christ that does the remitting, but when does this happen? Did it happen at the point of the shedding? Did his blood remove the sins of the whole world, both past and future, all at one time? No, for our sins are removed at the point of baptism. In order to receive forgiveness for their part in the crucifixion of our Lord, Peter told those on Pentecost to repent and be baptized "for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

Likewise, it is the blood of Christ that washes away our sins. The sinful soul is like the well-tracked beach, but the Christian soul is like the beach following the lowering of the tide when there is no sign of humanity ever having been there. The sinful soul is stained with sin and there is only one thing that can wash that stain away. Only the blood of Christ can do that cleansing. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). John writes, "Unto him that loveth us and washed us of our sins by his blood" (Revelation 1:5). But when does the blood perform its cleansing function? Paul had his sins washed away when he was baptized (Acts 22:16), and so can we.

It is also the blood of Christ that purges our conscience. Even though our conscience is not fool-proof, a clear conscience is essential to the peace of mind we all ought to have. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14). But when does his blood cleanse our conscience? Listen to Peter's answer: "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter 3:21).

Baptism does not remove our sins, but it is an indispensable part of having those sins remitted.

Through God's grace, the blood of Christ was shed upon the cross of Calvary. Through our faith, we respond to that gift by being baptized to come into contact with that saving blood. Don't let anyone tell

you that baptism is not essential to one's salvation, for it is the only way to contact the blood of Christ in order that his shed blood will remove our every sin. —202 Mesquite, Ranger, Texas 76470.

Bro. Charlie Wheeler Passes

Early Monday morning (October 4) Bro. Charlie Wheeler lost his six-year battle with cancer. His funeral was held in the building of the Midway Church of Christ on Tuesday afternoon, with burial in the adjoining cemetery.

Bro. Wheeler was the grandson of the late C. A. Wheeler, well known gospel preacher, who spent most of his life in this area, and who taught and baptized Gus Nichols. Bro. Charlie was baptized by the late W. A. Black 51 years ago. He began preaching the gospel in 1955 and has preached at several places in this area, such as: Shiloh; Tubbs; Deason Hill; Liberty; Crossroads; Enon; Whitson



PERVIE NICHOLS

Place; and some churches in Lamar County. For the past several years (until a few months before his death) he worked with the Mount Hope church (here in Walker County), teaching classes and preaching (here on Sunday mornings).

He and Sis. Wheeler were members of the Midway Church of Christ. They attended Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights. For years (until about a year ago) Bro. Wheeler taught the adult auditorium class on Wednesday nights.

Being a native of Walker County, I have known him (and most of the Wheeler family) for many years. I have always appreciated him for his work's sake. He was a student of God's Book, and did not hesitate to teach his convictions to the best of his ability. The church of the Lord suffers a loss in his passing.

Bro. Wheeler is survived by his wife (Willodene) of 42 years, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, 6 sisters, and 3 brothers.

Truly "... there is a prince and a great man fallen this day . . ." (II Samuel 3:38). — Rt. 3 Box 420 Jasper, AL 35501.

My Favorite Psalm

My favorite Psalm is the 119th. It is the longest Psalm in the book. It contains 176 verses, and David mentions the word of God in every verse with the exception of five. David gives nine titles to the word of God: (1) the law of Jehovah (v. 1), (2) his testimonies (v. 2), (3) his ways (v. 3), (4) thy precepts (v. 4), (5) thy statutes (v. 5), (6) thy commandments (v. 6), (7) thy righteous judgments (v. 7), (8) thy word (v. 9), (9) thine ordinances (v. 30). King David also shows us what the word of God can do for us. It can cleanse (v. 9), quicken (v. 25), strengthen (v. 28), confirm (v. 38), defend (v. 42), comfort (v. 50), instruct (vv. 98,99), enlighten (v. 105), assure (v. 114), uphold (v. 116), give peace (v. 165), and deliver (v. 170).

How can we describe the beauty of Psalm 119? Spurgeon said this Psalm "might well be called the holy soul's soliloquy before an open Bible." Its only subject matter is the word of God. David refreshes his soul at God's oasis. Psalm 119 is loaded with comfort. It is a hidden treasure chest full of golden nuggets. It is water for the thirsty, bread for the hungry, shelter for the destitute. It will deliver you from sin (v. 11), give you understanding (v. 169), cleanse your ways (v. 9), and be your meditation all the day long (v. 97).

Those who fill their sermons with death bed stories, what Dr. so-and-so says, the wisdom of the world, need to sit down and read Psalm 119. It will fill you with power in preaching the word. It will make you fill your preaching with a "thus saith the Lord." The word of God is what shall save men's souls (Ps. 119:9,25,107; Jas. 1:21; I Pet. 1:22). The sinner will

be convicted in his heart when you unsheathe the word of God. God's people will be edified when they hear the scriptures. Illustrations are handy, but they will not save the soul.

The word of God is able to keep us strong. "Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction" (Ps. 119:92). How much time do you spend in studying God's word preacher, elder, and Bible class teacher? David said, "I will never forget thy precepts" (v. 92). Is the Bible the home of your soul? Is it your meditation at night? (vv. 55, 62). Does your heart stand in awe of his words? (v. 161). Do you love his words because they are very pure? (v. 140). Do you spend more time with the newspaper, magazine, or TV than the word of God? These are questions we all need to ask ourselves. "I opened wide my mouth, and panted; for I longed for thy commandments" (v. 131). Gospel preachers used to be known for their ability to quote the word. We are not seeing much of that any more, maybe because it is no longer the "in thing." We want to become like the churches round about us. And we have. But Psalm 119 still remains the same for those who come to drink from its never ending springs. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Silly Excuses

Continued from page 3

by postponing it. It is the best tool the devil has to keep us from being what we can be. If one is unwilling to set a specific date and hour he will begin obeying God — he has made a decision not to obey Him.

Excuses are for only one purpose. They satisfy the excuser. They do not explain to anyone. They do not satisfy God. — 1701 Gold Avenue S. E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1982

NUMBER 50

The One Moment In History When All Jews Lost Their Religion

DAN BILLINGSLEY

No one person in all of history has shown more love and concern for the Jewish people than the Lord Jesus Christ. His mission to Israel was the strongest possible declaration and demonstration of God's love and concern for the Jews (Matthew 1:21; 3:11; 11:28-29; John 1:11-12; 3:16,36). Likewise today, the church of Jesus Christ should manifest a strong interest in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to all men lost in sin, including the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5; 15:24; Luke 19:10; Mark 16:15-16). There should not be one "anti-Semitic" sentiment among those who follow the Lord! But at the same time, Christians must *never forsake* the New Testament teaching of God which declares that *all Jews in every generation* need to be converted to Christ (Romans 1:1-5; 3:20-31; 5:1-11; 7:1-4; 8:1-2; 10:1-21).

In a recent article entitled "Churches Recognize Judaism" (Dallas Times Herald, Saturday, Feb. 6, 1982), Larry Jerden, Staff Writer, states: "Texas conference opens relationship — Houston, — The Texas Conference of Churches on Friday adopted a position statement accepting Judaism as a 'valid and operative religion' and rejecting 'unwarranted' efforts to convert Jews to Christianity" The position paper says, "We reject the position that the covenant between the Jews and God was dissolved with the coming of Christ. The Jewish people today possess their own unique call and mission before God . . . dialogue, rather than proselytizing — efforts at conversion — is the proper relationship between the two faiths." The article continues, "Bruce Theunissen, director of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches, said, 'he would rather not get into how the statement relates to the role of Jesus Christ. Traditional Christian theology holds that Jesus is the only way to God!'"

While we can appreciate the desire to unite men before God and to have a common bond of love and fellowship, we must realize that all such unscriptural attempts as this only stiffens the resistance of the Jews to the Lord, and continues to alienate and harden them against New Testament salvation. Such

a denial of God's revelation does not help the Jews' dilemma; it serves only to harm these people more deeply.

God gives no authority to "The Texas Conference of Churches" (16 Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox denominations) to speak for him or negate his divine will concerning the Jews. The Scriptures of God teach that the covenant and religious system of Old Testament Israel *is not now* a "valid and operative religion." God plainly declares that he *ended* the covenant with the Jews at the death of Christ on the cross (Colossians 2:14; Romans 7:4; II Corinthians 3; Hebrews 10:9-10).

By the crucifixion of Jesus he completely fulfilled the promises and prophecies made to Israel (Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-45; 15:8). He forever abrogated the temple worship at Jerusalem (Matthew 27:51); the old sacrifice of the blood of goats and calves gave way to the "blood" of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:12-14); the priesthood of Aaron and the tribe of Levi gave way to the priesthood of Christ and the church (Hebrews 7:12); the "old" covenant of Moses gave way to the "new" covenant of Christ (Hebrews 9:16-17); the "law" gave way to the "gospel" (John 1:17; Romans 8:1-2); the "old birth" of the flesh of Abraham gave way to the "new birth" of the gospel (John 3:3-5; I Peter 1:21-25); the "kingdom of Israel" gave way to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ when Israel rejected Jesus, and at the cross, when God ended his covenant with the Jews, he cast them away as his holy nation (Romans 11:15). *This was the one moment in history when every Jew lost his Jewish religion!* The Jews could no longer approach God through Moses. They must come through Christ and his New Testament gospel today. There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, for "the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon his name" (Romans 10:12). (See also Matthew 4:17; 16:18; 21:43; Acts 2:41-47; 8:12; 19:8; 28:20.)

There is simply *no way today* that the religion of Israel can be a "valid and operative religion." Such teaching invites another complete rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ by the Jews, and a denial of

his authority and kingdom. One Jewish generation did this when they caused the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Matthew 27:22-23), and this, present generation of Jews *should not* be encouraged to reject the only hope which God provided (John 14:6; Hebrews 4:20).

The most inhumane hurt that anyone could heap upon Jews today is to encourage their continued expectation and trust in the Old Testament. The Jewish holocaust of the last fifty years will be nothing compared to the hell which God has prepared for those who reject Christ (II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:11-15). God promised the fathers of Israel when he gave them the covenant of Moses, that if they rejected him and did not keep their covenant, if they refused the new covenant with Christ, he would punish them among the nations, that they would become "a hiss and a byword" among the heathen (I Kings 9:6-9; Deuteronomy 28:37), and that they would perish forever in their unbelief. What a tragedy — to encourage another generation of Jews to commit complete spiritual suicide!

To every Jew who may read this article: Dear friend, please listen to Jesus! He loves you, and can give you all the promise which God made to Abraham. The "law and the prophets" are history; now the gospel is life and immortality through Jesus (II Timothy 1:10). You cannot, even by the most zealous faith and determination, resurrect the Mosaic system. It is dead! Gone forever! Please remember the words of our Lord to his generation of Jews, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24; 20:30-31; Mark 16:15-16). — 403 Welch Denton, Texas 76201.

If some Christians knew as little about their jobs as they do the Bible, they would have to be guided to their work benches every morning.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501
FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friend, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

The Controversy Continues

The great debate over the origin of the earth continues. In fact, the controversy is coming to public light through the various media. The Christian has no fear in examining the evidence. The case for a creation by God has never been stronger.

For many years the "Steady-State Theory" was the accepted explanation for the origin of the earth. This held that the universe had neither beginning or end. Matter supposedly was created spontaneously to fill spaces left by expansion. This theory was proposed by Sir Fred Hoyle.

About sixteen years ago, two scientists of Bell Telephone Laboratories observed a faint radio signal from space that destroyed this theory. Their discovery gave some credence to a "Big-Bang" theory. This states that our universe is not eternal, but came into existence at some point in time. As time passed, this idea has come more into acceptance by scientists. Even Sir Fred Hoyle, who proposed first the "Steady-State" theory, has now accepted the "Big-Bang" theory.

This does not by itself prove creation. The "Big-Bang" theory still differs a great deal from the creation account in Genesis. God created the world out of nothing, at his word. The "Big-Bang" theory starts with matter and then sees a tremendous change.

However, we see man coming closer to the truth. Dr. Arno A. Pensias who was one of the first men to observe the radio signal from space said the following, "My argument is that the best data we have is exactly what I would have predicted, had I had nothing to go on but the five Books of Moses, the Psalms, the Bible as a whole" (New York Times, March 12, 1978). — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS

Do Deeds Determine Destinies?

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:15). It is alleged that this passage is teaching that only the evil deeds of the saints — not the saints themselves — will be burned. This allegation is made by those who insist that the child of God cannot so sin as to be eternally lost in hell. They say he can sin, and that his sins ("work") shall be burned, but he himself will not be burned, but will be saved.

Before examining this particular passage to determine the idea the Holy Spirit intended to convey to the reader, let us examine briefly the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. Those who believe this doctrine prefer to call it the doctrine of the security of the believer, but this is a misnomer. It is not a question of the security of the believer, but of the security of those who cease to believe and actually abandon their faith. Still others call this doctrine the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and under this title it becomes the *P* in the T-U-L-I-P of Calvinism. If any of Calvinism were true, then the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy would have to be true. Review it briefly with me. The *T* stands for *Total Depravity* — all are born hereditarily totally depraved. The *U* stands for *Unconditional Predestination and Reprobation* — God and Christ unconditionally and arbitrarily elected certain specific individuals to be lost and certain ones to be saved, and this number is so fixed that not one can be added to it or diminished from it. The *L* stands for *Limited Atonement* — Christ died only for those who will eventually be saved, and by the same token all those for whom Christ died will be saved, even without the preached or written word, or any conditions on their part. The *I* stands for *Irresistible Grace* — the idea that those unconditionally predestinated to salvation will be saved by an act of grace, and this act of grace will be irresistible. How could it be otherwise, if their salvation has already been unconditionally guaranteed? This brings us to the *P*, which stands for *Perseverance of the Saints* — the idea that all those saved will persevere unto the end, and that not one will be lost. This last point is demanded by the others. If one's eternal destiny were arbitrarily and unconditionally decided by God before the foundation of the world; if all for whom Christ died will be saved by an irresistible act of grace; then it follows that one saved according to such an arrangement would have to remain saved. Otherwise what has been unconditionally predestinated and fore-ordained would not come to pass. If it can be shown that it is possible for one saved person to become lost, then the whole Calvinistic system falls. Or if it can be shown that one person for whom Christ died will be lost, then the whole system falls. These two things we propose to show. While space does not permit even the mention of every passage which would normally be used in a discussion of this subject, we will mention some which we feel provide conclusive proof that the child of God may sin so as to be lost in hell.



BOB DUNCAN

Matthew 5:28, the latter part of the verse, states: "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Is it possible for a child of God to say, "Thou fool"? If it is, then it is possible for him to be lost in hell, according to this verse.

A second passage we will consider in this connection is Hebrews 10:28,29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified; an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" These words take the form of a question, but their implication is clear, that is, that punishment more severe than that provided under the law of Moses will be meted out to those who, having been sanctified by the blood of Christ, turn their backs upon him. And please notice that this passage is not talking about one who was never saved in the first place; it is talking of one who "was sanctified" by the "blood of the covenant."

The warning in I Corinthians 10:12 ("Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall") and the statement in Galatians 5:4 ("Ye are fallen from grace") both show that it is possible for the saved to fall from grace and be lost. Otherwise these passages mean absolutely nothing.

Two verses will suffice to show that it is possible for one to perish for whom Christ died. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died" (I Cor. 8:11). Calvinism says if Christ died for him, he will be saved by an irresistible act of God's grace, and cannot possibly be lost, be destroyed, or perish. The inspired apostle Paul says that one for whom Christ died may perish or be destroyed. I will accept what the apostle says about the matter!

Well, what about the statement in I Corinthians 3:15? Look at it again: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Does this say that one's sins shall be burned up? That his evil deeds shall be burned up? The very idea is absurd. How could one's sins be burned up? Once again it is the context which reveals the real meaning of the passage. The subject under discussion in the chapter is the subject of ministers by whom the Corinthians had believed (3:5). In verse 9 Paul called himself and other preachers, "labourers together with God," and he said the church at Corinth was "God's building." While preachers can be sure of the foundation (Christ) upon which they are building (verse 11), they cannot always be sure what kind of material their converts are made of. According to verse 12, they may be "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." Verse 13 tells us the fire shall try every man's work. Whether this is speaking of the fiery trials which would come, or whether it is speaking of the final judgment, makes little difference. The point is that all will be put to the test on an individual basis, and the personal salvation of the preacher does not depend upon the faithfulness of those whom he has converted. Naturally it is a great loss to him for those he has converted to be destroyed, but this does not mean he himself will be lost. This is the meaning of the passage.

The 1983 Fort Worth Lectures

The sixth annual Fort Worth Lectures, with the theme, "The Person and Life of Christ," is scheduled for the second week in January, 1983. This lectureship is recognized throughout our great brotherhood as being of tremendous benefit to all because of the relativity to the needs and concerns which face us. Some of the preceding years' topics were: "Premillennialism — True or False?," "The Holy Scriptures," "Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained," and others. The 1983 lectures promise to be no less inspiring and beneficial. The attendance to the Fort Worth Lectures is growing year by year as the quality of the program is becoming more widely circulated. We are looking forward to the 1983 Fort Worth Lectures with great anticipation.

I. PERTINENT DATA CONCERNING THE FORT WORTH LECTURES

(1) *Date.* January 9-13, 1983 — Sunday through Thursday.

(2) *Place.* The lectures will again be conducted in the facilities of the Brown Trail congregation, 1801 Brown Trail, Bedford (greater Fort Worth), Texas.

(3) *Theme.* "The Person and Life of Christ," promises to be one of the most interesting themes selected since the beginning of the lectureship.

(4) *Oversight.* While the lectureship this year has been planned by a "Lectureship Committee," made up of brethren Robert Bankes, of the Brentwood congregation, Tom Gardner, of the Midtown congregation and Eddie Whitten, of the Brown Trail congregation, it remains under the oversight of the elders of the Brown Trail church. Sister congregations of the Fort Worth area cooperate in this effort to make it possible.

II. EVENING SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Sunday evening, at the 5:00 p.m. hour, Avon Malone will speak on "The Blood that was Shed for Me." At the 6:00 p.m. hour, Bill Teague will be the speaker on the subject, "The Obedient Son" (I Corinthians 15:27). Robert Bankes will speak on "The Compassion of Christ" at the 7:00 p.m. hour.

Monday evening, Bobby Duncan will speak on "Jesus, the Fountain of Authority." Roy C. Deaver will speak on "Jesus Deals with False Teachers."

Tuesday evening, Bert Thompson will speak on "Christ, the Effective Energy Against Humanism;" and Johnny Ramsey will discuss, "Jesus, Our Friend."

Wednesday evening, the first topic will be, "Jesus' Power and Human Need," with Hulen Jackson as the speaker. Bill Humble will speak on "Jesus' Teaching on the Judgment."

Thursday evening, Rubel Shelly will discuss "The Historical Jesus." Hugo McCord will close out the lectureship with an all-scripture sermon entitled, "The Life of Christ." This has also been designated, "Youth Night."

III. DAYTIME SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Sunday: At the first lecture (9:00 a.m.), Dub McClish will speak on "Jesus Describes the Christian Life." David Roper will speak on "Christ's Relationship to the Scriptures."

Monday: John Waddey will discuss the topic, "Jesus, and His New Morality." James Willcutt will speak on "Jesus, The Suffering Servant." "Christ, and the Problems of the Home," will be the subject of Bill Cline.

Tuesday: Lynn Matheny will be speaking on "Jesus, the Good Shepherd." George Pledger will speak on "Jesus and the Use of Miracles." Gary Workman will speak on "The 'Jesus Only' Theory."

Wednesday: Robert Taylor will speak on "Christ, the King of the Kingdom." Claude Guild's topic will be "Christ, the Light of the World." Dick Sztanyo will speak on "Jesus' Incarnation and the Atoning Sacrifice."

Thursday: Gene Palvado will speak on the subject, "Jesus' Death and Burial." Roy Hardeman Deaver will speak on "Jesus, the Powerful Son of God." Norman Gipson will speak on "The Ethical Jesus."

IV. OPEN FORUM

There will be an open forum conducted daily from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Moderators will be: (Monday) Robert Bankes, (Tuesday) Johnny Ramsey, (Wednesday) Robert Taylor, (Thursday) Roy C. Deaver.

V. SPECIAL EVENTS AND FEATURES

(1) *Leadership Dinner:* On Tuesday, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., there will be a catered dinner enjoyed by all elders, deacons, preachers, Bible school teachers and their mates, with brother Leroy Brownlow as guest speaker on the subject, "The Challenge of Leadership."

(2) *Luncheons:* On Monday noon, Wyatt Sawyer will be featured, speaking on the topic "Who is my Mother and my Brethren?" *Tuesday,* at the noon hour, the annual "Honor to whom Honor" luncheon will honor E. R. Harper, with Willard Collins speaking. On *Wednesday* at noon, John Banister will speak on "Some Things I have Learned after 50 Years as a Preacher." *Thursday* noon, the popular feature, "Humorous Things that Have Happened to me as a Preacher" will be the theme. Lunches will be provided at the building for a nominal cost each day, and will be prepared by the ladies of the area.

(3) *Displays:* A large part of the building will be

prepared for display area, featuring various publishers, periodicals, benevolent homes, Christian colleges, mission endeavors, etc.

(4) *Ladies Classes:* There will be classes offered daily for the ladies, 11:00-12:00 a.m. The theme will be: "The Person and Life of Christ in the Elevation of Womanhood." On Monday, Mary Oler will introduce the theme with, "(Woman) In The Beginning." On Tuesday, Pat Suba will speak on "The Emancipation from Tradition." On Wednesday, Val Cardwell will speak on "Revealing of Truth to Women." And, Thursday, Thelma Banowsky will conclude the theme with "Challenging her to Highest Spiritual Service."

VI. LODGING

Free lodging will be provided in the homes of members of the church in this area for all of those who request it in advance. Or, if preferred, there are numerous motels available nearby. Fast-food restaurants are also available nearby; however, one main meal daily will be served at noon at the building at a nominal cost.

The lectures will be printed in book form and will be available at the lectures. Tapes of each lecture will also be available.

For further information, contact the Brown Trail church, 1801 Brown Trail, Bedford, Texas 76021, or call (817) 282-6526 or 282-3911.

The Soul Of Man

Man is an eternal soul. He is a triune being. Moses wrote, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Paul wrote: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23). The beast of the field has a body that is living. When the beast dies he no longer exists. He is dead forever. Man has a body that is living, but he also has a life or soul that will exist eternally.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

THOSE WHO TEACH THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION DENY THE ETERNAL SOUL. The theory of evolution, though popular, rests upon vague hypotheses, assumed data, and a religious faith without foundation. Wayne Jackson states: "The theory of evolution insists that life originally consisted simply of a 'blob' of protoplasm which, after millions of years, became bi-sexual resulting in man and woman" (Reason and Revelation, Vol. I, No. 8).

Jerry Adler points out in an article in *Newsweek* magazine: "In the fossil record, missing links are the rule: The story of life is as disjointed as a silent newsreel, in which species succeed one another as abruptly as Balkan prime ministers. The more scientists have searched for the transitional forms between species, the more they have been frustrated . . . Evidence from fossils now points overwhelmingly away from the classical Darwinism which most Americans learned in high school: that new species evolve out of existing ones by the gradual accumulation of small changes, each of which helps the organism survive and compete in the environment" (Adler, Jerry, "Is Man a Subtle Accident?" *Newsweek*, November 30, 1980, pg. 95). It takes greater faith to believe man came by chance than to believe an intelligent God created the world and man.

Many have rejected the Bible account of the origin of man. THEY THEREFORE REJECT THE ETHICS OF THE BIBLE AND REPLACE THEM WITH HUMANISM. They must have something to substitute in the moral void.

Corliss Lamont, humanist author, states, "Humanism believes that man has the power and potentiality of solving his own problems successfully, relying primarily on reason and scientific method to do so and to enlarge continually his knowledge of the truth.

"Humanism believes in a naturalistic cosmology or metaphysics or attitude toward the universe that rules out all forms of the supernatural and that regards nature as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of events which exists independently of any mind of consciousness" (*Humanism as a philosophy*. Philosophy Library, New York, 1949 PP. 19, 20).

A little observation reveals that the self-reliant man soon lowers his standards and falls. Therefore we rely upon Jeremiah's statement, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

We reject the evolutionary theory and humanism as doctrines destructive to a civilized society and to the eternal hope of man.

GOD CREATED MAN WITH THE RIGHT OF CHOICE. The devil tempted man to sin and man yielded (Gen. 3:1-7). Sin has continued until the present time. The gospel of Christ is the only thing that has an effect to elevate the lot of man upon this earth. Paul wrote, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).

Sin is so terrible, that forgiveness of sin demanded the gift of God's only begotten Son to die upon the Roman cross (John 3:16). Sin demanded eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46; II Thess. 1:7-10). But God extended mercy in the sacrifice of his Son upon the cross. His Son suffered the death upon the cross for the sins of mankind. We are informed by Paul, "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" (II Cor. 5:21). The salvation through Christ is

The Art Of Getting Along With Others

W. A. HOLLEY

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

"Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

"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).

These passages of timeless beauty and power would create a world of peace and harmony and graciousness, if they were but applied in the lives of men everywhere.

The word "art" as used in this treatise is defined as, "a system of rules or methods of performing particular actions . . . systematic application of knowledge or skill in effecting a desired result" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary).

Herewith, we submit some rules which, if sincerely applied, will enable you to find how to get along with others.

(1) Put forth your very best effort to cultivate a pleasing disposition (I Corinthians 10:33). It is not suggested that truth ever be compromised! A pleasing disposition attracts people, but a carping, fault-finding personality repels and drives away many who might have been won over. "He that hath friends must show himself friendly . . ." (Proverbs 18:24). In contending for the faith always leave the door open so that another opportunity can be had, if needed (Galatians 1:6-10).

(2) Learn to be tolerant, rather than abrasive. The devil has three swords which he urges people to use constantly: Sarcasm, caustic speech, and ridicule. Paul wrote, "With lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3). To illustrate: A lady was driving her car along a very crowded street when her car stalled. She tried and tried to start it but it just would not start. A man just behind her began to honk his horn . . . HONK . . . HONK . . . HONK!! This honking upset the lady no end. Finally, she got out of her car, walked back to the honking man, and said, "Sir, if you will go and start my car, I'll stay back here and honk your horn for you."

Another marvelous Scripture dealing with personal relationships is I Thessalonians 5:14-15, which reads, "We exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all" (ASV). Thus if disagreement arises, learn to differ without allowing hatred to fill your heart. There can be no doubt but that hatred has ruined many churches and many marriages — hatred that developed over minor things.

(3) To get along with others, you must learn to love people. We run into people everywhere we go. There is an element of stress and tension and pressure brought on by our association with others.

God loved the people of all the world. Even on the cross, Jesus prayed for those who crucified him (John 3:16-17; Luke 23:34). If we love only those who love us, there is no special reward; we are required to love even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-47). If we love our neighbor as we love ourselves, we are willing and ready to assist him in any good work (Matthew 22:34-40).

(4) To be courteous and polite toward others is a must! "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Peter 3:8). To be gracious, affable, cordial, diplomatic, thoughtful, considerate, are words close to the heart of a Christian. It is always wrong for a Christian to be impolite, rude, ill-mannered, overbearing, and discourteous toward

others. One of the best ways to disarm your enemy is to admit your mistakes (James 5:16).

(5) If you would get along well with others, you must make sure to control your temper. "Not soon angry," is one of the qualifications of elders. "All bitterness, wrath, and anger" must be cast aside (Titus 1:7; Ephesians 4:31-32). "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools," saith the preacher. Anger is one of the most destructive emotions possessed by human beings! Psychologists tell us that anger causes problems from hemorrhoids to upset stomachs. It is said that anger causes tension headaches; anger also contributes to high blood pressure and other diseases such as arthritis. What can one do about his anger?

(1) He can recognize that he is angry; (2) he can determine what he is angry about, and if it is worth what it will cost him; (3) he can decide if what he is angry about is realistic; (4) he can try to correct the

problem causing his anger; thus changing the situation in so far as possible.

(6) If one would get along well with others, it is absolutely necessary to watch one's words. Words are powerful: they can do great good and they can accomplish great harm! Some words build up and some break down and destroy! One word can lead one to heaven while another can lead one down to hell (Proverbs 15:1; I Peter 3:10; James 3:2,6). We shall give account for every idle word we speak (Matthew 12:36-37).

(7) To get along with others you must make sure to follow the golden rule in all your relationships (Matthew 7:12). Moreover seek to settle all difficulties at once (Matthew 18:15-17). The longer trouble is allowed to hang on, the more difficult it is to settle. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

The Soul Of Man

Continued from Page 3

not without conditions.

SALVATION IS CONDITIONED UPON OBEDIENCE TO A FORM OF THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. The gospel of Christ is based on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4). These facts are essential for Christianity to have validity.

Paul tells of the salvation of the Romans and his own. He says, "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" (Rom. 6:3-4). We must die in the practice of sin as Christ died on the cross. We must be buried in the watery grave as Christ was buried in the borrowed tomb (Acts

8:38-39; Acts 10:47). We must arise from the watery grave to walk a new life. If you have not so obeyed, you need to act while you have time and opportunity.

THE SOUL WILL GIVE ACCOUNT OF THE DEEDS DONE IN THE BODY (II Cor. 5:10). Solomon stated, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Jesus asked, "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?" (Matt. 16:26).

HOW MUCH DO YOU VALUE YOUR SOUL? IF YOU WERE TO DIE TODAY, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY? — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

Hearing But Not Believing

One of the frustrations experienced by preachers of the gospel is knowing that the gospel has been taught, yet there have been no responses by the hearers to obedience. This may occur when sinners refuse to obey the gospel of Christ and/or when members of the church fail to comply with the teaching of Christ to mature in the faith. There can also be puzzlement in the teacher's heart when one family obeys and another family rejects the same teaching while being instructed privately in their homes. The same gospel is being taught but is bringing different responses. It is easy to become discouraged, blaming oneself for the failure to convert all the people being taught the way of salvation.

We must understand and come to realize that all who hear will not believe and obey the gospel. The hearer has a responsibility in the process of conversion. This principle is clearly taught in the parable of the soils presented by the Lord, recorded in Matthew 13:1-23. In the usage of the words of Isaiah, Jesus mentioned that there were those who would



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

hear but would not understand. The apostle Paul referred to this prophecy of Isaiah on various occasions in his work when Israel would not respond to the teaching of this inspired man (Acts 28:25-29; Romans 10:16-21).

While it is true that faith is produced by the hearing of the word of God (Romans 10:17), there are times when the gospel is heard but obedience to Christ is not the end result. Why? The answer can be found in the example of so many Israelites who failed to enter into the promised land. The writer of the book of Hebrews informs us that the glad tidings had been preached unto Israel "but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Hebrews 4:1-3). Earlier we learn that the reason why some did not enter into that rest was because of unbelief (disobedience) (Hebrews 3:18,19). Had they not heard? Yes, but the word of God had not been united or mixed with faith on the part of the hearers. And without faith, a person cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

The hearer of the gospel indeed has a great responsibility. If the heart is not receptive, there cannot be any faith. As food eaten cannot benefit the body if it is not digested, neither can the gospel of Christ save the individual unless it is united with faith. Sinners are exhorted to "receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). — 809 Perry Store Road Opp, Alabama 36467.



W

IF

Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

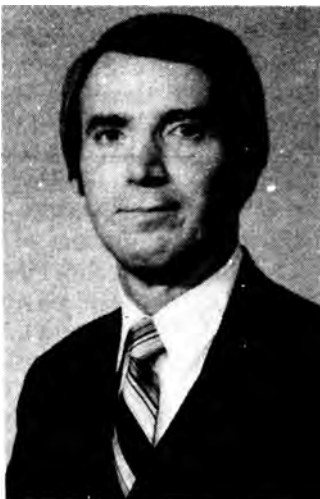
VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1982

NUMBER 51

The Christian And Law

There are those who assert that in this dispensation people are not under any law in the realm of religion. Those who so teach, usually do so in an attempt to deny baptism or some other command of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us examine this vital subject in the light of Bible teaching.



NOBLE MCKNIGHT

We are not under the edict given to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:15-17). You and I have never spent a day of our lives in the garden of eden. We have never been in the presence of a tree which contained the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, it should be obvious that this law was not given to us.

We are not under the precepts of the Patriarchy. There was law in the Patriarchal dispensation. Paul writes, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:13-14). Paul plainly declares that in the absence of law there is no sin. The book of Genesis makes it clear that there was sin during the time of the Patriarch. Therefore, there had to be law during this time. There was no written law but there was law. God would speak directly to the father and he would make known to his family the commandment given to him. You and I have never been commanded to build an altar and offer burnt sacrifices to God. That law was given to the Patriarchs.

We are not under the law given through Moses. God gave a law, from Mt. Sinai, to the descendants of

Jacob as they journeyed to the land of Canaan. Moses makes it very clear to whom this law was given. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgements which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deut. 5:1-3). This law was given to fleshly Israel. It was not given to us and God never intended for us to live according to its precepts.

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that the Law of Moses has been taken out of the way. It is no longer authoritative in the realm of religion. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). This is an obvious reference to the Law of Moses. It was taken out of the way when Christ died on the cross and no one is subject to it today.

We are not subject to the edict of Eden, the precepts of the patriarchy, or the law of Moses. Can we, therefore, conclude that we are under no law today in the realm of religion. Such does not follow and for very obvious reasons.

Paul writes that we are "under the law of Christ" (I Cor. 9:21). To the Romans he wrote,

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). Five chapters later he declared, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Paul wrote to the Galatians: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Surely then one can see that in this age we are subject to the law of Christ.

This law teaches what the alien sinner must do to become a child of God. He must hear the gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:13-14). He must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Jn. 8:24). He must repent of his sins (Acts 17:30). He must confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). He must then be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). At that time God will add him to the Church (Acts 2:47).

One must then continue to live his life in harmony with the teaching of the law of Christ. In the day of judgement, it is by this law that we shall be judged. Jesus said, "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" (Jn. 12:48). — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.

How To Enjoy Yourself

W. A. HOLLEY

"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," wrote the apostle Peter (I Peter 3:8). The apostle Paul suggests that certain things are necessary "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:1-6).

If you wish to enjoy yourself, how can you go about learning how to "love life and see good days?"

We prayerfully offer the following suggestions:


(1) Take a good, hard look at yourself. "Examine yourselves," saith the Scripture. What do you see? A person who is reasonable, happy, and satisfied? or a person who is frustrated, balky, and angry? Are you

afraid to think positively? As you survey your situation, do you see nothing but the bad things?

(2) Develop a burning desire to build a wholesome outlook upon life. It will not hurt you to put forth the greatest possible effort. Never withdraw into a shell and feel that there is no use in trying because you think that matters simply cannot be changed. You can do something for yourself (Matthew 7:7-12; Philippians 4:7-13; II Peter 1:5-11).

(3) You should remember that you are not alone, no matter what your encumbrances may be. If you are a Christian, the Lord will be with you to help you bear

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

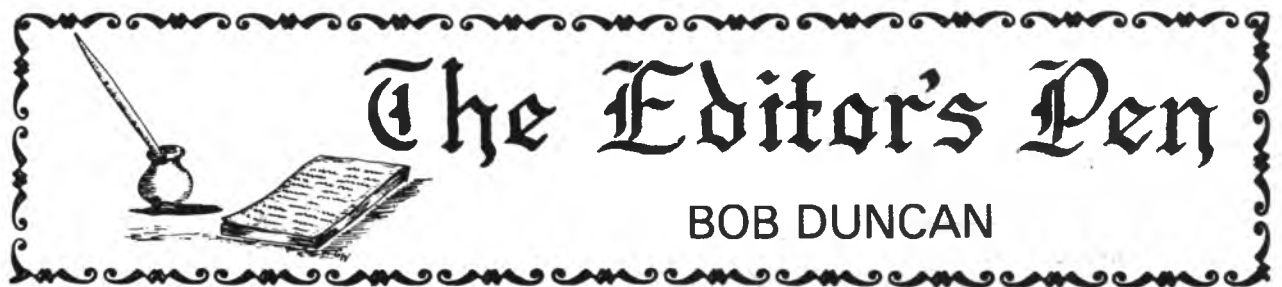
RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



"Paul, And Silvanus, And Timotheus. . ."

The words of the title of this article are the opening words in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. These men saw no need to attach to their names some high sounding title. On other occasions Paul introduced himself as "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ," or some similar words. Even in such cases the mention of his apostleship was to call attention to the importance and authenticity of the gospel he preached, and not to call attention to his own personal importance.



BOB DUNCAN

It is somewhat difficult in the denominationally oriented religious world in which we live for gospel preachers to avoid being called by the same titles which denominational preachers ascribe to themselves. We find ourselves almost daily in the position of wanting to correct some well-meaning person who has addressed us as "Reverend So-and-so," but wanting to make such correction without being ugly or offensive. Jesus taught: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matthew 23:8-10).

It is our *judgment* that even the word "brother" may become a title, if used exclusively of those who preach. For example, every member of a congregation may be called by his first name, except the preacher, and he is called, "Brother So-and-so." Or

the preacher answers the telephone at home, and some good sister on the other end of the line says, "Brother So-and-so, may I speak to Sadie?" Why is he *Brother* So-and-so, but his wife just plain Sadie? And many times letters we receive begin with the salutation: "Dear Brother [with a capital B] So-and-so." There's nothing wrong with calling each other "brother," but if it is not being used as a title, then why spell it with a capital B? In Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7 Tychicus is referred to by Paul as "a beloved brother," and in neither case did the translators think the word *brother* should be capitalized. Peter referred to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul" (II Peter 3:15), but the word brother is not spelled with a capital B, because it is not a title.

In the mail this week we received a brochure announcing a certain *seminar* sponsored by a church of Christ. The following titles (or descriptive terms, if you prefer) were among those used to introduce the speakers and class teachers involved in this seminar: (1) campus evangelist, (2) campus evangelist intern, (3) senior adult evangelist, (4) high school evangelist intern, and (5) single adult evangelist intern. Who are we trying to impress?

If the inspired writers of the New Testament held the philosophy some of my modern-day brethren hold, the first verse of First Thessalonians might read like this: "The inspired Apostle [spelled with a capital A] Paul, senior adult itinerant evangelist; and Silvanus, junior adult evangelist intern; and Timotheus, single adult evangelist intern; unto the church of the Thessalonians"

These things we have mentioned are within the realm of judgment, but let us try to use the very best of judgment in such matters.

And now I'm going to have to bring this article to an abrupt end. Our minister of secretarial services has some letters for me to sign, and our minister of custodial care wants to vacuum my study.

Inconsistencies

ROGER JACKSON

Titus 3:10 in the KJV states, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject." For "heretick" the ASV uses "factious man" while the Interlinear Greek New Testament gives "a sectarian man." Evidently, Paul's intention is to warn the brethren about a man who would separate the brethren into little antagonistic groups (I Cor. 1:10-14).

I heard a preacher say just yesterday that he had never preached in a place where the divisions were over anything other than opinions. One he mentioned was over whether the brethren would build a restroom or buy an air conditioner. While I cannot say such a thing about myself, I must admit that this has been the case with me in the vast majority of cases I have witnessed. When a man considers his opinion to be more important than either truth or the unity of the brethren he will press it to the limits, until he is stopped. Such a man is an heretic, and the brethren ought to stand as one against him. If one loves the peace and unity God demanded of us, he will take a stand for it (Psa. 133:1-3).

These brethren not only misunderstand the texts they seek to employ, if they use any scripture at all, but in practice even violate them themselves and cannot or will not see their inconsistencies. It proves that nothing can blind us quicker than blind contention determined never to alter its course.

A man who did not believe in Bible school literature once asked brother N. B. Hardeman to explain a passage of scripture to him so that he could use that explanation in his class Sunday. Brother Hardeman suggested to the gentleman that he write the explanation down, mimeograph it and give a copy to each student. He stoutly refused! Now what is the difference, except that he wanted all the glory? Did not the Jerusalem elders and apostles write information down to be read to the church (Acts 15)?

We changed the order of services once where I preached so that we observed the communion after preaching instead of before. Then, rather strangely, an older brother began mentioning at each business meeting with all the men, that he knew we were doing things that were not scriptural. When I confronted

Continued on page 3

How To Enjoy Yourself

Continued From Page 1

your burdens, and to overcome your handicaps or problems (Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5-6; Psalms 46:1ff; Romans 8:28).

(4) Picture yourself, in your own mind, as an active, likeable, loving, capable, helpful and cheerful person. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Try to see yourself as a ray of sunshine, not as a gathering storm. Hence, endeavor to build for yourself a new image.

(5) It is always best to try to look on the bright side of life. Of course, things may be bad, but not as bad as they might be. Even floods, storms, sickness, and hardships are certain to pass away. After the storms comes the sunshine. When you think seriously, it is a good morning every day. Repeat the following words, "This is a beautiful day: God and I will use it together. If problems arise, with the help of God, I will solve them. But, if my problems cannot be changed, by the grace of God, I will do my very best to

learn to live with them." Look up and see the starry sky; look down and see the loathsome mud!

(6) Learn from the past. All wise people do. Do not repeat the same mistake. Surely, life has taught you something. Why worry about things which never happen? Most storms which you spent so much time worrying about, never happened. Unbridled fear is a terrible master. So often the lions which we see along the way turn out to be kittens; many of our obstacles turn out to be blessings in disguise (Cf. Philippians 1:12-21; Matthew 6:24-34).

(7) You should take time to count your blessings. "Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your blessings, see what God has done," are words from a wonderful song which we often sing. You are richer than you think! "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one

Continued on page 3

How To Enjoy Yourself

Continued from page 2

body; and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15). It is suggested that you prepare a list of ten blessings which you do not wish to lose.

(8) As a Christian, you should do a lot of praying. Tell the Lord God Almighty about your fears and worries, your problems, whether physical or spiritual. You do believe that God can and will help, do you not? (Psalms 46:1-3; Hebrews 13:5-6; James 5:16; I Peter 5:7). The apostle Paul, while in the Roman prison, expressed the thought which should characterize you in the following words: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and

I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (II Timothy 4:16-17).

(9) If you truly wish to enjoy yourself, you must open your Bible, that you may see yourself as you really are. God's mirror reflects the true picture. All your rough edges are revealed and brought into sharp focus. You can find help to deal with all personality problems and emotional immaturity. Our "minds" need to be "renewed" day by day (Romans 12:1-2). The apostle Paul urges the "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). An hour, each day, spent in reading and meditating upon the truth of God, will do more to bring peace and quiet to a troubled heart than

anything you may know (James 1:22-25; Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15; II Corinthians 3:18).

(10) How do you feel about yourself? your family? the church? your nation? You must possess a high estimate of yourself (Romans 12:1-3). You were made in the image of God; you are one of God's creation; you are responsible to God Almighty, to yourself, and to your neighbors. Make yourself useful; get up each morning surrounded with work which you want to do; take a vacation by making yourself busy in service to the less fortunate, and to the lost. When you think of yourself in terms of service to others, you will see how valuable you are. — Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Inconsistencies

Continued from Page 2

him about it he said, "Our forefathers established this order and we must not depart from it." Where do brethren get these ideas? There is no established order in the Bible. The same is true with regard to the care of orphans. We are told that the only scriptural way to care for them is to take them into our homes, and yet there is no such teaching in the Bible. While we are on the topic of examples it might be mentioned that those who insist upon an express example for every practice of the church might do well to tell where we might find an example of the practice of a preacher's taking his salary out of the first day of the week collection of I Corinthians 16:1,2? Yes, it is right, but where is the example?

Baptistries in the building have always been a great concern for a few. Dig a pond in the yard and it is

alright, but put a shed over it and you are a liberal. Baptism in running water is essential to others. One poor sinner insisted upon being baptized in running water but objected when the preacher offered to pull the plug and turn on the faucet. Still another insisted upon being baptized in the Jordan. The preacher suggested he call him when he returned, but said he refused to go.

Of course there is always eating in the church building. Some brethren will stand by a water fountain while quoting, "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" And since great objections are raised to having a kitchen in the church and at the same time preach one can only get in by being baptized we might with all authority ask when the

kitchen was baptized?

One congregation had a unique way of handling factious people. They built a second building a few blocks away, and when one of these fellows came along they would invite him to go there where he could find a group of people of his disposition, and there they could fight it out and return when it was over. That is not a bad idea. — 940 Old Wood Rd. Oxford, Ala. 36203.

Many a man is not suspected of being ignorant till he starts to talk.

People who know the very least seem to know it the loudest.

Lamb And Lion Together?

KERRY KNIGHT

Material has come across my desk during the past year under the seal of "Lamb and Lion Ministries." One publication of that sort, called the *Lamplighter*, comes out of Plano, Texas. It is published by Dr. David R. Reagan.

In a special autobiographical paper called, "My Pilgrimage Toward A Premillennial Viewpoint," Reagan outlines his journey from prophetic ignorance to present enlightenment. Unashamedly, he traces his move to the millennial camp.

It is amazing how many brethren are being caught up in the sensationalism and alarmism of the millennial movement. To some, anything that is new, novel, and different is automatically better and more acceptable. It appears we are destined to fight the same battle in the present time that Foy Wallace, Jr. and other loyal brethren did a generation ago.

Reagan draws from Isaiah 11 his concept for the "Lamb and the Lion Ministry." To quote from his autobiographical sketch he writes: "In like manner, nations have not beat their swords into plowshares (figuratively or literally!) nor has the knowledge of the Lord covered the earth as the waters cover the seas, nor has history been graced by the new Jerusalem foreseen by Isaiah, nor has the LION LAIN DOWN WITH THE LAMB" (Emphasis added).

First, let us view the text under consideration. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isa. 11:6). It seems to me if one is going to literalize a passage he should at least be accurate in the details of it. The lamb does not lie

down with the lion, but rather with the wolf, and the lion lies with the calf.

To discount the figurative message and spiritual imagery of the text is tragic. By literalizing the scripture, he has wild animals dwelling in God's holy mountain and being full of the knowledge of the Lord (v. 9). Millennialists make a fatal error in trying to apply Isaiah 11 to some future, golden age in which animals with a wild nature will be miraculously domesticated.

The opening verses of the chapter declare a prophecy concerning the FIRST coming of Christ. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). Luke, in no uncertain terms, provides us with the fulfillment and application of that prediction in Acts 13:22-23. It was fulfilled in the first coming of Christ in connection with John's preaching "the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."

The wolf, lamb, leopard, kid, calf, lion, and fatling of Isa. 11:6 are simply metaphors describing people. Such usage was very common. Jesus said to Peter: "Feed my lambs" (Jn. 21:15). Paul speaks of being "delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (II Tim. 4:17). The carnivorous characteristics of some would be transformed into the meek qualities of God's people under the influence of the gospel's proclamation. No better example could be offered to illustrate this idea than the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. This man, as a persecutor, sought to devour the church (Acts 9:1). Like an animal, he stalked believers to distant regions and had them bound (V. 2). But under the influence of the Gospel Saul was

changed. He would later write to those whom he once despised and say: "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Phil. 4:1).

There is a very simple rule that I have learned concerning the interpretation of prophecy. If it will be followed, the endless speculations and literalizing of symbolic books may be eliminated. That rule is: "The Old Testament prophets sought to prepare the world for the first coming of Christ. The New Testament writers seek to prepare us for his return." — 12403 Pinerock, Houston, Texas 77024.

A philosopher thinks in order to believe. He formulates his prejudices and systematizes his ignorance.

When you don't want to do anything, one excuse is as good as another.

A truly great leader is one who never allows his followers to discover that he is as ignorant as they are.

The road to failure is greased with the slime of indifference.

Doing nothing is the most tiresome job in the world because you can't stop and rest.

Barzillai, The Iron Man

The story of Barzillai, the Gileadite, is one of the most touching in the Old Testament. The text tells the story of a beautiful old man and a beautiful incident in a far from beautiful time. David was forced to flee in haste from the rebellious troops of Absalom, his son. Without provisions, he and his troops headed for the hill country east of Jordan. Barzillai and others "brought beds, and basins, and . . . wheat . . .



JOHN WADDEY

and beans . . . and honey and butter, and sheep and cheese . . . for David and for the people that were with him . . . The people [were] hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness" (II Samuel 17:27-29).

All we know about Barzillai is found in this passage and another in II Samuel 19:31-39. His name means "strong or made of iron." His home was Rogelim in Gilead in the hill country of northeast Palestine (19:31). It was a land of pastures with sheep and cattle. He was a very wealthy man now some 80 years of age (19:32). Barzillai gave far more than physical supplies to David that day; he gave of himself. That is the essence of true giving (II Corinthians 8:5).

He was a man of *courageous loyalty*. Barzillai did not wait to see which way the wind would blow. David was his king, his long time friend. Many had turned against David and others refused to commit themselves. Barzillai stood solid as a rock, loyal at all costs. He was a friend who loved at all times, a brother born for adversity (Proverbs 17:17). He was a friend that "sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). The old man knew full-well what his actions that day would cost him should David lose. But he gladly risked everything for friendship's sake.

We admire his *generous hospitality*. Barzillai knew what to do with his wealth. He was glad to share his bounty. It was not a matter of constraint; there was no thought of reward. Such hospitality is a virtue expected of Christians as well. We must be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). So to minister to Christ's servant is to serve Christ himself and will bring its own blessing (Matthew 25:40). Each day brings us Barzillai's opportunities to do good, if we but have his spirit (Galatians 6:10).

This old man had great respect for David's character. It was not a matter of popularity to Barzillai. David was God's man; a good man, an abused man. He deserved support. Even though at that moment he was a fugitive, David's cause was right. He believed he should give honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7).

Humility was a trait of Barzillai. When the revolt was crushed, David and his men headed back to Jerusalem. Joyful friends went out to cheer their monarch. Barzillai also saluted his liege lord. Remembering the kindness his friend had exhibited, David invited Barzillai to live in the royal court at Jerusalem. But he did not want to be a burden to his lord (19:35b). To him, his services were unworthy of special reward. It was an honor to him just to serve his king, to walk by his side. His attitude is captured by the poet. "The service and loyalty I owe, in doing, pay itself."

His was a *beautiful old age*. He was an octogenarian. He was not spared infirmities of old age. His appetite and senses were all failing. Time had taken its toll (19:35). The evil days of decay had come and the dust would soon return to earth and the spirit to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7). In the

midst of these disabilities we see no bitterness and hear no complaint. His outer man had decayed, but his inner man was renewed (II Corinthians 4:16). Like the roses after the wedding, he had lost his color, but not the sweet smell. There is a mellowness of old age that many reflect. At 25 we are determined to carve our initials on every tree, but at 60 we have closed our knife blades. Barzillai did not use his old age as an excuse from serving his king. While he was able, he was determined to do his part.

We admire his *calm approach to death*. As he prepared to bid David farewell, he expressed the desire to die in his own land and be buried beside his parents (19:37). Death did not frighten him. There was no running from it, no pretending it was not nigh. Barzillai clearly saw that he was but a pilgrim enroute to another land (Hebrews 11:13). From him we learn both how to live and how to die.

Barzillai was concerned for his children. If he were too old to live in the king's court, perhaps his son, Chimham, could enjoy the privilege (19:37-38). David honored that request, instructing Solomon to "show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai . . ." (I Kings 2:7). Everyone has a blessing to confer upon his children,

even if very poor. "A righteous man that walketh in his integrity, blessed are his children after him" (Proverbs 20:7).

Precious memories will follow such a man's life. Upon his death bed, David still remembered with gratitude his old friend's kindness (II Kings 2:7). With the return of the exiles from Babylon, Barzillai's heirs are mentioned (Ezra 2:61). His works did follow after him (Revelation 14:13).

Great lessons can be learned from Barzillai's example. God can use us to bless some suffering saint, but only if we are willing to be used. We are reminded of the great personal satisfaction he enjoyed for his kind deeds. We should strive to grow old with the sweet spirit of Barzillai. May the Lord give us grace both to live and to die as this great man did.

"Among the faithless, faithful only he,
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unswayed, unfettered,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal." — Unknown.
— 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921.

Autopsy Of A Dead Christian

Often individuals die in unusual circumstances, or there is some question as to whether or not foul play caused their demise. When this happens the civil authorities perform a post mortem or what is commonly called an "autopsy." After death the body and the circumstances surrounding the death are investigated and a cause of death is determined.

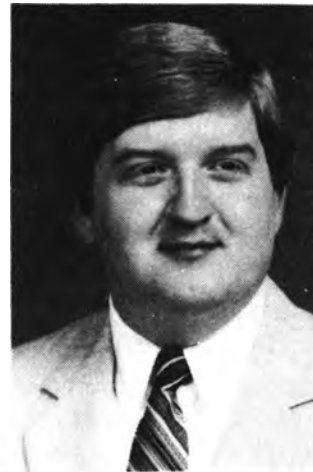
The Bible speaks of those who are lost in sin as being dead. Colossians 2:13 says, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." In the parable of the prodigal son, the father rejoiced when the wicked and riotous son came home. While he was living in sin his father considered him dead. But, after his repentance and return he was alive again (Luke 15:24). Other passages carry the same thought.

Many who were once Christians are spiritually dead now. Yes, they are walking, talking, breathing, eating, etc. but they have died spiritually. Let us examine such an individual. For a matter of reference we will call him "Joe."

Joe is not a real person. He is characteristic of many former Christians, however. He possesses characteristics, traits, and actions that are exemplary of many that are in the same situation. From this point of view he is real.

During his teenage years Joe was obedient to the gospel. He was the son of godly parents and received proper training. One Lord's day morning the sweet story of the cross moved him to obey the gospel.

As he grew older the story of the cross did not excite him as it once did. He became uninterested and even bored when it was preached. He no longer perceived it as God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). As a memorial to Christ's death, the Lord's



MIKE BARRETT

supper failed to help him remember (Matthew 26:26-30). He could not weep over Calvary. Thus, Joe began his spiritual demise.

It was not long before Joe left his first love (Revelation 2:4). Christ and his church were not as important as they once were. He began to worship and serve from a sense of duty and not from love. Later it was only habit. His heart was far from it (Matthew 15:8,9).

Joe was bored by the services of the church. He often stated, "I'm not getting anything out of church." He began to complain about the preacher. Then he blamed the elders. He even blamed his fellow Christians! He began to dread the coming of the Lord's day. He began forsaking the assembly (Hebrews 10:25).

Joe had no interest in saving lost souls. He had it at one time. He even helped convert some to Christ. He had believed and accepted the "Great Commission" by putting it into practice (Matthew 28:18-20; Cf. James 4:17). But then, something happened to him. He began to act as if he were ashamed of the gospel. He neglected his responsibility to help save lost souls (Jude 18; II Corinthians 5:11).

Finally, the world attracted and laid hold on him. He was forewarned of this danger (Luke 8:13,14; James 4:1-5). It was preached to him on many occasions. He had seen it happen to others; but, it caught him unaware. He renewed his old worldliness. His time was spent at less than desirable establishments. His companion was whiskey and his recreation was dancing. Later, he even committed fornication before the Lord. He wallowed in a pitiful and sickening condition (II Peter 2:20-22). He was physically alive but spiritually dead (I Timothy 5:6).

Beloved, there may be a little of "Joe" in all of us. It is certain that we have met many in his condition. The danger is real. It cost Joe his eternal soul. From God's point of view he was a "walking corpse." Jesus referred to it as a "whited sepulchre" (Matthew 23:27,28). Are you or someone you know lying upon a spiritual deathbed? Why not do something about it? God is willing; are you? (II Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17). — P.O. Box 1651, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not r
the Words c

VOLUME 18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1982

NUMBER 52

New Year's Resolutions For 1983

W. A. HOLLEY

Every person has his own life to live. To a large extent, since man is a creature of choice, life is what he chooses to make it. Like crossing a dangerous bridge, we travel at our own risk. In fact, life is a great journey, with wonderful goals which flash through cloud and fog and mist their glorious invitations. It, therefore, demands that we travel carefully and live as accountable to God and to man. The only person in the world, as far as you are concerned, who can make the right choices is you.

Jesus, in his wonderful parable of the talents, teaches us that the individual is responsible for the proper use of his time, money, and ability (Matthew 25:14-30).

You may have excused yourself by saying that your ability is too small to make any difference; but such is not the case. Often it is possible to accomplish much with little. For example, Gideon defeated a great army with only three hundred men (Judges 7:2-7). God used the voice of a crying baby to touch the heart of Pharaoh's daughter, which finally led to the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt (Exodus 2:1-10). Shamgar used an ox goad to "deliver Israel" (Judges 3:31). David's stone proved to be the difference between victory and defeat for the people of God (I Samuel 17:1-52). Samson used the jaw bone of an ass to teach the Philistines a great lesson (Judges 15:14-20). Jesus took five loaves and two fishes to feed a multitude (Matthew 14:13-21). Who are you to argue that your little cannot be used of God to accomplish great good?? You see, purpose, ambition, determination, and perseverance are the keys to successful living!!

Here are some suggested resolutions for 1983.

(1) Resolve to read the Bible more each day. It will give you strength never before tapped (II Timothy 2:15; Psalms 1:1-6; I Timothy 4:13).

(2) Be more diligent in doing your duty toward God and man (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Ephesians 6:6-17; James 1:27).

(3) Resolve to be more kind and sweet and charitable toward your friends and especially toward your enemies (Matthew 5:43-48; Philippians 2:1-5).

(4) Work toward constructing a better, brighter,

more cheerful attitude of life in general, and toward yourself in particular. You were made in the image of God. Do not sour on the world. Yes, in the midst of storms and clouds and even death God still reigns in the heavens. He has not forsaken you (Hebrews 13:1-6). It has been said, "Smile and the world smiles with you; cry and you cry alone."

(5) Nineteen eighty-three is coming up shortly. What will you do with it? Will you waste its golden opportunities? Why not resolve to make this year your most productive ever? What a wonderful year it will be if each preacher, elder, father, mother, child — each Christian — would but resolve to make this year the year fully devoted to Christ and his church!!

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) squandered their opportunities for good. Hymenaeus and Alexander are listed as traitors to the faith because of the sin of blasphemy (I Timothy 1:18-20). Judas could have been faithful to the Lord, if he had but resisted Satan's overtures. Paul endured in his service to the Master in spite of his many trials and tribulations (II Corinthians 11:23-33). Just here it would be well to read the entire fourth chapter of Philippians which shows how Paul met the great problems of life while he was in a Roman Jail. Verse 13, says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

(6) Be more generous with your time. Time is our most important earthly possession. Time represents the day when one can discharge one's duties and to take advantage of opportunities to do good (Lk. 12:42; Galatians 6:10). Because sin abounds is a good reason why Christians should seize upon every opportunity to do good, and also why they should make the most of time.

"Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17 ASV). Thus, let us embrace and improve every opportunity to do good.

(7) Each of us should make the new year, 1983, one of sharing. Today there are countless old and sick, lonely and weary, people who desperately need a gift from you — a pat on the back, a smile, a visit, a

telephone call, a crust of bread, a word of encouragement, a word of guidance and instruction. Today there are billions of people now living who have never heard "the Old, Old Story of the Cross." In China, alone, we have a billion lost souls. In New Testament times, the gospel of Christ was preached "to every creature under heaven" (Colossians 1:6,23). This achievement was accomplished without our modern means of transportation and communication. Why cannot we with the aid of television, radio, the printed page and the 747 get the job done in our day?? We have the brains and the money and the talent, so let us get on with fulfilling our true mission in the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49).

Perhaps, the one reason why we have not succeeded in preaching the gospel to a lost world is because we have not truly wanted to share ourselves with others. The story is told: "There are three kinds of givers, the flint, the sponge and the honeycomb.

To get any thing out of a flint, you must hammer it, and then you get only chips and sparks.

To get water out of a sponge you must squeeze it, and the more you squeeze it, the more you will get.


But the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness."

Dear Christian friends, share what you have with others. There is a wonderful mystical law of nature that the three things we crave most in life — happiness, freedom, and peace of mind — are always attained by giving them to someone else. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

A little learning may be a dangerous thing — but it's still safer than total ignorance.

There are more warmed-over ideas than hot ones.

It's a lot easier to form an opinion when you have only a few of the facts.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1510 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church, on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$1.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

What I Want For Christmas

We try to make this column, as well as the rest of this publication, quite impersonal, as we deal with scriptural truth from week to week. But at this season of the year it seems appropriate to send greetings of the season to our many readers across the nation, some of whom we have never had the pleasure of meeting; others are long-time personal friends.



BOB DUNCAN

In the spring, we will have been serving as editor of *Words of Truth* for seven years — the same length of time we will have been serving as evangelist of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama. This has been perhaps the busiest seven years of my life, as I have tried to serve both as local evangelist and editor, while holding several meetings and appearing on some lectureships each year. But we feel good is being done and God is being glorified, and to him be all the glory through his Son.

Our children are growing up, as are yours. Jill is a freshman at Freed-Hardeman College, and Tim is now in the sixth grade. Lois Ann is doing such an excellent job of rearing them, and with very little help from their father.

It has been our practice through the years not to

send cards of greetings during the holiday season. But from the entire family, and from all who write for *Words of Truth*, go our wishes for all of you and yours, a very joyous holiday season, and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

The following poem I wrote in 1977. It expresses my "Christmas wish" for myself, and for all of our readers.

Stronger faith in the promise of God;
In His law, greater delight.
Sincere compassion for those down trod;
Courage to stand for the right.

Patience for those who stumble along,
And fail to live as they should.
Fortitude always to fight against wrong;
Love for the whole brotherhood.

Gentleness and mercy for those in need;
Freedom from all prejudice.
Meekness and wisdom in sowing the seed;
Trust in the Lord to bless.

Real appreciation for the value of truth;
Deafness to the applause of the world.
Faithful devotion to the wife of my youth;
Health for my boy and my girl.

Confidence in Him who erreth not,
And points the way to Heaven.
Full joy and gratitude for what
His love already has given.

It Does Matter How God Created

RONNIE LOWE

Liberalism today is certainly attacking the truth on many fronts. Marriage vows are no longer considered sacred. The church is no longer considered as God's only family. We no longer need to maintain a distinctive nature from the denominations. But these liberal views are carried over to one of the most basic views of life — the creation of all things. What is the purpose of Genesis 1 and 2? Is it to tell us the who, why and how of creation? We think so. Many however, are now claiming that the "how" makes no difference — that it does not matter how we believe God created the earth, just as long as we believe that he did.

In some areas, we might not know how God went about accomplishing certain things. But when we start saying that it makes no difference how we believe he did those things, or that we cannot know how he did those things, we are taking a slap at the inspiration of the Bible and the miraculous power of God. For years many have tried to explain away the parting of the Red Sea by simply claiming the parting was the result of a low tide or a strong wind common to that land. Yet the Bible plainly states that God did it miraculously. To hold to any other view is to deny the inspiration of the Bible and the power of God. Likewise, many have attempted to downgrade the plagues in Egypt by offering all sorts of "natural" explanations to the things that happened.

Some time ago a brother offered a possible explanation for the flood as suggested by a group of scientists. Their view was that the bed of the Mediterranean Sea was once a great desert and that it was upon this desert that Noah lived. The Atlantic Ocean was then being held back by the Straits of Gibraltar. The straits gave way thus causing a flooding of this ancient desert. This increase in water increased the humidity of the region, thus causing further rain and the first rainbow that followed. In relying upon this explanation, more credence is given to the scientists than to the inspired word of God. God's word holds

The Bible provides us with physical descriptions of many of its characters. Esau is described as being an hairy man, even though his twin brother Jacob was a "smooth man" (Genesis 27:11). Saul, the first king of God's people, was a man of great physique (I Samuel 9:2). Samson is pictured as very strong, with long flowing hair, because of his Nazarite vow. Goliath was a giant who stood at the height of six cubits and a span. Rebekah was "very fair to look upon" (Genesis 24:16). Esther was so "fair and beautiful" that she "obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her" (Esther 2:7,15).

Yet, one man whose description is conspicuously absent is the main character of the entire Bible. Have you ever wondered what Jesus looked like as he grew up? How did he look as a young adult?

What Did Jesus Look Like?



RICKY PHILLIPS

of 30? We don't know the length of his hair, although men have chosen to portray him with long hair and a beard. We don't know his height, his weight, or his complexion. I feel that there are two reasons why God chose not to reveal these things to us:

(1) If man knew what Jesus looked like, he would make an idol in his image and worship his likeness rather than his deity, and (2) it shows that the outward appearance is not really important. The inward man is that about which we should be concerned. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart (I Samuel 16:7). There is nothing wrong with trying to have a nice outward appearance, but we should not neglect our inward man. As Paul said, our outward man perishes (gets older), but it is our inward man that we should renew every day (II Corinthians 4:16). Peter told Christian women not to place more importance on outward appearance than inward beauty (I Peter 3:2-4).

Which concerns you more? Do you spend more time and effort adorning your outward appearance or are you working on your inward beauty? Not everyone can be beautiful on the outside, but every Christian can be known for being beautiful on the inside. — P.O. Box 396 Oakman, Ala. 35579.

It Does Matter How God Created

Continued from page 2

that "on the *same* day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11).

Such a view denies the universal nature of the flood. If just the Mediterranean Sea bed were to be flooded, why didn't God just instruct Noah to move a few hundred miles away to escape the flood? To whom will be given the greatest credence? God or science falsely so called?

It does make a difference how we believe God did what he did. If the Bible tells us, then that settles the matter. All other explanations or compromises are wrong. The Bible plainly states that God created (brought out of nothing) the heavens and the earth. Furthermore, it states that the entire creation process — from beginning to end — was completed in six literal twenty-four hour days. Yet to many, there is nothing wrong in believing that it took God six billion years to do what the Bible says he did in six days.

To defend their teaching, they again go to the scientists. The scientist says he has "proven" that the earth is billions of years old, that life has

progressed from simple to complex forms over this period, and that the great dinosaurs were extinct before man made his appearance in the world. In order to harmonize these so-called facts with the Bible, they promote two theories. One is the "Gap Theory" and the other, the "Day-Age Theory."

The Gap Theory contends that there was a great gap in time between the original creation and verse 3 of Genesis 1. During this time the earth went through the various geologic ages. This perfect creation was rendered imperfect through the sin and evil influence of Satan and was made "waste and void." God then began a re-creating process which resulted in the creation of Adam and Eve. As you can imagine, there are many problems with such a view. (For a full treatment of this subject we recommend reading *Theistic Evolution* by Dr. Bert Thompson.)

The Day-Age Theory contends that each day of creation was actually thousands of years long instead of a literal twenty-four hours. This allows time for all the geologic ages and changes scientists say have taken place in the existence of the earth. Yet Genesis

1 states that the creation process took six literal twenty-four hour days. This is confirmed by Exodus 20:11 which states, "in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and *all* that in them is" To support this falacious theory, many go to II Peter 3:8, which actually has nothing to do with the subject. II Peter 3:8 affirms that the passing of time does not affect the promises of God. Genesis 1 states that God created everything in six days. To contend anything else is to call God a liar.

How did God create the heavens and earth? Did he do it through a process of evolution? Did he do it over billions of years? The Bible stated that he did it in six literal twenty-four hour days. To hold to any other view is to deny the inspiration of the Bible and the power of God. Let us remember that it does make a difference what we believe as to how God did a certain thing when the Bible clearly tells us how that act was done. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, Texas 76470.

Out Of The Depths

JOHNNY RAMSEY

There are many beautiful and compelling passages in the Psalms. Truly, the richness of that Old Testament book is reflected in the fact that our Lord quoted from its pages many times. There are tender words and powerful statements, strong entreaties and somber warnings, rays of hope and portents of doom in the magnificent words of David and his brethren who penned, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, such an eloquent book of poetry! One of the richest sections is Psalms 130. Within its eight verses are several brilliant points. The merciful, forgiving nature of the Creator forms the basis for the prayer that God will come to the aid of His people. Christians should often sing:

"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."

We should ever be grateful for a Father who hears us when we cry out toward heaven for deliverance, sustenance and cleansing. In the first verse of Psalms 116 we rejoice to know that Jehovah does hear "our voice and our supplications." Peter informs us that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers." What a marvelous thing it is to know that the prayers of God's faithful children enhance the halls of glory (Rev. 8:4-5). Boldness in prayer is effectual, James 5:16 tells us!

"Pray in the Morning, Pray at the noontime,
Pray in the Evening, Pray anytime;
Pray when you're happy,
Pray when in sorrow;
Pray when you're tempted; Pray all the time!"

In verse 3 of Psalms 130 we read words of deepest appreciation for the fact that our God is merciful and forgiving and does not "keep score" of our iniquities, but longs for our penitence (II Peter 3:9) and salvation (I Tim. 2:4). Two things are certain if he did keep score: (1) It would have to be a huge score card, and (2) we would all be forever lost!

In Psalms 86:1 we learn that Jehovah is of great mercy and forbearance. We all stand in need of that. The Psalmist based his life and hope upon the word of

the Lord, and so should we. We must patiently serve the Savior out of a loving heart of gratitude. Redemption from sin and purposeful living in the future both emanate from the grace of the Almighty.

The Psalmist had definite overtones of the Messiah in the eloquent treatise known to us as Psalms 130.

"O the love that drew salvations plan!
O the grace that brought it down to man!
O the mighty gulf that God did span

At Calvary!"

There is a classic blending of man's needs with God's provisions in this grand chapter. May we apply its message to our longing spirits as we draw near to the one who made us and the one who desires our salvation. Since we are the Israel of God today (Gal. 6:16) let us apply Psalms 131:3 to our own hearts:

"Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever." — Box 235 Rowlett, TX 75088.

Be Doers Of The Word

James begins the subject of hearing and doing by saying, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19). If everyone would heed this admonition, many problems and heartaches would be spared humanity. The person who needlessly speaks his opinion and flies off the handle in anger creates much of the trouble that plagues mankind.

There is no one so deaf as he who will not hear. When one is so firmly fixed in his conclusions with his present knowledge that he refuses to increase his knowledge, he will not make any further growth. At a lectureship an individual asked a question of a panel. The chairman asked the questioner if he wanted a certain member of the panel, who was thorough in his answers to answer the question. The questioner answered, "no." The reason he gave was, "I don't want to know that much about it." This is a great problem of man in spiritual matters.

The greater problem is people have knowledge but



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

are no doers of the word of God. (1) There is the AUDITORY HEARER. He is in the same class with those who hear the opera but do not understand word that is sung, or the fox hunter who loves to hear the sound of the dogs barking as they chase the fox. These hearers love to hear certain voices in the pulp but never hear what is said. (2) Another hearer is one expecting a miraculous change in life as the result of hearing the preacher preach. In every New Testament example of conversion, the prospect had to hear the word of God taught, believe the message and obey God. Those converted on Pentecost are examples. In Acts two we have Peter's recorded sermon. He established the identity of Jesus. Jesus was elevated to the right hand of God. Peter accused the Jews of crucifying the Son of God and declared him to be both Lord and Christ. This realization pricked their conscience. They cried out, "men brethren, what shall we do" (Acts 2:37). The preaching had effect upon them. They felt guilt. It was painful, and they sought relief. Their attention was at its highest peak.

Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized even one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). Three thousand responded to the message. They were doers.

(3) Other hearers believe change is impossible. One group believes they are so depraved that it

Continued on page 4

Be Doers Of The Word

Continued from Page 3

impossible to change. The example of the Pentecostians refutes this idea. No one can be any more depraved than those who had part in killing the Son of God. Yet they were saved when they obeyed the gospel. The other group believes the individual has no part in his salvation. He believes he was foreordained to salvation or destruction eternally

before the foundation of the world. He believes he has no choice.

The truth is salvation was chosen in Christ. The individual must choose to be in Christ or not to be in Christ (Eph. 1:3-5).

James said he who hears and is not a doer is like the one who looks in the mirror and then forgets his

image. He concludes, "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" (Jas. 1:25). — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Free Nursery (Infants — 5 yr. olds) Available At All Times



THE FORT WORTH LECTURES

Theme: "The Person and Life of Christ"

January 9 - 13, 1983

Sunday, January 9

LEADERSHIP DINNER

For all elders, preachers, deacons, Bible School teachers, and their wives — Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. — Leroy Brownlow — speaker.

DISPLAYS

Publishers, authors, dealers, children's homes, Christian schools, homes for aged, etc. located in the meetinghouse.

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Jesus Describes the Christian Life"	Dub McClish
9:00 a.m.	"Christ's Relationship to the Scriptures"	David Roper
5:00 p.m.	"The Blood That Was Shed For Me"	Avon Malone
6:00 p.m.	"The Obedient Son" (I Cor. 15:27)	Bill Teague
7:00 p.m.	"The Compassion of Christ"	Robert Bankes

BOOKS & TAPES

Lectures will be put into book form and will be available for purchase during the lectureship. Cassette recordings will be made of each lecture and may be purchased immediately.

MEALS

One meal per day will be served at the meetinghouse at a nominal cost.

Monday, January 10

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Jesus, and His New Morality"	John Waddey
10:00 a.m.	"Jesus, the Suffering Servant"	James Willcutt
11:00 a.m.	"Christ, and the Problems of the Home"	Bill Cline
11:00 a.m.	"The Person and Life of Christ — in the Elevation of Womanhood": "In The Beginning"	Mary Oler
12:00 noon	"Who is My Mother and My Brethren?"	Wyatt Sawyer
1:30 p.m.	"The Risen Christ"	Tom Gaumer
2:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Robert Bankes
Evening Break		
7:00 p.m.	"Jesus, the Fountain of Authority"	Bobby Duncan
8:00 p.m.	"Jesus Deals With False Teachers"	Roy C. Deaver

Tuesday, January 11

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Jesus, The Good Shepherd"	Lynn Matheny
10:00 a.m.	"Jesus and the Use of Miracles"	George Pledger
11:00 a.m.	"Jesus and Prayer"	Gary Workman
11:00 a.m.	"The Person and Life of Christ — in the Elevation of Womanhood": "The Emancipation From Tradition"	Mrs. Pat Suba
12:00 noon	"Honor To Whom Honor" Luncheon (honoring E.R. Harper)	Willard Collins
1:30 p.m.	"Words Jesus Used" (A Word Study)	Jerry Moffitt
2:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Johnny Ramsey
Evening Break		
5:00 p.m.	"The Challenge of Leadership" (Leadership Dinner)	Leroy Brownlow
7:00 p.m.	"Christ, The Effective Energy Against Humanism"	Bert Thompson
8:00 p.m.	"Jesus, Our Friend"	Johnny Ramsey

Wednesday, January 12

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Christ, The King of the Kingdom"	Robert Taylor
10:00 a.m.	"Christ, The Light of the World"	Claude Guild
11:00 a.m.	"Jesus' Incarnation and the Atoning Sacrifice"	Dick Stanyo
11:00 a.m.	"The Person and Life of Christ — in the Elevation of Womanhood": "Revealing of Truth to Women"	Mrs. Val Cardwell
12:00 noon	"Some Things I Have Learned After 50 Years as a Preacher"	John Banister
1:30 p.m.	"The Homiletical Jesus"	Roy Lanier, Jr.
2:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Robert Taylor
Evening Break		
7:00 p.m.	"Jesus' Power and Human Need"	Hulen Jackson
8:00 p.m.	"Jesus' Teaching on the Judgement"	Bill Humble

Thursday, January 13

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Jesus' Death and Burial"	Eddie Whitten
10:00 a.m.	"Jesus, The Powerful Son of God"	Roy H. Deaver
11:00 a.m.	"The Ethical Jesus"	Norman Gipson
11:00 a.m.	"The Person and Life of Christ — in the Elevation of Womanhood": "Challenging Her To Highest Spiritual Service"	Mrs. Thelma Banowsky
12:00 noon	"Humorous Things That Have Happened To Me as a Preacher"	Frank Dunn
1:30 p.m.	"Jesus' Attitude Toward the Law"	Roy C. Deaver
2:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	
Evening Break		
7:00 p.m.	"The Historical Jesus"	Rubel Shelly
8:00 p.m.	"The Life of Christ" (all scripture)	Hugo McCord

SPECIAL CLASSES FOR LADIES

Theme: "The Person and Life of Christ — in the Elevation of Womanhood"

11:00 — 12:00 Monday — Thursday

— Supported by Sister Churches of Christ — Free Lodging Upon Request

NEXT YEAR'S THEME: "THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH" January 8 - 12, 1984

BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST

1801 Brown Trail,

(HOME OF THE BROWN TRAIL PREACHER TRAINING SCHOOL) LOCATED 3 BLOCKS NORTH OF THE AIRPORT FREEWAY (121A)

Bedford (Ft. Worth), Texas





Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, mos.
the Words of Truth and

but speak forth

— Acts 26:25

God's Nots Should Not Be Untied

In the year 1888 John L. Girardeau, Professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina, wrote, "A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; i.e., whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, wither expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, is forbidden." (*Music in the Church*, p. 2.)



R. W. GRAY

Professor Girardeau made a sincere effort to prevent further apostasy within Presbyterianism in his book wherein he attempted to develop the soundness of the affirmation cited above. While his efforts went unheeded among the rank and file of Presbyterians, he strikes at the heart of the problem of unauthorized innovations in Christian worship.

It is a sad commentary upon the spiritual climate of our time that so few echo the warnings of the late Presbyterian scholar. It is equally sad that many, upon first glance, would feel they sanction his opening statement but would, in reality, reject it outright. Even among those who avow a desire to go back to the Bible there are those who subscribe to the idea that "whatsoever in the Scriptures is not EXPRESSLY forbidden is permissible." As a consequence of this notion they allow innovations in every area of religious thought, feeling that God, in his silence (?), has sanctioned them.

Men still ask, "Where does God say, 'Thou shalt not use mechanical instruments in the worship of the local church?'" It is apparently difficult for them to see God's unexpressed "nots." But we are actually commanded NOT TO DO certain things in thousands of instances where the word "not" is not found in the text. In 1924 the late S. H. Hall wrote, "it would take a lifetime to read the Bible just once . . . had God so written it as to meet the whims of those who seek to justify themselves in walking in their own way." (G. A., Dec., 1924.)

We must remember that God's unexpressed

"nots" are as binding as those expressed. For instance, all can appreciate the fact that God did not say to Noah, "Thou shalt not make the ark of elm wood, pine wood, hickory wood, etc." The list would be almost endless had God so done. But we appreciate the simple truth that the command to "make an ark of Gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14a) was enough.

The same principle obtained with reference to the dimensions of the ark. It was to be constructed "as" God instructed. It was "not" to be constructed in the thousands of different dimensions Noah or other men might conceive. Isn't it the case, my good friends, that we see the thousands of unexpressed "nots" in the command to build an ark "three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high?" (Genesis 6:14.) If a computer should print out all the possible variables, or contrasts, to the specified dimensions, we would see the figures almost endless. But the Lord did not expressly state all the "nots" in reference to the dimensions of that old ark; in fact, he did not express a single "not." But the "nots" are there with as much force as if they were all written out. It was the case then, as it is the case now, that when God specified the thing to be done, the materials to be used, etc., any addition, subtraction, or alteration was and is forbidden.

Examples could be multiplied by the hundreds wherein God's unexpressed "nots" are found in his

word. Far more "nots" are unexpressed than are expressly stated in Scripture. It is just as rebellious and sinful for men to untie an unexpressed "not" as to ignore those specifically stated. God nowhere stated specifically, "Thou shalt not erect an altar at Dan and at Bethel!" But Jeroboam was in violation of the law of Jehovah in the building of said altars. Why? Because God had named Jerusalem as the "place" of worship. God therefore sent a young man to renounce Jeroboam and his places of worship (I Kings 13:1-3). This is why it is rebellious and sinful to employ the mechanical instrument in Christian worship. Jehovah has specified the kind of music to be used, i.e., the singing of songs, hymns, and spiritual songs. The "melody" that accompanies is to come from the "heart" and not from the "harp" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16,17). When we are honest with God and with our handling of his word we honor his unexpressed "nots" in reference to the kind of music he has commanded. "Thou shalt NOT employ the instrument of music in worship" is there in the New Testament just as "Thou shalt NOT make an ark of sycamore wood" was there (unexpressed) in God's instructions to Noah (Genesis 6:14). May we learn not to untie God's "nots" whether expressed or unexpressed, both in reference to music in worship and any other unauthorized innovation suggested by uninspired men. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

The Curse Of Profanity

W. A. HOLLEY

Beyond any reasonable doubt, profanity has become the most ridiculous curse of our day. Words which are dirty, obscene, disgusting to one's finer senses, abhorrent to accepted standards of morality and common virtue can be heard almost every day. A coarseness that implies a roughness, a rudeness and a crudeness of spirit, of behavior, and of language seems to be the order of the day. Many are deliberately going out of their way to show others just how repulsive and offensive to good taste they can be! Many are making a career of flagrantly violating all senses of decency and propriety by using words and gestures which should make the Devil blush!

Irreverence and disrespect have become a blighting curse of modern society!! The Bible talks of shamefacedness, but modesty, bashfulness and shame seem to be almost forgotten (I Timothy 2:9-15). What is "shamefacedness"? It is that modesty and decency which have become rooted in one's godly character.

Just think of it? Four-letter words have emerged from the barrooms and the barracks and can be heard and seen almost everywhere — in conversation at restaurants, on bumper stickers, in cheers bellowed

Continued on page 2

Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, on a non-profit basis. Entered as Second Class Matter at Haleyville, Alabama post office. Send change of address notices on POD Form 3579 to Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35665.

BOBBY DUNCAN Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Associate Editor
P. O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42701

RUSS CROSSWHITE Circulation Manager
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al. 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Published each Friday under oversight of Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.

Congregational Rates: Mailed directly to each family, friends, etc., fifteen cents per copy payable by the church on receipt of statement the first of following month.

Individual rates are \$7.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35665.

The Editor's Pen
BOB DUNCAN

"If We Confess Our Sins. . ."

The Bible teaches very clearly that the only way for an alien sinner to obtain forgiveness of his sins is by becoming a child of God through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such obedience involves faith in Jesus (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of Christ (Matthew 10:32), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). We sometimes refer to this process as God's first law of pardon, or God's law of pardon for the alien sinner.



BOB DUNCAN

But those who have become children of God still stand in need of pardon from time to time. Children of God obtain this oft-needed pardon by submission to what we sometimes refer to as God's second law of pardon, or God's law of pardon for his children. It involves repenting of sins (Acts 8:22), confessing one's sins (1 John 1:9), and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). (Actually God has only one law, the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the terms of pardon stipulated in that law are one thing to the alien, and something else for the erring child of God.)

While God's law of pardon for the child of God always involves repentance, confession, and prayer, there are times when the confession of one's sins should be public, and there are times when that confession should be private. Jesus taught: "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" (Matthew 18:15). The Lord is here discussing what is, at this point, a private trespass. It should be dealt with privately, and corrected privately, involving repentance and a private confession.

But in the next verse, the knowledge of this private trespass becomes more widespread: "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." Now two or three people know about the trespass, whereas only one previously knew. Now it must be corrected with the two or three. The confession of the sin should be made known to all those who know of the sin, so that all who know of the sin might also know about the repentance.

Then in the next verse, what was a private trespass becomes public: "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 an heathen man and a publican." We have now reached the point that a private confession to one man, or a confession to two or three, will not suffice. The entire church knows about the matter, and are treating the man as if he were "an heathen man and a publican." The only way the entire church will know to quit treating this individual as if he were "an heathen man and a publican" is to know he has repented of the sin he committed; but the only way they can know he has repented is for him to confess it as the Bible teaches.

I John 5:16, studied against the background of I John 1:8-10, makes it abundantly clear that those who

know about a brother's sins must know also about his confession of sins: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." This passage teaches that Christians are to pray that their brethren may be forgiven of sins, and that God will forgive. It teaches also that there are cases in which there is no need for Christians to pray that their brethren may be forgiven. Now, how am I to know when to pray God's forgiveness for my brother, and when not to? The answer to this question is simple, when it is remembered that John, in the first chapter of this epistle, points out that God will forgive all sins, of whatever magnitude, a brother will in penitence confess. It follows, then, that a sin which a brother will in penitence confess is a sin "not unto death." The sin which is "unto death," then, and for which I need not ask that he be forgiven, is the sin which he, in stubbornness and rebellion, refuses to confess. This shows that God intends for sins generally known to be confessed publicly.

But a public confession cannot be substituted for a private apology. It is a mistake for one to believe he can correct some private trespass against his neighbor or one of his family members, or anyone else, by walking down the aisle and saying, "I have done things I should not have done, and I want the prayers of the church." It may be easier to do that than it is to go to the person wronged and apologize, but that is not what God intended. A woman who has become angry with her husband and said things to him in the privacy of their home that she should not have said does not need to make a public confession; she needs to make a private confession to her husband and to God, and ask their forgiveness.

The question often is asked: "When one makes a public confession, must he name the sin or sins he is confessing?" No, not under normal circumstances. If naming the sin were necessary, then how could we ever be forgiven of those sins we commit ignorantly? Beside this, it is not the purpose of the confession to advertise the sin; it is rather its purpose to advertise one's repentance. Those who may know of specific sins in the life of the person coming forward to make confession should understand this action as evidence that this one has genuinely repented of those specific sins. Those who know of no specific sins in the life of this person making confession do not need to know what specific sins he has committed. It is altogether sufficient, under normal circumstances, to announce simply that brother So-and-so has come in penitence, confessing his sins, begging the forgiveness of the church, and requesting your prayers on his behalf.

But we have used the expression, "under normal circumstances." Are there exceptions? There are indeed! Suppose it is generally known that a brother engages in drinking alcoholic beverages. Faithful brethren have admonished him to give up this sin, and to confess it so he might be forgiven. He admits the practice of drinking, but vehemently denies that it is a sin. He even says, "I will come down the aisle and confess I have sinned, but I deny that my drinking is a sin." Under such circumstances, a general confession ("I have sinned") would be insufficient for it would not be understood by those who know what this man has contended as being an

The Curse Of Profanity

Continued From Page 1

at sports events, on television and in movies. Many books are filled with "cuss" words. It seems that the more profanity used in a book the greater its popularity and its sales! What does that say about one's spirituality?? Again, millions of T-shirts are used to spread abroad many forms of profanity. Parents should keep a close check!

Those who "cuss" and swear care little for other people's feelings or values. Psychologists and psychiatrists are seeking to turn profanity into a good thing, but, according to God's law, it is a sin before a holy and righteous God.

In Ezekiel's day many priests had shown their irreverence to God's law: "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean . . ." (Ezekiel 22:16). God demands that his teachers teach the difference between the sacred and the profane. "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezekiel 44:23). God says that it is a sin to mix the sacred and the profane. "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).

Under the wonderful leadership of Moses, God dedicated Israel as his holy people. They were "holy" because of their special relationship to the "holy" God, the Creator of the universe! It was God's intention to use this "holy" nation as a "holy" institution through which to bless the nations of the earth. We read, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6).

In support of the foregoing statement, we shall now read I Kings 8:41-43: "Moreover concerning the foreigner, that is not my people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for thy name's sake (for they

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 3

The Curse Of Profanity

Continued from page 2

shall hear of thy great name, and of thy mighty hand, and of thine outstretched arm); when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name." Cf. Exodus 13:3; Deuteronomy 3:24; Joshua 4:23; I Samuel 17:46.

The culmination of this great promise is found in Jesus Christ. For Paul wrote, "For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be the heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith" (Romans 4:13).

When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, he promised to make of him a great nation, and then added the promise that refers to Christ: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). That this promise includes all the nations is plainly declared when God renewed this promise to Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). Galatians 3:16-29, reveals the fact that all who believe and obey the Christ become Abraham's spiritual seed, with all fleshly distinctions being eliminated

completely in Christ. God's holy nation today is the church of Christ (I Peter 2:5,9; Titus 2:11-14; Galatians 6:16).

Thus, according to Paul, the church of Christ is to be pure, holy, spotless!! "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). Cf. James 1:26-27; Romans 12:1-2; Titus 2:11-12.

It is a sin for one to take the Lord's name in vain (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12). The tongue is a very small member but it can get one into a great mess unless one is extremely careful (See James 3:1-13). It is said that a great man ordered his servant, "Go to the market and get me something good." The servant returned with a tongue. On another occasion the master said, "Go to the market and get me something bad." The servant brought another tongue. "Why a tongue each time?" asked the master. "Because," was the wise answer, "a tongue may be the source of either good or evil. If it is good, there is nothing better. If it is bad, there is nothing

worse."

The devil catches men and women through "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes," and "the pride of life," but when it comes to cursing and swearing, he catches them without any bait or reward (Cf. I John 2:15-17).

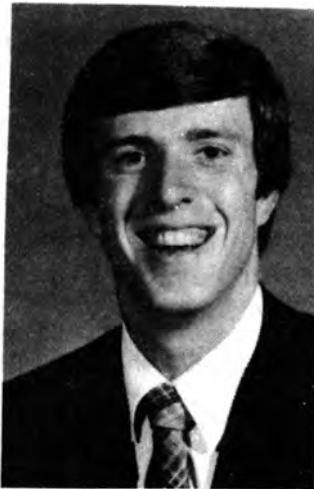
"The foolish and the wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing is a vice so mean and low, that every person of sense and character detests and despises it" (George Washington).

Profanity has become very popular in modern society. If one listens to casual conversations these days, he will hear curses ranging from the slightly vulgar to the very obscene, regardless of the age, sex, race or social status of the participants. There can be no doubt that TV has had much to do with the growth of profanity, because it dumps such garbage into the livingrooms of millions of American homes; and TV adds to the supply of garbage day after day, year after year.

If people could but be taxed for using "cuss-words," the national debt would soon be retired. Many are deeply concerned about water and air pollution, but what about mind and speech pollution?? (Cf. Philippians 4:8; Romans 12:1-2). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

A Message To Youth About Alcohol

The following statements about alcoholic beverages were taken from a newspaper article dated November 26, 1982: "It kills more teen-agers in traffic accidents each year than any disease. It plays a part in the crimes they commit and in substantial numbers of suicides by teen-agers." "It has left more than 3 million American young people under the age of 18 with serious drinking problems according to the federal government." "But alcohol is a drug, and one that wreaks havoc with teen-agers' physical and mental health." "Studies also show that most youngsters who go on to hard drugs start with alcohol because it is the easiest to get and then combine drinking with other drugs, with potentially deadly consequences." "Last year, 25,000 people died in alcohol-related accidents, according to the safety board, and 35 percent of them, almost 8,500 people, were aged



RUSS CROSSWHITE

16 to 24." "We're certainly seeing teen-agers coming in more and more," the spokesman said, adding that AA now has 20,000 members under age 20.

These statements were quoted to introduce our subject at hand. Startling, are they not? There are so many young people wrecking their lives with the sin of drinking. People are being so deceived into thinking drinking is the thing to do. They think drinking makes one into somebody, a big person. That is nothing but a lie. Drinking is a sin that not only destroys one physically, but it also destroys one spiritually.

We can see how alcohol destroys a person physically. Just read again the statements that were quoted from the newspaper article. It has been said that alcoholism is the number three killer behind cancer and heart disease.

Why is the use of alcohol sinful? The following reasons will explain:

It harms the body. This is sin against God. Our bodies do not belong to us, but to God who created them (I Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31). We have already noticed some of the ways it is harmful in this way.

God wants us to maintain control over ourselves (I Corinthians 9:27). Alcohol has the effect of dulling judgment and removing restraint. Even moderate amounts of alcohol in the body slow up one's reactions, affect his judgements, dim his perception, and release his inhibitions so that he will do careless, foolish and irresponsible things he would never do if he were in total control of himself. I talked to a fellow one time who had gotten a girl pregnant out of wedlock. He said the night it happened he had been out drinking. So, drinking causes one to lose self-control.

One is responsible for the influence he has on others. To do anything which might become a stumbling block to another person is sin, and the use of beverage alcohol is something which definitely has that effect (I Corinthians 10:31-33).

The Bible condemns drunkenness (Proverbs 20:1; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:21; I Corinthians 5:11; 6:10). What if someone asks, "What about just one drink?" I would answer them by asking them this question: "What constitutes drunkenness?" Drunkenness is only a matter of degree.

There are unnecessary and dangerous risks

involved. One person out of nine who takes the first drink will eventually become an alcoholic, or as the Bible puts it, a "drunkard" (I Corinthians 6:10).

Let's teach our young people why they are not to drink. The temptation to drink is really great. If we love and care about them we will show them why drinking is not the thing to do. They need to see the proper example from their parents.

Young person, NEVER, NEVER take that first drink. You will never regret it. — 1501 6th Ave., Jasper, Ala. 35501.

"Add To Your Faith Virtue"

Perched majestically upon the second rung of inspiration's ladder of Christian graces is the attribute of virtue (II Peter 1:5-7). Having reminded his readers of the "exceeding great and precious promises" made by God in their behalf, Peter further encourages, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue" (II Peter 1:4,5).

The original greek word, *aretan*, from which our word "virtue" is translated has beneath it a broad base of meaning. In a general sense, it denotes a well rounded excellence (Barclay). Its definition may be either (1) moral purity, or (2) courage. Many of the newer versions have translated *aretan* as "goodness," "moral goodness," or "moral excellence" (NEV, Phillips, NIV). However, other translations, such as the *Emphatic Diaglott*, have rendered the word as "fortitude" or its equivalent.

It may well be that both of these meanings are



DALTON KEY

"If We Confess Our Sins . . ."

Continued from Page 2

acknowledgement of sin committed in drinking. It would leave them believing he still has not repented of the sin of drinking alcoholic beverages. In order for them to know he has repented of that sin, he would need to name the sin. This would let all know he has had a change of mind with reference to his drinking.

The question of how public a confession of sin needs to be is easily settled in our minds when we understand that the purpose of the confession is not to report the sin, but to let those who already know of the sin know also of the repentance. And unless there is genuine repentance, a confession is of no benefit.

Continued on page 4

"Add To Your Faith Virtue"

Continued from Page 3

intended. The apostle speaks of a pure life backed by the courage to live and defend such a life in the face of adversity.

It is of no little significance that Christians are here admonished to reflect lives of moral purity. It is the Lord's desire that his body, the church, be "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). The chaste and godly lives of his disciples contribute to their being "a peculiar people," "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" (I Peter 2:9; II Timothy 2:21).

The world has always stood in staunch opposition to the upright life. The bumper sticker which reads, "Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil . . . have no fun," reflects the thinking of our society. The Epicurian philosophy of feeding the flesh and starving the spirit is evidenced all about us, while righteous living is looked upon as "old fashioned" and "square." Though we must live in the world, we

must also "live soberly, righteously, and godly" within it (Titus 2:12). It is still both wise and safe to "abstain from all appearance of evil" and thus remain "unspotted from the world" (I Thessalonians 5:22; James 1:27). The rewards of purity — a clear conscience, healthy self image, pure body, longer life, respectable friends, and above all, the hope of heaven — far outweigh the passing pleasures of behaving like Beelzebub. When Peter admonished his readers to add to their faith virtue, he had in mind a life of consecrated purity.

Likewise significant is the fact that Christians, through Peter's use of the word *aretan*, are called upon to manifest courage in the delineation and defense of this pure life. Splendid examples of moral courage abound within the Sacred Volume. We recall Elijah standing boldly in defense of the God of heaven in the face of not less than 450 antagonistic prophets

of Baal (I Kings 18). Before Elijah's time, Joseph had courageously refused the advances of Potiphar's wife by exclaiming, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). And what of young Daniel, determining not to defile himself with the king's dainties, and later facing the lion's den rather than cease his prayers to God (Daniel 1:8;6)? And the list is virtually endless. God's will, in every generation, has been carried out by those faithful servants who feared no one or no thing but God. Such have never been satisfied with being faithful only in prosperity, but have been "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10). May their tribe increase.

The apostle Peter, in using the word *aretan*, suggests a pure life backed by the courage to live and defend it. May we strive to add to our faith virtue. — Box 563, Liberal, KS. 67901.

The King's Servant

Recently it was my privilege to speak to a group of brethren who were asked to lead in particular areas of service for 1983. My text came from II Samuel 15:15: "And the King's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint." I pointed out that we serve King Jesus. Therefore, the very same attitude expressed in this passage should be the attitude that characterizes us in our service.



CURTIS R. DOWDY

The implications of this attitude are many and far reaching. Think of some things the King has appointed:

1. **WORSHIP:** "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"

(John 4:24). In other passages we learn that Sunday is the day true worshipers assemble to worship in a special way (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11; 16:1, 23, etc.). Where the attitude of our text is, there will be no doubt as to where we are on the Lord's Day!

2. **GROWTH:** "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen" (II Peter 3:18). In II Peter 1:5-11 and other passages we see areas in which we need to grow. Where the attitude of our text is, there will be no doubt as to where we are when the church comes together, no matter the day of the week.

3. **SERVICE:** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19-20). This and other scriptures point us in the way of meeting the needs of others. Certainly the greatest need is knowledge of the "Good News." Since all are lost (Romans 3:10), all need to hear Mark 16:15-16. Where the attitude of our text is there will be no doubt as to our interest in

the needs of others!

4. **LOVE:** "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34,35). Here and in other places there is emphasis upon loving each other as brethren. But love is not restricted to brethren (Matt. 5:44). Where the attitude of our text is there will be no doubt as to our actions toward one another.

What motivates this attitude so essential to serving our King? I illustrate it by the following true story: In 1588 the Spanish Armada sailed to conquer England. Historians know, of course, that the plans proved to be a disaster.

A lone ship survived, and with her 1300 passengers limped toward Scotland. On board was a young sailor who wore the ring of his beloved. That ring was a symbol of the gift of herself. A raging storm drove the ship on to the rocks where it was broken. The young sailor with the ring did not survive.

Centuries later the wreck was found and located was a ring. Carved upon it was a hand offering a heart, and inscribed upon it were these words, "I have nothing more to give thee."

Brethren, when we have given our hearts to the Lord then and only then will we be motivated to do "whatsoever my Lord the King shall appoint." — 1518 Highland Avenue Columbia, Tn. 38401.

Man Or Machines?

Experts predict that by the end of the 1900's, many of our traditional jobs will disappear, or lose their significance. Just as the buggy makers were put out of work a few decades ago, so some of our more familiar jobs will gradually disappear. Service station attendants will not be needed, since a majority of our automobiles will be propelled by something besides gasoline. Some university professors will not be needed, since their knowledge will be outdated, or unneeded. Assembly line workers will be replaced by robots. Much clerical work will be done by computers instead of people. Will machines ever replace men? Can we look to the time that man will gradually pass into insignificance and machines dominate our society?



ANCIL JENKINS

There are many jobs machines can and will do better than man. Man will be relieved from some dangerous and boring jobs by robots and machines. Yet man will never be replaced by anything. Man is unique. The machines come out of factories with incredible sameness.

Intelligence rests in man. No animal or machine has the ability to reason. An animal may be trained or conditioned to perform a certain act. Yet the reason "why" this is done will never be understood by the animal. Machines can be programmed to make choices, yet they cannot reason beyond their programming. God made man as ultimate of his creation.

Machines cannot feel. Hospitals now team with computers and equipment unhought of in the past. They may diagnose and prescribe, yet they cannot put a comforting hand on the sick or give a smile to cheer the hurting. Man is given a heart that reasons, thinks, feels and acts. A machine can never feel compassion.

It has been said that people think — machines work. This is true, and is according to God's plan for man. Truly, we are " . . . fearfully and wonderfully made . . ." (Psalms 139:14) — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Thank The For '83

AVIS CORLEY PORTER

THANK YOU GOD FOR LETTING ME SEE,
THIS BRAND NEW YEAR OF '83.
MAY I STRIVE HARD BETTER TO BE,
AND BE THE BEST I CAN IN '83!

The most effective way to conceal ignorance is to listen and shake your head when asked for an opinion.

Don't wait for your ship to come in if you haven't sent one out.

It is impossible to win an argument with an ignorant man.