



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most
the Words of Truth and

but speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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NUMBER 1

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(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 in chronological order. The numbers in parentheses denote the month and day of the issue in which the article was published. — Editor)

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— Acts 26:25

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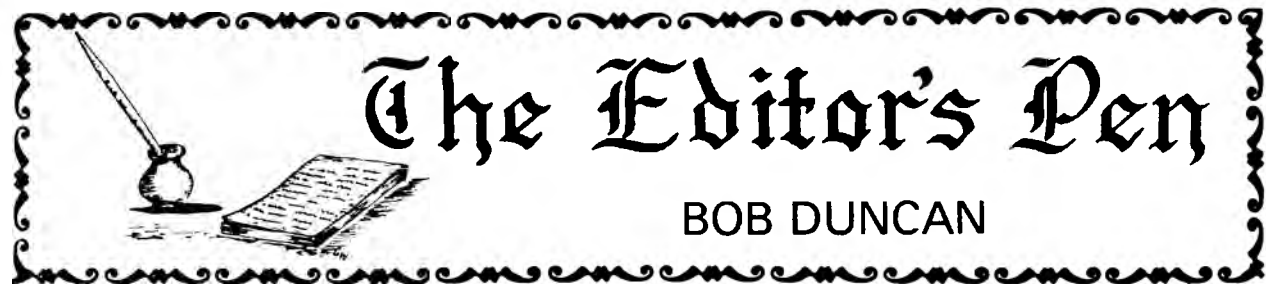
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"O Foolish Galatians"

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Galatians 3:1). J. Noel Merideth, in his *A Commentary on Galatians* (Merideth Publishing Company, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee), says, "The word 'foolish' (*anoetos*) means failure to use one's powers of perception rather than natural stupidity." This fact reminds us that people who are perfectly intelligent and rational in other areas will often act completely foolishly when it comes to the matter of religion. They are not just naturally stupid, but in the realm of religion they fail to use their powers of perception.



BOB DUNCAN

Is this not the very reason some have never obeyed the gospel? They are wise enough to know they need life insurance to protect their families in the event of an untimely death, and they would be careful not to let their policies lapse, even for a week. They are wise enough not to run the risk of a costly stay in the hospital without benefit of hospitalization insurance, even though such insurance is very costly. They are wise enough to maintain a sufficient level of automobile insurance to protect them from great financial loss should they be involved in a serious accident. But they very foolishly put off their obedience to the gospel of Christ and run the risk of dying in a lost condition, with no hope of anything except eternity in hell. Such are not just naturally stupid; they simply fail to use their powers of perception when it comes to spiritual matters.

When it comes to the matter of what one must believe and do, people often do not use the same kind of logic in religious matters they use in other areas. Many actually believe it makes no difference what one believes and does in religion, so long as he is honest and sincere. It is not because of natural stupidity that some believe this, but because they are *anoetos* 'foolish,' i.e., they are not using their powers of perception. They would not use the same kind of logic in other matters. For example, they know that extra strength pain-relievers laced with cyanide will kill those who take them, regardless of how sincerely and honestly they believe them to be safe. They know that honesty and sincerity will not keep them from losing their money if they make a bad investment. They know that honesty and sincerity will not guarantee their safe and prompt arrival at their intended destination if they happen to get on the wrong highway. Why do they believe that honesty and sincerity will get them to heaven, even though they are not following the road that leads there? (Read Matthew 7:13, 14.) One who is

properly using his powers of perception will be impressed with statements such as the following: "And ye shall know the *truth*, and the *truth* shall make you free" (John 8:32). "Sanctify them through thy *truth*; thy word is *truth*" (John 17:17). "Of his own will begat he with us the word of *truth* . . ." (James 1:18). "[Charity] rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the *truth*" (I Corinthians 13:6). II Thessalonians 2:10-12 teaches that those who do not love and believe the *truth* will believe a lie, and that doing so will cause them to be damned.

People who are perceptive enough to have no difficulty at all in understanding plain language in other realms fail to use their powers of perception in understanding plain Bible truth. For example, there is no command of God more clearly taught in the New Testament than the command to be baptized for the remission of sins. The language in which God's will concerning this matter is set forth is abundantly plain. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Now, what could be plainer than that? It is not, "He that believeth shall be saved"; neither is it, "He that is baptized shall be saved." But it is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Those who are mentally retarded and cannot understand God's revelation will not be held accountable for their failure to do God's will. But those who do not understand and do the will of God simply because they fail to use their powers of perception will be hopelessly and eternally lost in hell.

Pride

According to Vine's Dictionary of New Testament words, our english word "Proud" is translated from the Greek word HUPEREPHANOS, and is always used in scripture in the bad sense of arrogant, disdainful, proud. In the scripture it is limited to these interpretations and is never used in a good sense. Does this mean that the word could never be used in a different sense to convey something good and honorable. Not in the least. Considering the etymology of the english language, we find that many of our words have taken on added meanings in common usage. When a word is given a meaning by common use of the masses, that meaning is then adopted by the lexicographers and assigned to the sense of the word. Such is the case with the english word



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proud. The following quote is taken from the Random House Collegiate Dictionary: "It may refer to an affectionate admiration of or a justifiable pride concerning someone else: Proud of his son."

A few years ago, we travelled to the beautiful State of Oklahoma on the occasion of the wedding of one of our sons. While there we were privileged to attend the Lord's day services with this good family who were all united in the Lord as were we. All of their children were home from distant cities in the U.S. Two of the sons delivered lessons at the morning service. That afternoon the eldest son performed the wedding ceremony. It was a great day that will live forever in our memory. After the ceremony, the father of the bride and I were talking; I could sense that here was a man who had reared his family in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" and was now enjoying the fruits of his labors. With misty eyes and a humble smile he asked: "Does an old man have a right to be just a little bit proud?" I replied: "Yes brother, you have every right to be proud." In the sense of "affectionate admiration" for his children who were walking with the Lord, he had that right.

There are occasions when we have a sense of pride (affectionate admiration) for our loved ones for worthwhile honors and accomplishments in everyday life, and justifiably so. I am convinced however, that nothing in this world can cause greater joy to the hearts of godly parents than to know that their children are "walking in truth." Yes, we have a right to be proud of those who are faithful in the Lord. The Apostle John wrote: "I rejoice greatly that I found of my children walking in truth, as we have received commandment from the Father" (III Jno. 4). I say: AMEN — Rt. 4 Box 479 Elba, Ala. 36323.



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 19

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1983

NUMBER 2

Qualifications Of The Preacher

Brother Batsell Barrett Baxter was an excellent teacher and well remembered by every preacher student. Undoubtedly his two most remembered classes are "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons" and "Practical Aspects of Preaching." The helpful suggestions and detailed outlines he handed out must be in hundreds of preachers' libraries.



One of the subjects Brother Baxter emphasized the most had to be the qualifications of the preacher. He suggested that every field of activity had its own qualification requirements. He knew it was not possible to give a list of minimum, nor a list of maximum, requirements, but he suggested a list of desirable qualities in a preacher. He wrote, "All other things being equal, the man who has the largest number of these, and has them to the greatest degree, will be the most effective servant of the Lord."

Here is Brother Baxter's list of major qualifications: (1) character, (2) sincerity, (3) enthusiasm, (4) knowledge, (5) courage, (6) reality, (7) imagination, (8) originality, (9) health, (10) works hard, (11) speaks well, (12) meets people well, and (13) vision.

The following is a list of these qualifications with a brief comment explaining each one:

Character is the quality most mentioned by the Lyman Beeche lecturers. The preacher should have no serious faults; he should be a spiritual leader, and an example worthy of being followed.

God's messenger must be sincere. "Preaching," wrote Willard L. Sperry, "can survive countless honest errors; it cannot stand insincerity."

"Enthusiasm," said Brother Baxter, "grows

out of a firm conviction." Henry Ward Beecher wrote, "In almost all communities enthusiasm stands before anything else in moving popular assemblies. A preacher who is enthusiastic in everything he does, in all he believes, and in all the movements of his ministry, will generally carry the people with him."

Commenting on knowledge Brother Baxter stated, "What a man knows makes the difference." Further, "There is no sort of wholesome knowledge which is not desirable for the preacher to know." R. W. Dale wrote, "Your strength must be given to grave and continuous studies. You will fence around the prime hours of the day and keep them for hard work, or else you will be lost."

Courage was described by Brother Baxter as speaking the truth tactfully and lovingly. He suggested it is not being afraid to preach because of an individual or a group of individuals. Phillips Brooks wrote, "The timid trimmer is as bad as the timid surgeon."

The preacher must be realistic. The preacher's life and experiences are often so different from those of his congregation that his preaching does not fit into their realm of experience. Charles Reynolds Brown said of reality, "If you propose to preach, you will have to be the real thing. No shams, no make-believes, no perfunctory machines need apply."

In describing imagination Brother Baxter said, "Let imagination mean 'fruitful in moral ideas.'" Further, "Historical imagination brings the characters of the Bible to life." "Rather than using abstract concepts," he said, "the imaginative preacher paints pictures."

Briefly describing originality Brother Baxter said, "Let originality mean 'freshness and individuality.'"

Brother Baxter talked a great deal about health. The statement which sums-up what he said is this: "The physical condition of the preacher at the time of delivery may make or break the sermon."

Many people have the mistaken idea that the preacher has an easy job. Brother Baxter

refuted this idea. He used a humorous illustration: "A man had two sons. In describing them to someone he said, 'One is a preacher, and the other one doesn't like to work either.'"

To be able to speak well was something Brother Baxter almost over-emphasized because he believed in it so much.

He said, "Speech ability is a necessary tool. Homiletic 'know-how' is a pre-requisite to success in preaching. Familiarity with the rules of grammar is also a great asset."

Brother Baxter spoke often of the ability to meet people well. He said, "Some men know how to open the hearts of others. They are the most successful of God's preachers."

Speaking on the subject of vision, Brother Baxter stated, "No man goes higher than he aims." He emphasized that our biggest limitations are in our own minds. He gave examples of David Lipscomb, Otis Gatewood, and James Walter Nichols.


In concluding his classes dealing with the qualifications of preachers, Brother Baxter, in his usual humble style, said, "Preaching is the most difficult task in the world. We need all the ability we can possibly get. Even if we possessed all these abilities and more, we still could succeed only with God's help and by his power."—316 LaFayette St., S., LaFayette, AL 36862.

The more ignorant a person is about a subject under discussion, the more convinced he is that he's right.

A loafer is always glad when Monday comes. He has another whole week to loaf.

You can't help but admire the fellow who is stupid but knows it

Most of the people who sit around and wait for the harvest haven't planted anything.



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— Acts 26:25

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"Are Ye Now Made Perfect By The Flesh?"

The problem with which the apostle Paul dealt in the book of Galatians was the problem of Judaism; false teachers were insisting that Gentile Christians be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. In the first five verses of Galatians chapter three there are six questions, all of them asked for the purpose of challenging the thinking of those who were about to go back



BOB DUNCAN

under the law of Moses. One of these questions is in the latter part of verse three: "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

This question and the discussion surrounding it should be given serious consideration by all those who are expecting the Lord to return to the earth for the purpose of establishing an earthly kingdom, with headquarters in Jerusalem, and with the Jews returning to Palestine. If such were to take place it would be a giant step backward for God and his people. The church of Christ is a *spiritual* house (I Peter 2:5, composed of people who mind *spiritual* things (Romans 8:5, 6), walk after the *spirit* (Romans 8:1-4), sow to the *spirit* (Galatians 6:8), offer up *spiritual* sacrifices (I Peter 2:5), and enjoy *spiritual* blessings (Ephesians 1:3). Their citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), and even those faithful in Old Testament times "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). Are we then to believe that all this will be culminated by the establishment of an earthly kingdom, with an earthly throne, and in which we enjoy material blessings, and offer up material sacrifices to our earthly king? Will our citizenship then be upon the earth? Will we then be no longer strangers and pilgrims on the earth? Will we then be taught to mind earthly things and walk after the flesh? "Having begun in the Spirit," will we then be "made perfect by the flesh?" This is what Premillennialism demands.

But someone may say, "What about the promise to Abraham and his seed?" Well, it is true that the promise to Abraham involved a fleshly nation and a material territory — the Jews and the land of Palestine (Genesis 15:13-21). But this part of the promise found its fulfillment many years before Jesus was born into the world. Nehemiah 9:7,8 says: "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst chose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with

him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous." These words show that the promise concerning the fleshly seed of Abraham in the land of Canaan had already been fulfilled in the days of Nehemiah. If every fleshly descendant of Abraham in Palestine today should leave, and never another one set foot on that soil, the promise to Abraham concerning his fleshly seed and the land of Canaan has been fulfilled. Furthermore, if every Jew in the world should move to Palestine, and if Israel should become the world ruler, such would not be in fulfillment of any promise made to Abraham, because Nehemiah, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that, with reference to the fleshly seed and the land, *God had performed his words.*

But the land of Canaan and the Jewish nation, like the law of Moses, were only secondary and temporary elements of God's promise to Abraham. Look at Paul's statement in Galatians 2:7: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Look also at verse 9: "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Verse 14 says: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." These verses show that the primary fulfillment of the promise to Abraham has to do with salvation through faith in Christ, and not with some material blessing upon a fleshly nation. When God made the promise to Abraham he was looking beyond the fleshly nation, and the land of Canaan, and the law which was given at Sinai. He was looking to the coming of Christ into the world so that men could be forgiven of sins and become children of God in Christ Jesus. Is this not the force of the statement in verse 16? "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." In view of all this, how can one expect a return to that which is fleshly, earthly, and material? "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

Then what was the purpose of the law of Moses and the fleshly nation to which it was given? "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made 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" (Galatians 3:19-25). You see, it never has been God's intention for Jesus to be an earthly king on an earthly throne. Jesus himself said, "My king-

I Am Ashamed

The Christian has every right to be proud of his associations in the kingdom of God. The ideals of Christ make for the most blessed of friendships and social and business relations. The child of God should never be made ashamed of his faith in Christ or the family of God of which he is a member.

Like Paul, I am not ashamed of the gospel, the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

I am not ashamed of my salvation, for I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he will keep that which I have committed unto him unto eternity (II Timothy 1:12).

I am not ashamed of the church of Christ, planned by the God of heaven (Ephesians 3:9-11), purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), and indwelt by the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 3:16-17). It is holy, without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27) and perfect as designed by the Architect of Eternity.

I am not ashamed of the Scriptures, inspired of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16-17), and guaranteed to be fully authoritative and complete.

I am not ashamed of the promised heaven which awaits the righteous (Philippians 3:20-21). As surely as Christ is Lord, we can believe his promise of eternal mansions (John 14:2).

I am not ashamed of God's promises to guide, provide for and protect me in this life (Romans 8:14; Matthew 6:33; I Corinthians 10:13). He has never failed nor forsaken even one of his children (Hebrews 13:5-6). While men have reneged, never has my Lord.

In spite of all these marvelous blessings, I am ashamed of a number of things which I continually encounter in my Christian walk.

I am ashamed of my sins (Romans 6:21). So often I fall short of what my Lord expects of me. I am ashamed of my inability to seek first the kingdom of God in every venture of life every day of the year (Matthew 6:33). Crucifying the old man is an ongoing



JOHN WADDEY

I Am Ashamed

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process (Galatians 2:20).

I am ashamed of fellow Christians who live in such a worldly fashion that they cast shame and reproach upon our Father and our spiritual family. When I see a Christian immodestly attired in public, or imbibing in sinful worldly habits such as indulging in the use of liquor, profanity, or tobacco, I hang my head (Titus 2:12).

I am ashamed of brethren who are willfully ignorant of God's word and pitifully negligent of their study of the living oracles. How can they treat the precious word so lightly? (Acts 17:11).

I am ashamed of preaching brethren who mishandle the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15). I have in mind men who do sloppy work in the teaching and preaching; who neglect the work of an evangelist (II Timothy 4:4), while gladly accepting the financial support for such work (Galatians 6:6). Those preachers who leave the safe, secure doctrine of Christ to venture out into the swirling currents of

speculation and human opinions, make me ashamed (II John 9,10). Then there are those that presume to make rules and regulations for God, binding them on the hearts of brethren. The strife and division this always engenders embarrasses me. To see our enemies laugh with scorn at the bruised and broken body of Christ, torn asunder by his own disciples, is depressing indeed.

I am ashamed of brethren that abuse and mistreat God's servants who give their lives to proclaiming the word. How shameful when God's own people become the tools of Satan in opposing and persecuting the very men who could help save their souls (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Especially am I embarrassed by preaching brethren who do not pay their bills. Recently a Christian businessman who deals mainly with preachers told me how many bad accounts he had from men who weekly stand in pulpits of God's church. Some of these are insignificant men, known

only to a few. Others, however, are widely known. Many of these poor accounts have been billed repeatedly, some have been personally contacted by phone. Not only do some of them refuse to honor their debts, they promise that they will take care of it right away and then do nothing. Have these men not read Paul's warning that thieves and liars will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:25)?

Will it not be strange in that day when Christ judges us to see hundreds of people enter heaven's gates while the preacher who taught and baptized them is sent into damnation because he would not pay his bills for the books purchased from which to prepare his sermons?

May all who read these lines look into their hearts and examine themselves to see if they are still in the faith (II Corinthians 13:5). May we not only labor to save others but our souls as well (I Timothy 5:16).
— 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Spiritual Security

Everyone wants security. When a man gets married, he thinks about the financial security that he can provide for his family. This is only natural for the Bible teaches that one must provide for his own family (I Timothy 5:8). It's good to have the proper insurance on one's life, car, health, etc. for security reasons. Security is very important. But the greatest security to have is that of a spiritual nature. Is your heart secure in heaven? In other words, if you should die today would your soul go to heaven? The first priority of one's life should be the spiritual security of his soul and of his family. In this article we want to name some ways in which one can secure his heart not only in this life, but also how he can secure his heart in heaven.



RUSS CROSSWHITE

First, one must have a purpose in life and that purpose must be three-fold; (1) Put God first in your life. Job 5:8 says "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause." Jesus tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). We must be willing to put God over our own will (Matthew 16:24-25). God must even be put above our very own families (Luke 14:26-27). This does not mean that we are to hate our families, but that we are to love them less than God. God must be first. But, one can see by putting God first that he will be the best member of his family that he can possibly be. (2) The second fold of our purpose should be this: to be a good Christian example, and influence as many people to Christ as we possibly can. We can make a strong impression on people for Christ by the example we set. By our devotion to God, his church, our honesty and character we can have a powerful influence on many people. Read I Timothy 4:2 and Matthew 5:13-16 and see what the verses say about setting a proper example before others. (3) The third fold of our purpose should be to help others. James 1:27 says, "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." Those who are sick, shut-in, sad from the death of a loved one or maybe someone who needs a little encouragement could use our help. We would appreciate someone helping us if we need it, and so we must do the same to others (Matthew 7:12). If we have a purpose in life that is based upon the things that have been discussed, then we will be on our way toward spiritual security.

A second way in which we can secure our hearts is to sow to spirit and not to flesh. Galatians 6:7-8 reads: "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." Sin brings nothing but heartache and sorrow. Avoid the works of the flesh as mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21. Not only will these things bring sadness in this life, but they will cause one to lose his soul in hell. Spiritual security cannot be obtained by participating in things of such nature.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:6: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." By sowing to the spirit one can be

securing his heart not only in this life, but also in heaven.

Finally, in order for us to secure our hearts we must face life with confidence. Hebrews 13:5-6 says, "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. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." We need to have confidence in God's forgiving us of our sins by our obedience to the gospel, by doing as much good as we possibly can, and by overcoming temptations (Mark 16:16; II Corinthians 9:8; I Corinthians 10:13). Remember what Hebrews 11:6 says: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." By facing life with confidence we will be growing more secure not only in this life, but also in the life to come.

Security has been defined as freedom from doubt, care and anxiety. It means to be fixed, to be certain and confident. We can have this kind of spiritual security if we will follow God's word, the Bible. Is your heart secure in heaven? — 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

"Are Ye Now Made Perfect By The Flesh?"

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dom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Now read the concluding verses of Galatians 3: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Can the establishment of an earthly kingdom im-

prove on this arrangement?

To the Premillennialist we would like to ask the following questions: (1) When Jesus reigns from his throne in Jerusalem, and the Jews are returned to their native Palestine, who will be Abraham's seed? (2) Who will be the "heirs according to the promise"? (3) Will God then place a distinction between Jew and Greek? Bond and free? Male and female? (4) "Are ye so foolish having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

The "Overtly Religious" Preacher

Once upon a time there was a certain preacher who travelled about publicly "pushing doctrinal positions" among the people. His emphasis were on the church (kingdom), moral purity, and worshipping God correctly, among other such "overtly religious" topics. He was bold, uncompromising, and intolerant of religious error. He named names. His approach was often confrontational. His preaching was just "blatantly religious."



PHILLIP GRAY

Now, in fairness it must be mentioned that this preacher was very popular for a time. Multitudes attended to his ministry early in his illustrious career. However, increasingly he began to make enemies and alienate erstwhile friends through his frequent and unmitigated attacks on the religious establishment. There were even occasions when those closest to him expressed their concern that some of his remarks were clearly offensive to his hearers. But he would not bend. His continuing attacks only intensified until he was utterly rejected by those whom he had so earnestly sought to influence by his "overtly religious, confrontational" manner of preaching.

What could he have done to have avoided that end? If he were given another chance, what could he do differently to retain those large crowds that had once attended to his preaching? Oh, if he were only on earth today, could he not benefit from the wisdom of some eminent evangelists of our time who have now discovered that the "overtly religious" approach to reaching the masses is not the best? Today, could not this preacher who was so cruelly rejected profit from findings of modern psychology that are now often applied by many of our students of preaching to methods of evangelism? Modern preaching experts have begun to learn that harping on the problem of sin, and salvation, is now generally ineffective in reaching the lost. The "confrontational" approach is no longer a constructive way of sharing the gospel. Yes, if this rejected preacher had only been living today, he could have known that we must approach the people in terms of "felt" and "immediate needs." To borrow a statement and example from a leading evangelist of today, "Of course, sin is the most destructive and universal problem known to man, but not everyone perceives this, especially in time of personal crisis. A woman with a sick daughter is understandably more concerned about her child's health than anything else." Undeniably, so many in our world are now experiencing "personal crisis." Thus, instead of approaching the lost with such "overtly religious" themes as the church, or controversial moral issues, or how to worship God correctly, many modern, successful preachers have discovered that we must first deal with immediate emotional and physical needs.

This mistreated preacher could have learned these things had he been given the opportunity to live in the 1980's. But alas, he went about in the old-fashioned way. There is even a good chance that, were this preacher privileged to hear the prudent pronouncements of some of our preachers, he would not give heed anyway. Given his record of being blunt and right-to-the-point about sin, hell fire and damnation, he might even attempt to counter the above quote of our scholarly brother with something like, "Yes, in trying to reach the lost woman concerned for her daughter mentioned in the quote above, we should not ignore her immediate, and 'felt' need for comfort.

But, we cannot make even that the first order of business." That old-time preacher would probably also say that, "we must be careful not to teach just one aspect of the gospel, as for example 'comfort,' to the exclusion of doctrine or, 'the weightier matters of the law'" (by the way that was one of his characteristic statements). He would perhaps continue arguing with our contemporary brother that, "we have to be careful not to make it appear that the meeting of the woman's one, specific need for encouragement over her daughter's condition is the gospel." I think we could expect that old-time preacher to argue such a thing as this in view of the way he dealt with a problem similar to the example presented by our modern brother who was quoted above. Why, on that occasion, this "overtly religious" preacher had a golden opportunity to reach a wayward soul who had come to hear him preach. This lost man's own father had just passed away. The man was still in grief and the funeral apparently had not yet taken place. Obviously, that man's most "pressing need" was to find comfort in memorializing his departed father; it was to learn how to cope with grief. But what do you think the preacher told him? Even though the grief-stricken man was "understandably more concerned about" his dead father than "blatantly religious" matters at that moment, the preacher insisted that the man follow him, right then and there, and said bluntly, "Let the

dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:21,22). You see, of course, how he insinuated that his listener's preoccupation with the loss of his father was not as important as the overtly religious. It was because of this very approach that this preacher finally lost the greater part of his following (and eventually his life). Oh, but our preachers now know better. "Help the sinner solve his most pressing psychological problem first, then maybe you can carefully slip in a word or two about the 'blatantly religious' later on," they suggest (even if this approach means stealing promises from the many comfort and joy passages of the Bible which belong properly only to those who are already children of God)!

In closing this article, let me cast aside the satiric mask and speak plainly. The universal and most important need of mankind is salvation from sin (Mark 8:36,37). Any other consideration is secondary. Our Lord and his apostles were not afraid to declare this. If we begin to elevate the mundane above the spiritual in our efforts to reach the lost, no matter how important the hearer may at the moment perceive those needs to be, can we truthfully claim to be following in the footsteps of the Model Preacher? "But, they might not perceive salvation to be their most urgent need," someone might counter. If that is so, then we must do all within our power to convince them that it is, before it is too late, everlastingly! — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, Ala. 36441.

Jesus Was A Man Of Prayer

"And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed" (Mk. 1:35; cf. 6:46; Lk. 9:28). Barnes in commenting on this passage brings out four important points:

1. The Savior regarded the duty of secret prayer as of great importance.
2. He sought a solitary place for it — far from the world, and even his disciples.
3. That Jesus did it the very first thing in the morning.
4. If Jesus prayed, how much more important is it for us!

Jesus enjoyed going to the Father in prayer. You can't force a person to pray. Prayer is something of desire. David said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1). Again we read, "O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and weary land, where no water is" (Ps. 63:1). Christ was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief..." (Isa. 53:3). He prayed because He was a man on earth (Phil. 2:5-11).

Not all that much is recorded in the Bible about our Savior's prayer life, but what is recorded is of great value. Luke states that Jesus spent all night in prayer (Lk. 6:12). Jesus prayed the same prayer three times, showing the importance of repetition (Mt. 22:44). "He prayed more earnestly; and his



GEORGE REED

sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Lk. 22:44). Lenski says, "Severe mental distress and strain drive out sweat from the body, a fact that is constantly observed. The fact that this may reach the point where the tiny blood vessels of the skin are ruptured and permit blood to mingle with the sweat is attested medically." Can you imagine the agony it would have taken to produce such? The Hebrew writer says concerning Christ's prayer life, "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear" (Heb. 5:7).

Jesus spent a great deal of his time teaching and praying for his disciples. The disciples asked him how to pray in Luke 11:1,2. He showed them what to pray for in Matthew 6:6-15. (This many times is called the Lord's prayer, but Jesus never did pray this prayer; He only taught his disciples to pray it), Jesus taught his disciples to pray for more workers (Mt. 9:38), not to be led into temptation (Mt. 26:41), for those who despitefully use us (Lk. 6:28), believe what we pray for, and we will receive it (Mk. 11:24), and that we should always pray (Lk. 18:1). Finally, Jesus prayed the Father (Jn. 14:26) that He would send the Holy Spirit upon his apostles (cf. Acts 2:33).

Yes, Jesus was a man of prayer. The question is, are you.—1769 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Folks who don't know anything should keep it to themselves.

Idleness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes it.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 69)

... nobis Festus; but speak forth
the words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 3

Are We Missing The Point

Is it possible for us to place the emphasis on the wrong thing? Can we have a lot of activity and it not be the best for the future of the church? I think, in our sober moments, we all will admit that such may be the case. We know that, Martha-like, we get our priorities wrong (Lk. 10:41). We mean well, but it may not end well.

Forty years ago there wasn't a whole lot of fuss about what went on in meeting houses. Most congregations were just happy to have a place to meet. Then after World War II we began to grow in number and became more prosperous. Then we started thinking about our "barns." So we tore down or sold the ones we had and built greater ones. In them we put all the comforts of home—padded pews, air-conditioning, the best in lighting, sound systems, and carpet throughout. We also put in water fountains. Though this is a judgmental matter, didn't many congregations handcuff themselves with more building than they needed? Didn't we lose sight of some priorities in the "building boom"? No, I am not opposed to having comfortable buildings, but we must admit such can be overdone.

Along came the vacation Bible schools and we served refreshments to the children, which is well and good. From that we had our meals together in one of the larger rooms in the building, which is similar to the love feasts of the early church. From this point, some moved to expend large sums to provide places to meet and eat, but surely all would agree there must be a stopping place somewhere. Would we reason from the refreshments at vacation Bible school and water fountains to a gourmet restaurant housed in every church building over the land? Do not hungry mouths and lost souls cry out against our congregational excesses as much as they do against personal excesses? (James 5:5). What is the difference in our faring sumptuously as a congregation with the beggars at the gate, and the rich man of Luke 16:19-21



WINFRED CLARK

with Lazarus ignored at his? Aren't we turning within to pamper ourselves when we spend more on fun and frolic than we do in mission work, and when we give token efforts in benevolence?

Many of us take a firm stand against churches giving to a college without restrictions. We do not oppose giving to teach the Bible in a Bible department. This is worthy of support. The church, after all, is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15). We, however, make a distinction so far as how the money is to be used. We do not support the

basketball teams nor sports programs from the church treasury. We want administrations to know this, and they agree. All know such is not the work of the church. Most brethren I know who want to do right draw the line at this point. Are they missing the point in what a church may do for a college? I think not. Wouldn't the same line need to be drawn in congregational matters? If not, why not? The line has to be drawn at some point or else the church may provide a Six Flags in every city. Would you oppose it? I would.—P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611

Lincoln Counting Time

WINFREY HENNESSEE

Beginning about the first of November, the elders and deacons must begin a difficult task; that of planning a new budget for the coming year. Many hours of hard work, much thought, and considerable effort must be put forth in order to complete this important job. Some of this work is done long after the other members of the congregation have retired from their day's work.

In order to present a challenge, it is always good to set the budget a little higher than the contribution is at the present time. Some will complain, but they should study the words in II Corinthians, chapters 8-9. The Lord must have thought this an important subject, or else, he would not have had so much written in the Bible about it.

Most of us live in nice homes, drive a late model automobile, and have plenty to eat. It is not wrong for a Christian to live comfortably, but we should be good stewards of the Lord's money. We should not enjoy all of the luxuries of this life if we are going to deprive God of what is already his.

Sometimes I think a good way to plan the budget would be for the elders to go out on the church parking lot when it is full, and count the fine cars out there. It

seems to be no trouble to lay by in store the portion which goes to the banker every month. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

Forgive And Forget


EARLENE ROSE

... FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND REACHING FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE Phil 3:13

"Let bygone be bygone" is an old cliché with meaning so true; it should cause us each day to examine our heart, and if it is found a grudge we are carrying is weighting down,

Remember, forgiving means forgetting, too; Forgiving helps others — forgetting helps you. Let love fill the place where once was regret -- "Let bygone be bygone" — forgive and forget. — Northport, AL 35476

(Editor's Note: Earlene Rose now has published a collection of her poems in book form. You may order them directly from her at the above address for \$5.00 plus \$.75 for mailing.)



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Child Abuse

An article I just read told of the death of a five year old boy who died as the result of being abused by his mother and her boyfriend. He was hit with fists, knees, and perhaps a wooden instrument of some sort. The boyfriend, according to the article, slammed the child's midsection down on his knee, as if he were trying to break a board. The boy died of internal injuries. There were 170 bruises on his body, and most of his organs were damaged.



BOB DUNCAN

In the United States alone, this same story, only with a different child and a different set of circumstances, could be repeated thirteen times a day, every day in the year, without ever mentioning the same child twice. Children die of child abuse in this country at the rate of thirteen a day. Some are beaten, some forced to sit in scalding water, some locked out in freezing weather, some dropped from heights, some pushed from moving automobiles, and on, and on the list goes. Indelibly impressed upon the mind of one small girl was the reason she had to suffer such abuse at the hands of a heartless and merciless mother. "I just would not be good," she told the hospital attendant who tried in vain to save her life. Tears fill our eyes, anger fills our hearts, and nausea fills our stomachs as we pensively consider the plight of precious little children whose fate lies in the hands of those who do not love them, and who mercilessly abuse them simply because the children are defenseless.

But let me tell you about another kind of child abuse more prevalent in our country than the kind we have described, and far more damaging. And the laws of our land protect those who practice it. I refer to those who abuse their children by neglecting their spiritual training. Now before you dismiss that thought with a wave of the hand, consider this: Without exception, that child who was beaten to death at age four or five leaves the walks of this life to live eternally in heaven with the Father. But that child whose spiritual training is neglected will, almost without exception, one day leave the walks of this life to enter into the eternal punishment of hell.

How does it make you feel to imagine your own child's being mercilessly beaten, or shoved down the stairs, or made to sit in a tub of scalding water, or locked out in the freezing weather, or locked up in a hot oven? Well, then, how does it make you feel to imagine your own child's being consigned to the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" for eternity? Friend, it could happen. And in all probability it will, unless you take it upon yourself to see to it that it does not.

The following poem has been in my files for many years. By whom it was written, I do not know. The church bulletin from which I obtained it gave credit to

the Capitol Hill Bulletin, Oklahoma City.
AS THE TWIG IS BENT

A little girl with shining face,
Upturned with eyes aglow,
Said: "Daddy, it is almost time
For Bible school. Let's go!
They teach us there of Jesus' love,
Of how he died for all
Upon the cruel cross to save
Those who on him call."
"Oh no," said Daddy, "Not today.
I've worked hard all this week,
And I must have one day of rest.
I'm going to the creek,
For there I can relax and rest,
And fishing's fine, they say.
So run along, don't bother me.
We'll go to church some day."
Months and years have passed away,
But Daddy hears that plea no more;
"Let's go to Bible school."
Those childhood days are o'er.
And now that Daddy's growing old,
When life is almost through,
He finds the time to go to church.
But what does daughter do?
She says, "Oh, Daddy, not today—
I stayed up most all night,
And I've just got to have some sleep.
Besides, I look a fright."
Then Daddy lifts a trembling hand
To brush away his tears.
As again he hears a pleading voice
Distinctly through the years.
He sees a small girl's shining face
Upturned with eyes aglow,
As she says, "Its time for Bible school.
Please, Daddy, won't you go?"

The most interesting point some preachers make is the stopping point.

The mistake a lot of people make when they pray is putting in too many commercials.

Happy laughter and family voices in the home will keep more kids off the streets a night than the strictest curfew.

Prayer is the prelude to peace, the prologue to power, the preface to purpose, and the pathway to perfection.

Justice is blind, so they say, but seldom is it too blind to distinguish between the defendant who has a roll of bills and the one who is dead broke.

Everybody is for justice, but few will bring them rewards and give their neighbors who they have coming to them.

The Christian Garment

In I Peter 5:1-4, Peter gives some exhortations to the elders, and then in verse 5 he says: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elders. 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."

Peter says that Christians are to be "clothed with humility." The Christian's garment is humility. The word he uses for "be clothed" is an extremely interesting one. It comes from a word which describes anything tied on with a knot. Connected with it is a word which means a garment tied on with a knot. It was commonly used to refer to protective clothing. At the beginning of the Christian era it was used to refer to the white scarf or apron which slaves wore tightly fastened around the waist to distinguish them from freemen.

In I Peter 5:5 the meaning is, "Tie on humility like a slave's apron." Thus Christians are to tie humility on securely like a garment that it may never fall away.

There was a time when Jesus put upon himself just such an apron. John talks about it in his account of the gospel. "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:2-5). Jesus knew that he was divine. He knew that he "was come from God, and went to



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

Ministers Of Righteousness Or Ministers Of Satan?

(No. 1)

"Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers fashion themselves as the ministers of righteousness" (II Corinthians 11:14-15).

One of the most frightening aspects of Satan and his workers is that he is often involved in church work! That is, those under his influence sometimes pose as being righteous, but as an effort to secure the Devil's goals. Sometimes they are even unaware of Satan's influence (II Corinthians 4:4).

In few other areas is this more plainly evident than in the realm of so-called faith healing. We are told, "Lay your hand on the television and receive your healing." Others invite us to, "Come forth and



MIKE BARRETT

receive a miracle." Almost daily we hear these statements or some just like them. Scores of men and women claim to possess the ability to perform miracles. Many of them host weekly television or radio programs promoting their claims.

In this article, and one that will follow next week, let us examine the joint claim of these folks. Are we missing our "miracle"? Are they ministers of righteousness, or ministers of Satan?

As we begin our study let us not misunderstand our intentions. We are not examining or questioning God's ability to answer our prayers for recovery from sickness. Neither are we questioning any miracles performed by Christ, his apostles, or any inspired person during the first century. The only consideration we are making is simply this: Do present-day faith healers possess the God-given ability to perform miracles?

The Bible teaches us to examine claims and doctrines that are presented to us (I John 4:1; I Thessalonians 5:21; Revelation 2:1,2). Knowing this, we have a solemn charge to question and even challenge ideas, theories, doctrines, practices, etc. in light of the truth. God's word is that truth (John

17:17; Cf. John 8:32).

Although we may be shocked by the claims and practices of twentieth century imposters, the same claim was made in the first century. Simon, the sorcerer, amazed and deceived people into believing he could do the miraculous. He even let his works be attributed to the power of God (Acts 8:9,10).

There has been no demonstration of the miraculous by these so-called faith healers. The lame do not walk. The blind do not see. The dumb do not speak. And, the maimed are not made whole. These failures are blamed upon a lack of faith on our part. If they be not able to perform the positive, then perform a negative miracle as did Paul (Acts 13:6-12). Yet, this writer and all others who withstand them still possess sight.

The truth of the matter is this: they are not performing miracles because they do not have the ability. If they do have this ability then present the Moses and Elijahs from among them to set the world straight! They cannot demonstrate any power, and next week we will see why. — P.O. Box 1651, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132.

The Gems Of Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy is the fifth and last book of the Pentateuch. This book sets forth the blessings and cursings of the law of Moses. We can read in this book of God's promise, peace, provision and power. The key thought of Deuteronomy is the word "obedience." Obedience is the *call* of the past, the *duty* of the present and the *guarantee* of the future.



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

"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" (Deuteronomy 4:2). If every person living upon the face of the earth would go by this verse of scripture there could be the complete unity of which our Lord prayed to his Father as recorded in the book of John, chapter seventeen. Wouldn't it be wonderful for every person in every community to assemble together and worship God together in spirit and in truth? Every preacher should strive to follow this great lesson. In looking back over my twenty years of preaching I have known of preachers who had great talents to preach but over the years have made a law that God has not made and have taken away from the law that God has made. Whether one adds to or takes away from God's word, wrong has been committed. We must preach only what the word of God contains. We must forever stay on guard and not become a liberal or dogmatic person that adds to the law of God. Other verses that can be read concerning this lesson are: Joshua 1:7; Proverbs 30:5-6; Matthew 15:8-9, and Revelation 22:18-19.

In Deuteronomy 7:1-4 we find some information about marriage. Verse three is very interesting for it says, "Neither shalt thou make marriages with the heathen." Many times when a man and woman are contemplating marriage they are so wrapped up with

one another that they do not consider the Lord in their marriage. Many people have left the church and the Christian life and have given themselves completely to their non-Christian wife or husband. If we would all study God's word about marriage, I believe we would have a greater determination to marry a Christian and have a Christian home. One criterion in making a major decision is to weigh the assets against the liabilities. If this should be done we would marry only Christians; for the assets of marrying a Christian would always outweigh the liabilities of marrying a non-Christian. We would do well to read and study Joshua 23:11-13; I Kings 11:1-4,6,11; Ezra 9:2, and I Corinthians 7:39 concerning the subject of marriage.

Today America is a land of sales. People are clamoring daily tempting you to buy, buy and buy. Many times when you buy something you can profit from the sale and by not buying you will lose. In religion many people do not see anything that is good in being a child of God. The Christian life is the greatest blessing that man can have upon the earth, yet rejecting God, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Christian life is man's greatest curse. If we could only get man to see what could be gained by living the life that Christ wants us to live and to see what man has lost in rejecting Christ, then we could understand what Christianity means to man in the twentieth century. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: A blessing if ye obey the commandment of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). Deuteronomy 30:15-19 also contains a lesson on life and death and good and evil. Matthew 25:46 sums up perfectly what I am attempting to accomplish in this article when it states, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." This warning should be motivation enough to cause us to serve the Lord and avoid such punishment. Many today are unhappy and disappointed in life because they have put their faith in someone who has forsaken them. We must learn a very valuable lesson

from God's word and that is: that the life which we now live upon the earth is not the end but there is life beyond the grave and we must put our faith and trust in God. "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee: he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deuteronomy 31:6). "He will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8). Many of us are more concerned with man than God, the material than the spiritual. "In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalms 56:4). We need the faith of the apostle Paul when he wrote, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). "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. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Please remember as you read the great books of the Old Testament that Paul said, "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). This admonition should cause us to read and appreciate the Old Testament even more. — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, Ms. 38858.

There are two types of people who'll tell you there are better places to be than where you are — real-estate salesmen and preachers.

It is just as well that justice is blind; she might not like some of the things done in her name if she could see them.

A coed concluded her prayer with a modest appeal, "Lord, I don't want to be selfish about it, but I would appreciate it very much if you would send my mother a son-in-law."

The Christian Garment

Continued from page 2

God," and was, thus, deserving of their service. Yet he served them.

The reason is given in Matt. 20:28 where the Bible says, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . ." Christ served his apostles and left us "an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (Jn. 13:15). When we are clothed with humility, we will serve one another.

To the Philippians, Paul wrote: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). This same apostle said to the Romans, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). Humility is a must if one is going to practice what these passages teach.

This slave's apron, the garment of humility, becomes the robe of honor. Solomon wrote, "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility" (Prov. 15:33). Service is the way to

honor and true greatness. Jesus said, "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk. 18:14). "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:6). James, addressing the same subject, wrote: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10). Clothe yourself with the garment of humility; serve one another, and God will exalt you. — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.

Proofs Of Christ's Resurrection



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Man's progress in the areas of Science, Medicine, and Technology has had the effect of man's feeling self-reliant. He forgets he is still a worm in the dust and is dependent upon God. As Paul said, "For in him [God] we live, and move, and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). We must ever keep in mind, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17).

Luke writes about a previous book he had written. His statement reads, "The former Treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:1-3).

The "former treatise" or book was the book of Luke. Luke says Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion." After he died on the cross he arose from the grave. Luke affirms this truth is confirmed "by many infallible proofs".

Paul lists six instances of those who were eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection from the grave (I Cor. 15:5-9). The women went to the grave on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1). The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the Mother of James and other women (Lk. 24:10). "And they found the stone rolled away from the Sepulchre [the grave]. And they entered in, and found not the body of Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed hereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen . . ." (Lk. 24:2-6).

These women did not expect the resurrection of Christ. They had no excuse to lie. Mary Magdalene ran and told Peter and John. She had at that time not yet accepted the fact of the resurrection. She said to Peter and John, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2). Peter and John ran to the tomb. Peter, thought to be the older, outran John. They saw the grave clothes and believed (John 20:5-8).

John tells us of our Lord's appearance after his

resurrection to Mary Magdalene. While weeping at the tomb, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. She saw two angels in white sitting. One was at the head and the other at the foot where Jesus had laid. Mary thought someone had stolen the body of Jesus. She turned and saw Jesus standing, but did not recognize him. "Jesus saith unto her, woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardner, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:15-17). Then Mary went and told the disciples.

The same evening, on the first day of the week, the doors were shut. The disciples had assembled because they feared the Jews. Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you." He showed them his hands and his side. Their response was gladness (John 20:19-20).

Thomas, one of the Apostles, when told by the other Apostles they had seen him, expressed grave doubts. "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" (John 20:25).

After eight days the disciples were together and this time Thomas was with them. Again the doors were shut and Jesus stood in their midst. He 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 into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:26-29).

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote these eyewitness accounts to produce faith in us. John concluded, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Paul affirms the validity of the gospel of Christ depends on the historical fact of Christ's resurrection from the grave. He said, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor. 15:13-14).

Since Paul was an eyewitness of the resurrection of Christ, he declares it is a fact. Saul, who is called Paul from Acts chapter thirteen on, held the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death. This event kindled great persecution against the Church. "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the

Synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2).

As he journeyed to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shone upon him (Acts 9:3). This light was above the brightness of the noon day sun (Acts 26:13). He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speaking in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And [Paul] said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 26:14-15). Paul in referring to this occurrence said, "And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8).

Since Paul was an eyewitness, he could say with certainty, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-3).

Paul tells of other eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. "And he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve: After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:5-8). Paul was the last to see the Lord.

Because of the resurrection of Christ, we can have the hope of our resurrection from the grave. Paul said, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 15:53-57). — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

There is no such thing as a problem boy. He's just a boy with a problem.

When leading a public prayer, speak loudly enough to be heard of men and sincerely enough to be heard of God.

It's difficult to tell who gets the most pleasure out of marriage, the preacher who ties the knot, or the lawyer who severs it.



Words Of Tr.

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 1983

NUMBER 4

The Merideth-Hogland Debate

(No. 1)

On the nights of June 25, 26, 1982, J. Noel Merideth of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, met Ward Hogland of Booneville, Mississippi, in a religious debate. This polemic discussion was conducted at the City Auditorium in Grenada, Mississippi. W. N. Jackson of Austin, Texas, was originally scheduled to participate in this debate but illness prevented his presence and participation. Brother Merideth stepped in to take his place and with but a very short time to make preparation. He did a splendid job.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Each night contained two thirty-minute speeches by each participant. Both men pressed hard and persistently their respective positions. The decorum from the audience was excellent. Some four to five hundred were present the first night. A few less than that were present the second or final night. Interest ran high for this debate and each side presented its arguments with vim and vigor. Both sides of the issue were well represented with brethren coming from near and far.

Brother Merideth represented the brethren at Elliot, Mississippi; brother Hogland represented the Van Doren congregation in Grenada. Billy James moderated for brother Hogland; Steve Hentz and I moderated for brother Merideth. Due to the excellent decorum of both participants and audience the moderators were left with but little to do except preside, keep time and aid each debater in various arguments presented. Wendell Gann of Birmingham, Alabama, operated the overhead projector for brother Merideth. He drew the Merideth charts and was a talented and able co-worker in the preparation stages for the debate.

THE PROPOSITIONS DISCUSSED

Brother Hogland was in the affirmative the first night with brother Merideth in the negative with reverse orders for the second or final night. Brother

Hogland affirmed that "The Scriptures teach that the congregation from its treasury may not provide benevolent aid to either sinners or those who are safe." Brother Merideth denied this. The second night brother Merideth affirmed that "The Scriptures teach that the congregation from its treasury may provide benevolent aid to sinners and to the safe." Brother Hogland denied this. Throughout the debate it was very clear that both speakers were united in the fact that the individual can help saints, sinners and the safe. The very definite difference in their positions lay in the fact that brother Hogland and the congregations affiliated with him deny that the congregation can act as a collective unit and aid sinners or babies in need out of the church treasury. Brother Merideth said YES to this; Brother Hogland said NO. This was the crucial crux of the debate. As touching what the church can do collectively the momentous matter boils down to a "saints only" position in the realm of congregational benevolence. The two very bottom lines of Hogland's position are: (1) that in the rendering of benevolence to needy sinners and babies in need the Christian individual can be far, Far, FAR more generous with extended aid than can be the congregation collectively; and (2) the church collectively has to be far, Far, FAR more selfish toward sinners and little babies in need than the Christian individual is. These implications were loud and clear throughout this plain and pointed discussion.

THE HOGLAND THRUST


Brother Hogland began on the note that the Van Doren congregation practiced individual aid to sinners and babies. But the proposition said NOTHING about this aspect of benevolence. There was no difference between Elliot and Van Doren on this; there was no appreciable difference in the two debaters on this aspect of benevolent aid. The debate touched benevolence to sinners and the safe from the local church acting collectively and from its treasury.

It was apparent in the opening speech that brother Hogland had a rather novel set of definitions for the word church. He claimed the church is used in the Bible universally, *distributively* and in its worship capacity. The second was the crux of the debate from his side of the question. By *distributively* he had reference to what the church can do as *individual*

Christians. But is *each* Christian the church, the kingdom, the body, the temple, the vineyard, etc.? Is each Christian a CONGREGATION? If so, how, How, HOW??? Yet as he referred to the *ekklesia*, the Greek word from which "church" is derived, he referred to it as a COLLECTIVE noun or the called out. Yet that collective aspect will not fit at all his emphasis all the way through the debate with distributive action. Brother Merideth called his attention in his first negative to the three well defined and oft used scriptural usages of the word church, as a religious organization. They are: (1) universal as in Matthew 16:18, (2) geographical or in a localized sense as in I Corinthians 1:2, and (3) when the church assembles in a worship capacity as in I Corinthians 11:20 and 14:23.

As expected, the battlelines centered much on the two expressions of "unto them, and unto all men" in II Corinthians 9:13. Brother Hogland had trouble with pronoun usage and implications from the same throughout the debate. Brethren of that persuasion have always had this trouble since the incipency of the movement some twenty-five or thirty years ago. Look at "himself" in James 1:27 and the doctrines they have built thereupon. They do not have that trouble with "himself" in the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:28, which is obviously a church ordinance. Brother Hogland maintained that "unto them" referred to poor saints in Jerusalem and "unto all men" referred to poor saints elsewhere or outside Jerusalem. He claimed that all he needed was a King James Version to establish the truth and stood in no need of lexicons and the like. Yet he did not accept what they (the KJV translators) placed here as an italicized (an added) word. The ASV simply says "all" and does not add the word men. Brother Hogland sought to parallel a current contribution for poor Indians at Tuttle, Oklahoma, near where he was born, and unto all with the ALL made applicable ONLY to poor Indians elsewhere. He maintained that no Caucasians could or would be included in such a contribution. His attempted parallel fails to stand because the said contribution of II Corinthians 9:13 was for poor saints and all men. He used a number of

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Polygraph



BOB DUNCAN

On a recent airing of 20/20, a popular news-type television program, there was a somewhat lengthy presentation concerning the widespread use of the polygraph. This is the instrument used in what is commonly referred to as the "lie detector" test. The polygraph simultaneously records changes in such physiological processes as heartbeat, blood pressure, and respiration. Those accused of crimes may voluntarily submit to polygraph tests, but may not be forced to do so, since the reliability of the polygraph for actually detecting lies is not proven to be one hundred percent. It came as somewhat of a surprise to this writer to learn that in nearly all of the states in this country employers may require their employees to submit to a polygraph test, and refusal to submit is considered by the courts as justification for firing that employee.

thoughts." He still does. John 2:25 says that Jesus "knew what was in man." He still does. I Samuel 16:7 teaches us that "the Lord looketh on the heart." Hebrews 4:13 states: "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." One may deceive his fellow man; he may even deceive himself. But he does not deceive God.

Finally, the Bible says nothing about little white lies. It is true that believing certain lies is worse than believing other lies. A man might believe a lie concerning a matter that does not affect his eternal destiny and still serve God faithfully and go to heaven. But to believe a lie which would keep him from obeying God, or which would cause him to violate God's will, would cause him to be lost. II Thessalonians 2:11,12 is speaking about this kind of lie, i.e., the kind which one believes and is lost as a result thereof. But while believing some certain lies is not fatal, and believing certain other lies is, it is a fact that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

The Meredith-Hogland Debate

Continued From Page 1

denominational scholars to support his case on II Corinthians 9:13 and to show it was not a new or novel concept. Brother Merideth showed where Hogland would have to reject much of what these same scholars taught. The proposition did not call for supportive proof from denominational scholars but what the Sacred Scriptures taught.

It was of interest to see brother Hogland tell brother Merideth from time to time what was not in the proposition and the men (Tant, Hailey, William Wallace) he (Merideth) was not meeting in this debate. Yet again and again and again he pressed brother Merideth about the church's building gymnasiums and putting the college into the budget. But by one of the very definitions given the church by Hogland, the one he prized the most in this debate, the church can most assuredly build gymnasiums and enter the college finance question, etc. The church could do so *distributively!* Regardless of what he says it would still be the church's doing it by his own prized definition!! Brother Merideth set forth his opposition to the church's involvement in such in fine fashion. But the proposition called for a discussion of *benevolent* aid to sinners and babies — not *recreational* and *secular educational* matters.

Brother Hogland took the position that if Paul gathered this contribution to help poor saints at Jerusalem and used any of it for anyone else, that he was dishonest and stood guilty of misappropriation of funds. Yet brother Hogland appeals to I Corinthians 16:2 as authorization for receiving his pay from the church treasury, and yet that collection was for the poor saints as I Corinthians 16:1 makes plain. Hence, this really places his position in between the proverbial rock and hard place and makes precarious his appeal to this passage for his pay checks. But no longer can these brethren appeal to II Corinthians 11:8 for receiving their paychecks from the local church where they work. This was for mission work in a virgin field and came from other churches — not the one where Paul labored. Brother Hogland took a position on pronouns that are plural such as in

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A Message That Pleases

Every local church is composed of members with varying degrees of spirituality. While some are "hot" others are "cold" and "lukewarm" (Revelation 3:16).

It isn't a very easy thing for "cold" or "lukewarm" church members to hear preaching week after week that convicts the soul of sin and gnaws at the conscience. Usually, they move in one of the following five directions:



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

1. *They stop attending.* If they are not present they don't have to feel guilty.
2. *They transfer membership.* They know the new preacher will not know of their sins and they will *feel* "restored" even though they are not.
3. *They continue to attend, feeling guilty.* They have just enough religion to be miserable. Too much to quit attending and too little to repent.
5. *They continue to attend, hardened.* Like water rolling off a duck's back, the gospel goes "in one ear and out the other."
5. *They repent.* This they should do (Acts 8:22), and soon.

It isn't easy to preach, week after week, a message to please everybody. But then, again, this preacher isn't trying. — P.O. Box 242 Morris, AL. 35116.

Ministers Of Righteousness Or Ministers Of Satan?

(No. 2)

In a preceding article we noted several things concerning the claims and actions of present-day faith healers. First, we said that it is possible for those under the Devil's influence to do his bidding while posing as ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:14-15). Also, we noted that at times it was not known to that individual (II Corinthians 4:4).

We discovered that claiming the ability to perform the miraculous and attributing it to the power of God, even if one was an imposter, was done in the first century. Simon, the sorcerer, tried the same scam (Acts 8:9,10). We noted that today's so-called miracle workers fail to demonstrate any ability to perform miracles. Their failure is often attributed to unbelief on the part of the ill. Some have been challenged to perform a negative miracle as did Paul. He struck an unbeliever blind as he sought to withstand him (Acts 13:6-12). But this writer and others who withstand today's imposters still retain the gift of sight.

Now let us understand why there is a lack of performance among the twentieth century miracle workers. Their failure is evident because the means of obtaining the power they claim has ceased. The only two cases mentioned in the New Testament where miracles were manifested apart from the laying on of hands of the apostles of Christ, were the apostles themselves on Pentecost, and the household of Cornelius. The apostles were baptized in the Spirit by Christ directly from heaven. Such was the case of the household of Cornelius (Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4; 10:44-48).

The Bible tells us that these cases resulted for specific purposes. The baptism of the apostles in the Spirit was to equip them to confirm the words which they spake (Mark 16:14-20). The baptism of Cornelius in the Spirit was to prove to the world that the Gentiles were to receive the gospel without being bound by the law of Moses. Peter expressly said that it was God's way of bearing witness that they were to be saved by the gospel (Acts 15:7-9). All other cases of the dispensing or reception of the ability to perform miracles (i.e. miraculous gifts) was through the



MIKE BARRETT

laying on of hands of the apostles of Jesus Christ!

Paul laid hands on certain disciples in Ephesus and they spoke in different languages (Acts 19:1-6). He stated that he wanted to see the Roman brethren and confer some gifts upon them (Romans 1:1). Even Timothy received the gift by the laying on of Paul's hands (II Timothy 1:6).

Finally, we state that the purposes of having this ability have ceased. Who can show that the ability to perform the miraculous today is for different purposes than in the New Testament? The two purposes of the miraculous were: (1) to start things (Acts 2:1-4); and, (2) to reveal and confirm the truth (Mark 16:14-20).

If we must have the truth re-confirmed and re-revealed does that not say that the Bible is not complete? Does not such a doctrine teach that God has not said all that he's going to say? But, the Bible

itself teaches the completeness of the scripture (Jude 3; II Peter 1:3).

Holy Writ tells us that the ability to perform miracles would cease when its purpose for existence had ceased. In I Corinthians 13:8-13 Paul states that the time will come when miracles and other such gifts would no longer be necessary. Their existence was temporary until that which was in part, the will of God revealed to man through the writing of the scriptures, was complete. According to II Peter 1:3 and Jude 3 it is complete. James refers to it as the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25).

Let those who have been misled by these false teachers come out of darkness into the light. We have tried these individuals and found them to be liars (Revelation 2:1,2). Let us take up the sword of the spirit and do battle with these ministers of the Devil! — P.O. Box 1651, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132.

The Meredith-Hogland Debate

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Galatians 6:10 that they call for individual offerings — not collective ones. But this gets him into deep trouble with Philippians 4:14-16 for FIVE times Paul says "ye" therein. That would then make individual offerings to Paul and not something the collective church did. This argument really recoiled on him. Full implications of their premises will sooner or later hit them where it really hurts — their own pocketbooks or billfolds. Errorists usually are not willing to accept the full implications of their premises when fully carried out.

I was not present for the second night, being able to be there only for one night. But I have listened with great care to the Saturday night tapes and heard the two Hogland speeches in person on Friday night. I have listened with care to the Friday night tapes also before beginning this two-part review. I gain the distinct impression that the church collectively and the congregational treasury are synonymous terms to

brother Hogland and those who see eye to eye with him on these momentous matters. This is totally too narrow a view of the church as a collective unit in local and worshipful action. Brother Hogland seems utterly unable to view the church in a local or geographical sense unless somehow it is linked with the church treasury. This has been one of the chief reasons for the divisions prompted by this entire movement. A serious and inexcusable perversion of the church treasury has become the golden calf of this entire movement. I have felt this to be true since first studying their position back in the 1950's when it first began to emerge into prominence among us.

The second and final part of this review will set forth the Merideth thrust and call attention to twenty-three very, very serious implications and consequences of the Hogland position of the "saints only" position in benevolence to sinners and the safe. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The Forgotten Bride

ANCIL JENKINS

Our weddings place great emphasis on the bride and somewhat less on the groom. The newspaper tells us of every aspect of the bride's dress. The groom is not forgotten—but in our weddings the emphasis is on the bride.

Concerning God's spiritual family, the church, many are doing the exact opposite. They give great stress to Christ, the bridegroom and almost forget or greatly neglect the bride, the church. This is not only unbiblical, it is dangerous to our salvation and relationship with God.

We cannot dismiss any cleavage between the Christ and his church. They must be united in

Continued on page 4

Is It Really Christ Versus Moses?

(No. 1)

It would appear that those who think Moses is refuted by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount would be thoroughly answered by the time they arrive at Matthew 5:43-48. If not, this passage is the death knell to their theory. Our thesis is: Jesus is not refuting Moses in Matthew 5:20-48 but the Pharisaical and Rabbinical misapplications of Moses.

The basic thought for the remainder of the chapter is set forth at 5:20: "For I say unto you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (New King James). Nowhere after this does Jesus say he is quoting from Moses, only that "they had heard it was said" (vv. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) to which often some tidbit of rabbinical theory is added. V 21 adds "and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment," which Moses



MARTEL PACE

never added (since this meant only a local elders' judgment or synagogue condemnation).

What The Scribes Taught?

Verse 43 strongly indicates Jesus is not quoting directly from Moses by saying, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." Did Moses teach the latter? He did not! Two errors were committed by the Scribes: (1) that *neighbor* was limited to one's close relatives, those living in near affinity, or those of one's own party, and (2) that one was justified in having his neighbor.

"Neighbor" was used by Moses to include Egyptians (Ex. 11:2). And even the "stranger" visiting was to be "loved as thyself" (Lev. 19:33-34). One's neighbor was to be loved as oneself (Lev. 19:18). In the light of this lofty teaching by Moses it is strange that today we hear good brethren arguing "Jesus is refuting Moses."

"But David Hated His Enemies"

"But did not David say he hated his enemies as God hated them?" This idea is stated explicitly by David at Psalm 139:21-22. Some were inveterate enemies against God, and David hated them. However, God always stood ready to forgive the penitent, as David likewise did. For instance, see his refusal to injure Saul when he had him in his grasp, though he had

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Is It Really Christ Versus Moses?

Continued from page 3

become both David's and God's enemy (I Sam. 24). God's hatred is not of the same nature as ours, in that he always loves his most hated enemy enough to forgive at any sign of penitence. David was similar in his hatred; therefore, this hatred must have been more of a hatred of deeds than of persons.

Further, the Old Testament taught one was not to rejoice when "thine enemy falleth" (Prov. 24:17-18), and to feed and water an enemy when he was hungry or thirsty (Prov. 25:21). There is no basis then for arguing that Moses or the Old Testament justified personal vindictiveness toward one's enemy. However, the Jews of the first century taught and practiced this. Tacitus said, "They readily show compassion to their own countrymen, but they bear to all others the hatred of an enemy." This is what Jesus was refusing, not Moses.

Why Christ Is Rejected

The section of Matthew 5:43-48 may be the best known statement of Christianity by Jews and infidels. It is certainly viewed by most as unrealistic and impractical. "Love your enemies" is impossible; it would require changing my whole entire nature and

that of all mankind!" Perhaps so, and that is exactly what Jesus proposes to do. This one teaching by Jesus may be the cause of more rejection of him by the ignorant masses than any other single thing. This, along with "Be ye perfect," seems absurd to them.

However, in our time another wicked fruit is causing (though unwittingly) a rejection of this teaching of Jesus as applicable to us. Our Premillennial friends, though not stressing this aspect of their teaching, reject the Sermon on the Mount for us! You see, Jesus gave this teaching while he was still promising the Kingdom! But according to them, he later postponed the kingdom. Consequently, "Kingdom teaching" is not for today, but for the coming millennium. Thus, an acceptance of the Premillennial theory requires a rejection of the whole Sermon on the Mount, and particularly the part on "Love thine enemy." Who can believe it? Arthur Pink was right: "Never has the Devil succeeded in palming off for the truth a more soul-destroying lie than this!" (p. 137). By their fruit we know them.

But Even Paul Wasn't Perfect!

How can Jesus demand perfection of us when even

Paul said he was not perfect (Phil. 3:12)? "This is discouraging; nobody can live that way. It sounds ridiculous!" Our problem is in understanding the meaning of "perfect." The word *teleios* referred to an animal without spot; it was perfect. A full grown man, even an acne-faced teenager, might be perfect. Perfect has no reference to sinless perfection. The Greek idea was that a thing was perfect if it fully fit the purpose for which it was designed. A man is perfect, in this sense, who realizes the purpose for which he was designed, and fulfills it.

God is completely fair in his sending sunshine and rain on all - that is perfection. He is willing to accept Jew and Gentile - that is perfection. This requirement is not discouraging, but most encouraging, for it tells us we can be like God! In this way we may become distinctive. If we salute only our friends, "What is special about that?" (Moffatt). The Christian is indeed special, for he has come to know the love of God and is thus enabled to return good for evil, to turn the other cheek, give to the needy and to go the second mile. — 3414 Elaine Dr., Montgomery, AL 36109

I Owe The Church

We each owe our family so much for their constant love and support they so unselfishly provide. Likewise, there is a great deal we owe our spiritual family. When I obeyed the gospel, the Lord added me to his church, thus placing me under an obligation to the church in every locality. But I am especially obligated to my home congregation. This is true by virtue of my membership therein. We owe something to

the local congregation because of the blessings we receive from being a member. But what are you doing to pay that debt? What are you doing to grow personally and help the congregation grow? The late President John Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." We might say, "Ask not what your congregation can do for you. Ask what you can do for your congregation."

We owe it to our congregation to support its leadership. No organization can rise above its leadership and no organization can survive when its members are unwilling to follow its leadership. Can you imagine the chaos if all the soldiers were to forsake the commander on the field of battle? We must learn to work under and with our elders. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account" (Hebrews 13:17). You can make or break your elders. We need to realize the great burdens they are under and pray for them. Great leaders are made by great followers, and thus the more willing we are to follow, the better they will be as leaders.

We owe it to our congregation to attend every service. The very existence of the congregation depends upon the attendance of its members. If it is right for me willingly to absent myself from the services, it is right for all to do so. But if all did so, there would be no service. Each time I deliberately



RONNIE LOWE

forsake a service I cast a vote to discontinue that service. To absent myself from the services is to be guilty of deliberate, premeditated sin (Hebrews 10:25,26). The church needs my presence and I need what that presence provides.

Likewise, we owe it to our congregation to provide financial support. The church has regular obligations and expenses just as I do, and thus there must be regular income. Most all of us would find ourselves in a bind if we missed a single pay check, and the church is no different. But as I give, I not only do so for the good of the congregation, but for my good as well. For by thus giving I increase my account in heaven (Philippians 4:17). I also receive those blessings God bestows upon the cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:6-8). Remember, the church can't pay if I won't give!

Also, we owe it to the local congregation to be dependable. We all like things that are dependable - what one can count on. Can the congregation count on you to carry out its programs? Can you be counted on to support its leaders, attend every service,

contribute each week, live a good life and work without complaining or offering all sorts of excuses?

My home congregation has a great program of work. It is so big in fact, that it cannot be done by a mere handful of its members. Yet it is estimated that 95 percent of the work of the average congregation is carried out by 5 percent of its members. We have no right to expect others to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves. We have much at stake (the future of my soul, this congregation and the church as a whole), and we must therefore take care of our business - the Lord's business. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, Texas 76470.

Voice Of Freedom Breakfast Set For F-HC Lectures

ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

For about fifteen years we have had a VOICE OF FREEDOM Breakfast annually at the Freed-Hardeman College Lectureship each February. The 1983 breakfast will be Wednesday morning, February 9 at 6:30 a.m. in Gano Dining Hall on the F-HC campus. Brother Flavil Nichols, able and faithful preacher of the gospel at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and long time Associate Editor of WORDS OF TRUTH, will be our featured speaker. Brother Nichols has attended faithfully nearly all these breakfasts across the years and is deeply interested in the pioneering work that VOICE OF FREEDOM is doing.

If you plan to attend the F-HC Lectures, consider this as your very special invitation to be present for our breakfast. Preachers, elders, deacons, Bible teachers and all Christian men and all Christian women are welcome. We especially would like to urge young preachers studying at F-HC to attend. This is a class of potential attenders we have never been able to reach beyond a very, very few. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The Forgotten Bride

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doctrine and purpose.

We must understand the need for faithfulness on the part of the church. The church must have the same mission and outreach that Jesus has.

The love that Christ gives the church must be returned to him. We cannot practice wrong and love right!

We must not attempt to divorce Christ and his bride. To minimize the importance of the Lord's church while claiming allegiance to Christ is impossible. The same actions that put one into Christ, put one into his church.

In his great marriage, let us never make the mistake of forgetting the beauty and place of his bride. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

26:25

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Is It Really Christ Versus Moses?

(No. 2)

All too often Christianity is rejected because of a misunderstanding of terms rather than because of the real teaching of Jesus. This was indicated in a previous article regarding "perfect" (Matt. 5:48); our misunderstanding of the meaning of the original term created confusion and a rejection of Jesus.

God's fairness in sending rain on evil and good and allowing his sun to shine on the just and unjust was an indication of his perfection (Matt. 5:45). God is eminently fair; man is not, and is therefore imperfect. If we are similarly fair in greeting all, and not just our friends, we would be perfect in that regard as well.

But We Can't Love Our Enemies!

"But God asks too much in requiring that we love our enemies. How can we possibly feel towards them as we do our families? God has demanded the impossible of us." We can be thankful God chose the Greek language in which to express his truth. It has shades of meaning that English is lacking. It had four different words for love and understanding. This will enable us to see a little easier how we can love an enemy.

The word *storge* was family love, a child for a parent and parent for a child. There was *eros*, which is nowhere found on the pages of the New Testament. It originally had no evil connotation, but referred to sexual or passionate love. With the passing of time it came to include the thought of lust rather than pure love, and may be the reason it is not used for love in the New Testament. There is *philia*, which was the warmest word describing real affection for one's closest friends. It could even mean to fondle or kiss.

Finally, there was *agape*. It was more than love, for it included an unbounded spirit of goodwill with a



MARTEL PACE

strong desire to practice benevolence. No slander or abuse by an enemy could conquer this "invincible goodwill." With this in our hearts we do not allow bitterness to reside in us. It is evident from a proper understanding of this word that Jesus never expected us to love our enemies in the same fashion we love our wives or children. Jesus never demanded the impossible, and that would be impossible. That might not even be right.

The Motivation For This Love

But how can we love our enemies in this sense? Jesus never gave a command without the proper motivation for it. "We love because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). When we come to know the love (*agape*) of God for us and respond to it, we can begin to see all things differently. We then see our own unworthy position, lost and undone, guilt-ridden and sin-stained. Seeing our damned position and understanding how the love of God has saved us we can look with a different eye toward all men, friend and foe. We see ourselves as existing by the mercy of God, that we are just pilgrims here, that we have a "Father" and not merely a God to whom we pray as do others. He is a loving Father. Incidentally, Jesus only addressed him as "God" in prayer when he felt rejected and alone!

What Is Special About You?

Jesus asked, "If you only respond like everyone else, what is so special about you?" (Matt. 5:47). He didn't ask if we are living a moral life; many atheists do that. He didn't ask if we believe in God; many Jews do that. There is to be a recognizable similarity between us and God for us to be children of the Father. No wonder men will give honor to the Father when they see our good works (Matt. 5:16); they recognize the Father in and through us.

Purpose of The Sermon On The Mount

We are humbled by the lofty requirements of this Sermon. Perhaps that was part of the purpose Jesus intended. Nothing is more needed than the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount to help us see our sin and our need for the kind of perfection demanded. Surely the first hearers were driven to humility by it, thus mourned for their sins (Matt. 5:4), and came to have the righteousness for which they

hungered (5:6).

Preaching The Sermon On the Mount

When we preach through this Sermon, as we must if we are to establish in our hearts the real spirit of Christianity, let us not forget the continuation of God's moral requirement in both Old and New Covenants. Remember that Jesus was not refuting Moses, but the misapplication of Moses by the Pharisees. Therefore, when we preach the offer of salvation through faith we are not abrogating God's requirements under law. "On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31, NKJB). Jesus must have meant something like this in "fulfilling the law" (Matt. 5:17-18).

We preach a watered-down and weakened Gospel by implying God's basic moral requirements are no longer law! Paul declared that those who recognize God's law will have "every mouth . . . stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). Is this not our purpose as well — to convince the whole world that it is condemned by God's law? Salvation is by grace through obedient faith, but men seldom seek this until they are convinced of sin by law. — 3414 Elaine Montgomery, AL 36109.


The Wrecking Crew

RICK RICKARD

While driving through town yesterday, I had the opportunity of watching a wrecking crew tearing down an old building. It wasn't a very large building, so the only machinery that was required to do the job was a bulldozer. I watched with interest as it virtually chewed up the cinderblock walls with its enormous steel jaws. Before long, all that remained was a dusty pile of rubble.

You may be thinking that seeing a wrecking crew at

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

— Acts 26:25

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The Wrecking Crew

Continued from page 1

work isn't an uncommon thing these days. If so, you'll be surprised when I tell you of the delight their labors brought me. Delight? Indeed! Why? Because that heap of rubble on the ground had been a bar.

As I watched those men demolish that bar, I realized that this was a most fitting end — fitting because of all the destruction that had taken place within its walls. I thought of the families that had been wrecked by the alcohol served there. I envisioned the children whose lives it had helped destroy, the wives who had been beaten or deserted by drunken husbands, the traffic accidents that had begun there, and those who took their first drink inside. Human lives ruined by strong drink — some forever!

Almost every day one can find something about the Nazi concentration camps of World War II on television or in the newspaper. Members of my own family have told me of the chilling experience of visiting those death camps and seeing the places where millions of innocent men, women, and even children were brutally slaughtered. Buildings with an infamous history. Walls cursed forever by the cruel activities they once sheltered. Thank God they are empty! Thank God that, except those preserved as grim reminders, they are gone every one!

So, there I sat in my car, watching the faded yellow bulldozer methodically charge and retreat, each time leaving less and less of that old building. Though we were thousands of miles from Western Europe and Auschwitz, I somehow felt that the bar was very much like its cousin, the concentration camp. Its history was also infamous. Its walls had been a haven for a multitude of sins and heartaches. Its arms had enfolded and squeezed the life from fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons, and daughters. Its destruction on that cold January afternoon was welcome. Thank God it is empty! Thank God it is gone!

God give us more wrecking crews! — 4207 Adamsville Parkway Adamsville, AL 35005.

A person's most fervent prayers are not said when he is on his knees, but when he is flat on his back.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

“Why Is The House Of God Forsaken?”

After twelve years as governor of the Jews in Jerusalem, Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, under whose authority Nehemiah had gone to Jerusalem and by whose help the walls of the city had been rebuilt. When some time had passed, Nehemiah went again to Jerusalem, and found cause to raise the question: “Why is the house of God forsaken?” (Nehemiah 13:11). It doesn't take long, when one reads the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah, to find the answer to this question. Actually the house of God was forsaken for more reasons than one, several of which are clearly mentioned in this chapter.



BOB DUNCAN

The house of God was forsaken because the law of God had been forsaken. The people discovered in the law of God some things they had never known were there concerning the matter of who should come into the congregation (Nehemiah 13:1-3). It was obvious they had not been doing right by this commandment. People cannot do right unless they know what is right; and people cannot possibly know what is right if they neglect to read and study God's word, which is the standard of right and wrong. How sad it is in our own time when people find they have been guilty of grievous sins simply because they neglected the study of the Bible, and did not learn what is right and what is wrong. It is especially sad to find people who learn God's law concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage only after they have violated it to the extent they will never bring themselves to repent. One reason the house of God is forsaken today is because the law of God is forsaken.

The house of God was forsaken because material things took precedence over spiritual things. It was “business as usual” on the sabbath day, as the people went about their work, not respecting God's instruction to them not to do any work on the sabbath day (Exodus 20:10). The spiritual had given way to the fleshly. Material considerations had crowded out the genuine practice of the religion of God. It was a problem of not having their priorities properly arranged — the same problem which so often besets the church in our day. Jesus knew something about the problem of priorities, and so he said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). When members of the church allow material things to take precedence over spiritual things, the house of God is forsaken.

The house of God was forsaken because the support of the Levites had been neglected. God's plan was that the Levites were to be supported by the tithes of the other twelve tribes, and from this, they were also to pay tithes (Nehemiah 10:37,38). This arrangement, if followed faithfully, would guarantee that “we will not forsake the house of our God” (verse 39). But the plan failed because the Levites had not been given their portions (Nehemiah 13:10), and they had been forced to leave their work about the house of God

and go into their fields. One reason, no doubt, that some who formerly spent full time in preaching the gospel now have forsaken that work to make a living in some other vocation is that their support was neglected and they and their families had to suffer financial hardships. There is not a man preaching who is not willing to make sacrifices in order to do so. But there is absolutely no excuse for the fact that so many preachers and their families are suffering unnecessarily while working with churches which are well able to take better care of them. We are told that the number of full time gospel preachers is being reduced at the rate of about one hundred per year. In other words, we are losing about one hundred more gospel preachers each year than we are producing. I would hate to be those Jews in Nehemiah's day who failed to see that the Levites received their portions. And in the day of judgment, I would hate to be those who allowed faithful gospel preachers and their families to suffer financial difficulties needlessly. The importance we attach to the gospel may be measured by the way we support those who give their lives in preaching it. When members of the church neglect the support of those who preach the gospel of Christ, the house of God is forsaken.

The house of God was forsaken because of a compromising spirit. The high priest had actually made an alliance with Tobiah, one of the ones who had been doing everything within his power to defeat the work of the Jews in rebuilding the walls of the city. Tobiah was occupying a chamber provided for him by the high priest in the house of God. Certain of the vessels had been moved out to make room for this ungodly blasphemer. Can you imagine such? With that kind of an attitude toward the workers of evil on the part of the high priest, it is no wonder that the house of God was forsaken. The spirit of compromise pervades the thinking of so many church members. A compromising attitude is what causes members of the church to defend social drinking, go to the dances, wear immodest apparel, and cringe when a gospel preacher speaks plainly against any of these or against religious error. Unfortunately, a compromising spirit controls many preachers, many elderships, and many congregations. When the spirit of compromise takes charge, the house of God is forsaken.

It needs to be recognized that large crowds do not necessarily indicate that the house of God is not forsaken. It may be forsaken by God. Such was the case in Revelation 3:14-22. The church of the Laodiceans boasted: “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” But the truth is that the Lord was standing on the outside, knocking at the door, wanting to get in. The house of God had been forsaken by God, because the people had forsaken the right way.

There's justice for all, but it doesn't seem to be equally distributed.

A man is truly poor, not when he has nothing, but when he does nothing.

One of the problems of a delinquent is children running away from home. It is entirely possible they may be going for their parents.

The Merideth-Hogland Debate

(No. 2)

In the initial article we gave some of the particulars relative to the debate, the propositions discussed and the Hogland thrust. In the second and final of this two-part review we wish to take primary note of the Merideth thrust and especially the consequences of the Hogland position of "saints only" in congregational benevolence. Before taking up with these two main items, a few things



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

concerning the questions that were asked by each participant. Each participant was permitted to ask three questions of the other each of the two nights. Brother Hogland seemingly felt he had gained some ground of victory in getting brother Merideth to acknowledge that some type of limitation had to be recognized and practiced in congregational benevolence relative to people who would not work, or in supporting false teachers. We have NEVER taught unlimited congregational benevolence. Brother Merideth pointed out that congregations have to limit their benevolence just as individuals do in giving. This posed no more of a problem for the Merideth position in this debate than it did for the Hogland position. Early in the debate brother Merideth asked if brother Hogland would allow a sinner working at the church building on Monday morning to drink from the water cooler which was bought with money from the church treasury. Brother Hogland said he would. This would be a form of congregational benevolence, unless one contends that this would be evangelistic in scope, and is extended to a sinner. He gave up his proposition right there and then!! Brother Merideth asked if he would allow a baby to starve before he would take money out of the church treasury and feed it. Brother Hogland answered, "No, I would not." Then he quickly suggested that he would take money out of his own pocket and feed the child to keep it from starving. But that is not what the question asked. The question did not touch individual benevolence, but would he let that child starve before he would "dip his hand into the church treasury" (one of his favorite expressions throughout the debate). Brother Hogland did not like some of the Merideth questions, but they hit the issue quickly on the head and he felt their impact with a show of force.

It can be said to the credit of both men that they did give answers to the questions of each other and did call for each other's charts which is not always the case in debates.

In dealing with the critical and crucial passage of II Corinthians 9:13, brother Merideth showed clearly and forcefully that "unto them" referred to poor Christians and "unto all men" had to include sinners and children in need as well as poor saints elsewhere. He reinforced it with similar constructions elsewhere in the Bible. In Acts 5:11 just subsequent to the Ananias and Sapphira incident of conspiracy Luke relates, "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." The latter includes more than the former. In I Thessalonians 3:12 Paul wrote, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." This is of similar construction. Is Paul telling the Thessalonians here that they may only abound in love toward saints and *saints* (redundancy here according to the Hogland position), and not unto all men? Another similar construction is found in this Pauline declaration:

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men" (I Thess. 5:15). It is obvious that "all men" here is inclusive of more than just saints, just as it is obvious that "all men" in both Galatians 6:10 and II Corinthians 9:13 is inclusive of more than just saints, the entirely new and novel position from our anti-brethren to the contrary notwithstanding!! Brother Merideth's appeal was not to denominational scholars or even men in the Restoration Movement. He showed from a statement by Justin Martyr (a second century religious leader) that the church very near apostolic times did help its own and all men as opportunity permitted. But Justin and the second century church were not his authority. He showed where Paul and the Gentile Christians gave to help poor saints and all men. Brother Hogland seemingly had a chronological problem with II Corinthians 9. He seemed to think Paul had already delivered the contribution when he wrote II Corinthians 9:13, and Paul was telling the Corinthians of its generous reception. But Paul in these two chapters (II Corinthians 8 and 9), was seeking to motivate the Corinthian church to give and give generously, even as the marvelous Macedonians had. He told them even before they finished giving that the contribution was FOR the saints and FOR all men. There was no Pauline deception in this momentous matter of congregational benevolence to help saints and others in need.

One of the most effective Merideth charts dealt with The Totality of the Judaeian contribution. Brother Merideth established and exhibited how we take *all* the Bible says on any given point such as the rich young ruler, how to become a Christian, etc., to ascertain truth. He showed how Paul said it was for poor saints, for all men, and then threw a bombshell at Hogland's position. In Acts 24:17 Paul told Governor Felix he came to bring ALMS to his NATION. Nation here is *ethnos* and was that over which Felix was governor in Acts 24:2 and judge in Acts 24:10. With stunning force, and a noticeable shock to the Hogland position, brother Merideth asked if Felix ruled only over poor saints in Jerusalem!! Of the dozen times *ethnos* appears in Acts it NEVER refers to just poor saints in Jerusalem. How did the Roman Governor understand it? Did it not occur to him that a man who could command such vast almsgiving for his nation would surely be in position to buy his liberty which the context shows was in Felix's evil mind? If Felix had understood that NONE of that money could go to any except a poor saint, the temptation to work for a bribe from Paul would surely have NEVER entered his mind. He would have known such to be futile.

Hogland and his brethren have accused us of being the ones who changed, of being digressive and liberals, and of apostasy in these matters which have needlessly divided and splintered us for nearly thirty years. Brother Merideth produced a quote from brother Homer Hailey in GOSPEL GUARDIAN in 1949 commending strongly the work done by Brother G. K. Wallace and the Wichita area congregations in caring for orphans at Maude Carpenter's Orphan Home. The Hailey article was enthusiastically endorsed by Guardian Editor Yater Tant. With force Brother Merideth asked, "Were Hailey and Tant liberals and digressives in 1949?" Brother Hogland was asked where he stood in 1949. All of us know where he and these men stood then and they are not NOW standing where they stood then!! Brother Hogland said they had learned some things since then. I began preaching that year of 1949 and WE ALL occupied common ground then. In fact, one of the very first books I purchased after beginning to preach was the HOGLAND-KESNER DEBATE. I feel perfectly safe in saying brother Hogland and I would have had NO differences along these lines back

then relative to congregational help of babies in need. Brother Hailey surely saw nothing wrong in such good works then. It was aware to every discerning mind in the audience as touching the real ones who had changed. They need to give up the charge that we are the ones who have changed. My first sermon was for a congregation that helped needy sinners and our orphan homes; I still preach for a congregation thirty-three years later that does the same. NOW WHO HAS REALLY CHANGED??

Another effective Merideth chart had Paul's carrying the Gentile contribution to Jerusalem with a sack of money in each hand. He comes across a man half dead between Caesarea and Jerusalem. The man is not a Christian. This is all the money Paul has. By Hogland's position Paul could not be a Good Samaritan and give this dying man help out of that contribution. Yet it was taken up for poor saints (of which he WAS NOT one) and for all men (of which he WAS ONE). This is the "saints only" position in calloused and cruel colors.

One of the most effective Merideth arguments was the listing of twenty-three consequences of the Hogland position. Numbered and noted they are:

(1) Hogland's position makes Dead Sea churches; they are always receiving but never giving, i.e., to sinners and babies.

(2) Hogland's position makes Pharisaic churches; they make void God's law; they have made laws where God made none.

(3) Hogland's position does not allow the church to follow the steps of Jesus who did good to all men; this the church cannot do collectively or out of its treasury.

(4) Hogland's position loves its own but does not allow the church to love the people of the world.

(5) Hogland's position will allow the church to receive \$20 from a sinner in the contribution plate, but if that man walked out of the assembly and was hit by a car in front of the building, he could not be helped a penny out of the church treasury.

(6) Hogland's position robs God of receiving glory through the church by helping those not its own and of allowing its light to shine before men (Eph. 3:21; Matt. 5:16).

(7) Hogland's position would say to the poor and destitute of this town to be warmed and filled, but not out of the church treasury.

(8) Hogland's position would say the church could preach to a hungry man but could not feed him out of the church treasury.

(9) Hogland's position by implication says that if a tornado strikes this town, the church could not feed, clothe or provide shelter to needy sinners.

(10) Hogland's position is that we have apostatized, but he is the one who has done that.

(11) Hogland's position is that if both parents were killed and children survived, that every church in town could help them except the church that follows his position.

(12) Hogland's position would not allow the church to do good unto all men as Paul commanded the Galatian churches to do (Gal. 1:2; 6:10).

(13) Hogland's position would not allow the church to practice pure and undefiled religion as inculcated in James 1:27.

(14) Hogland's position would not allow the contribution to go to saints and to all men as taught in II Corinthians 9:13.

(15) Hogland's position would not let the church remember the poor as taught in Galatians 2:10.

(16) Hogland's position will not allow the church to remember the poor always, as commanded and approved by Christ in Mark 14:7.

(17) Hogland's position keeps the church from doing the good works to which it was created in

The Merideth-Hogland Debate

Continued from page 3

Ephesians 2:10.

(18) Hogland's position would have the church render evil for evil contrary to I Thessalonians 5:15.

(19) Hogland's position will not allow the church to abound in love toward all men as taught in I Thessalonians 3:12.

(20) Hogland's position would have the church love in word but not in deed those who are safe and sinners (I John 3:16ff).

(21) Hogland's position would make fleshly Israel superior to Spiritual Israel or God's glorious church in benevolence, in that the former could help strangers collectively and the latter cannot.

(22) Hogland's position says we may hold forth the word of life but may not extend an outreach hand to strangers as could be done under the law of Moses.

(23) Hogland's position would not allow the church to use its building as a bomb shelter in a time of national emergency, in case of an atomic war, for either sinners or babies and little children.

Throughout these twenty-three points Brother Merideth uses the church in its true Biblical sense and what it may and must do in its local functions.

These are the results of the "saints only" position in congregational or collective benevolence. Their premises accepted years and years ago have now

driven them to a position that possibly not even they dreamed would be an end result.

Brother Merideth did a remarkably fine job. The truth is safe in his able hands. He knows the English Bible; he knows the Greek New Testament; he knows English grammar. He knows logic and how to wield it effectively for support of truth and for the unmasking of sophistry and fallacy. When brethren need an able defender of the faith, Noel Merideth can be given the task with total confidence. He is one of our very best and ablest of preachers, editors, writers and debaters. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Adverse Effects Of Divorce Upon Children

The rapid increase in the divorce rate is staggering, appalling, and over-whelming. There is a definite lack of love and commitment among so many couples in their marriage relationship. One of the most common "reasons" given is that it will be better for the children. In fact, a young mother related to me on one occasion that since she and her husband were always fussing that it would be better for the children if she obtained a divorce. Is this argument valid? Do children fare better when parents divorce?



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

In the periodical, *Christianity Today*, Volume 26, Number 18 of November 12, 1982, there appeared a very interesting article on this very subject about the effects of divorce on children. This study was done by Judith Wallerstein, a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, and operator of the Center for the Family in Transition in nearby Corte Madera. "The Children of Divorce project, begun in northern California in 1971, studied 60 divorced families spanning a variety of racial and economic backgrounds. The 131 children involved were from 3 to 18 years of age." The main thrust of the study was to investigate the effects that divorce had had on these children after a period of ten years.

"Many of the children — 37 percent — were found to be 'consciously and intensely unhappy and dissatisfied' with their life in the post-divorce family." Many of them were "intensely lonely" and complained of coming home after school to an empty house. Divorced parents' readjustment to single life often made them feel left out. Even in remarried families, children felt abandoned or shunned by the newly married couple, whose main concern often seemed to be privacy.

The study also revealed that older children manifested strong anger, specially toward the father. Some even refused to have contact with their fathers.

"Thirty-four percent of the children, a group representing both sexes and all ages, were found to be psychologically resilient and coping well with their changed life. However, even among this group, many of them still felt lonely, unhappy, or sorrowful about what had happened. They harbored vivid, detailed memories of the breakup even after 10 years."

"In almost all cases, the first news of the divorce came as a shock, with the children neither seeing it as a solution to their problems nor experiencing feelings of relief. They considered their situation to be no worse than that of anyone else and would have been

content to carry on."

The emptiness experienced by these children could not be filled by friends nor grandparents. The study showed that occasional visits by the father did help but offered very little in "fully addressing the complex tasks of growing up."

The Children of Divorce project founded by Judith Wallerstein brought out the observation that the "brother-sister relationship among divorced families continued to be strong. The enduring ties Wallerstein describes as almost constituting a kind of subfamily."

A positive effect divorce had on the older children interviewed was that they wanted to avoid divorce in their own marriages. However, in their twisted values, many expressed a desire in delaying of marriage while living together and bearing children out of the marriage relationship.

"Concerning the causes of divorce, Wallerstein believes that in most cases, 'there was never really a marriage.' Where true intimacy and oneness were lacking, the marriage was unable to bear the stresses of life — children, deaths in the family, change, and economic woes. Wallerstein acknowledges that many people have been "carried away" in equating eroticism with happiness in recent years. A number of husbands in the project had been having extra-marital affairs."

There might be isolated cases wherein children would fare better if there was a divorce; however, this

would be an exception and not the rule. God has a place in the home for both parents. The cold hard fact is that people are not interested in God's plan as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. An endangered species in our society presently is the husband/father image in the home. Recently, it was reported in Montgomery (Alabama) County, sixty percent of all the school children were from one-parent homes. That percentage is probably representative of our nation as a whole. This apparent change in the family makeup is not for the good of our communities, but rather is detrimental.

God, who established the home, has also designed the relationships and functions of its members. The father is to be the head of the family and the supplier of its physical needs (Ephesians 5:22-33; I Timothy 5:8). He has the primary responsibility of directing his family in spiritual matters (Ephesians 6:4). The mother has the wonderful privilege of being the homemaker, providing counsel and love to her children (Titus 2:4,5). Together the father and mother can rear their children in the way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6). This gives emotional and spiritual stability to their off-spring. When there is a failure in this plan of God, adverse consequences will follow. This is what we are witnessing today in our modern society. In fact, we have only begun to learn of the adverse effects that divorce is having upon the children. — 115 Sheila Blvd. Prattville, AL 36067.

Food For Thought

DALTON KEY

Life is strange. Now that comes as no surprise to you. You have known all along that life is not always consistent. So long as we live among people, so long as we remain in this earthly sphere, there will be unfairness. God never has promised to transform earth into heaven. Imperfections, flaws, and faults will remain with us as long as the flesh remains with us.

This may explain certain of our failings, but this does not excuse them. If we somehow could look down upon ourselves from without and above ourselves, what a sight we would behold!

For instance, we are generally kindest to those we scarcely know and cruelest to those we supposedly love most dearly. We will smile, tip the hat, and extend a cheerful hello to any stranger we happen to see on the street. And that is as it should be. Peter encourages us to "be courteous" (I Peter 3:8). And Paul advises, "Be ye kind" (Ephesians 4:32). And yet while kind to strangers and courteous to passing acquaintances, we are all too often unkind and discourteous to those closest to us. Our friends, our family, our children, our parents, our husbands or wives often bear the brunt of harsh words which we

would not think of using before strangers. Because we are so close to the problem, we seldom see it. Oh, yes, we see it in others, but not in ourselves.

And this is not all. It seems the closer to home a thing is, the more we take it for granted and the less we appreciate it. As Jesus observed, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house" (Matthew 13:57). We will compliment other wives, other husbands, other children, other leaders, other preachers, other teachers, but not our own! The grass always appears greener somewhere — anywhere — else. We brag on a stranger while cruelly ignoring the wonderful attributes of those closest to us. The strange thing is, others, outside our circle, look within our circle and marvel at the wonders within it. Yet these "others," like us, fail to see the wonders in their own backyard.

I told you life was strange. — Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

It's too bad that the only men who can solve the world's problems are too busy sitting on the front porch whittling.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble
the Words of Truth and soberne.

forth

ts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1983

NUMBER 6

The Grace Of Giving

JOHNNY RAMSEY

In II Kings 12:4 we find a little-known but tremendously effective verse on the subject of giving unto God's great cause. It is a verse that does violence to an erroneous concept many have in regard to the Old Law. Some have ardently believed for a long time that there was *no heart* to the system of Judaism. I have even heard it suggested that until Christ came all men just mechanically worshipped and routinely served Jehovah. But, contrariwise, when Jesus summed up the commands of the law in Matthew 22:37-40 he made it quite clear that *genuine love for God* and man was an absolute must! The sparkling little book of Hosea and the crystal clear tempo of Micah 6:8 forever shatter this straw man of legalism which some have attached to the Old Covenant. Our loving Creator has always required loving hearts to serve him sincerely. In Amos, Jehovah refers to any other expression of praise as just so much *noise* and *hypocrisy*. Knowing this, then, we are not surprised to learn in II Kings 12:4 that men in ancient times not only gave as *stipulated* (tithes of land, grain, cattle, and money) but also all that "*cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of Jehovah.*" When men give "of their own voluntary will" (Leviticus 1:3) over and beyond what they have promised to do there must be rejoicing in Heaven. We have six outstanding examples of such contributions in the Bible. Notice these powerful examples of liberality.

(1) *The Unspeakable Gift of God:* In II Corinthians 9:15 a grateful Paul expresses deep gratitude for the beneficent blessings of the Father who crowned all his bestowals of mercy with the unsurpassed gift of Christ Jesus. Many times we seem to forget the unfathomed love of God (Romans 11:33-36). When Heaven gave it was not a token nor was it something marred or imperfect. The most precious gem of glory left those hallowed halls for the shame of earth. Truly, God so loved he gave the best he had (John 3:16).

(2) *The Liberal Gift of the Macedonians:* In II Corinthians 8:5 an inspired writer tells us of some brilliant Christians who, out of deep poverty, nevertheless *gave themselves* unto the Lord. When people do that there will be no need for sermons on *how much* we "lay by in store upon the first day of the week" (I Corinthians 16:1-2). When one gives himself

to the cause of the Savior everything else falls in proper place. His treasure and heart find a common rendezvous near the heart of God. An old preacher, upon being told that too many sermons on giving would kill the church, had a beautiful reply. He said: "Just show me the congregation that died because of giving and I'll stand in the pulpit there and say "*Blessed Are The Dead Who Die In The Lord!*"

(3) *The Widow's Mite:* In Mark 12:44 we find the culmination of a penetrating study on sacrificial living. No one has contributed like the widow until he gives all he has. The sum of her devotion was less than a penny in our money, yet the Bible says that she gave more than all the rest. Jesus saw how they gave! He knows our hearts. He knows our motives. So few really give liberally, cheerfully and out of the depths of a purposing heart that meets the approval of the Lord. The devotion of that widow is an exquisite reminder for us.

(4) *Mary's Alabaster Box:* In Mark 14:8 we are challenged to learn that Mary, "*hath done what she could.*" If that epitaph could be placed over every member's gift each first day of the week we could evangelize the earth's remotest bounds *beginning next Sunday!* The passage in Mark's account of the gospel does not tell us that this unusual woman took care of all of her own desires and luxuriant pace of endeavor and *then* did what she could. That type of situation would be more compatible with our offering today however. Like those in the day of Amos we have more and more folk with winter and summer houses and beds of ivory and gold. Yes, to be honest, we have millions for our own comfort and prestige and just a pittance for world evangelism. Mary poured out an entire year's wages upon the Lord while some today drop "a tip" in the plate and save the rest to make payments on their fancy boats and exorbitant vacations.

(5) *The Vow of David:* In II Samuel 24:24 we have the famous text for many evangelistic sermons on giving. It would be difficult to improve upon the unapologetic tones of this Old Testament Line: "I will not give unto the Lord that which cost me nothing." David would not allow

someone else to supply his gift to God. In congregations where 80 percent of the collection is supplied by 20 percent of the members, someone is certainly willing for others to sacrifice while they selfishly abstain from generosity. Are you a spiritual deadbeat?

(6) *The Death of Christ:* In Philippians 2:5-8 we are reminded of the grandest, most eloquent gift of all time — the sacrificial Lamb of God. He laid down his own life (John 10:18). Our sins he bore in his own body upon the tree of the cross (I Peter 2:24). Vicariously, painfully, and all alone, Jesus paid it all. Is it any marvel that the Bible tells us to give generously and joyfully? May we grow in "this grace also" as we show the proof of our love (II Corinthians 8:7-24). — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.


Church By Mail

WINFREY HENNESSEE

Have you received your church by mail application yet? I have, it came to me from Atlanta, Georgia. But there must be some mistake. The letter said that my P. O. Box number was directed to them by the Holy Spirit, because there was someone at this address who needed blessing. Is the Holy Spirit forgetful? We who live at my house are blessed every time we see the sun rise each morning, every time we eat a meal which our Lord has provided, and every time we assemble with our brothers and sisters for the purpose of worshipping God.

One page of the letter was used in showing pictures of the material things of life, such as money, new cars, houses, TV sets, and appliances. All the recipient has to do is fill in the necessary information on the card, and return it to them. Among the things one is to receive is a gold metal "Prosperity Cross" which is actually a key ring in the shape of a cross. Now, this is not just an ordinary key ring, but one which has been prayed over, fasted over, and blessed in the name of the one who receives it, according to this scripture: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN!

Oral And Jesus To Discover Cancer Cure

According to an article in the *Atlanta Constitution* January 21, 1983, Oral Roberts claims that Jesus, in a seven hour conversation with him, told him that he had been picked to find a cure for cancer at his hospital on the campus of Oral Roberts University. In this conversation Jesus told Oral to ask each of his "prayer partners" for \$240, which Oral very gladly and quickly did.



BOB DUNCAN

Some will remember that Oral Roberts announced to the world in December of 1977 that Jesus had commanded him to build his hospital. This within itself was somewhat of a surprise to some. Why would a man who is able to heal miraculously need a

hospital?

This is another example of the gullibility of those who put their confidence in the fake healers of our day. There is not a one of the so-called miracle workers of our day that can miraculously heal a hangnail on his most faithful follower. But some — many aged and poor — will continue to send in their money to these robbers who are less honorable than the robber who uses a gun. (The robber who uses a gun does not pretend he is doing what he is doing in the name of the Lord.)

One of the sad things about such shameful shenanigans on the part of Oral Roberts is the fact that it will cause some to question the sincerity of all who preach; others will conclude that religion itself is nothing more than a sham.

On the other hand, perhaps some will be caused to notice the difference between the religion of those who have become fabulously rich by begging their radio listeners and television viewers to send them their dollars, and those who preach on radio and television but do not ask those in the audience to send in their contributions.

Church By Mail

Continued From Page 1

they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). I will quickly agree that God is always pleased when two or more are in perfect agreement with one another; and when they pray in perfect harmony on behalf of someone else, it must sound like beautiful music to God's ears. But the part which I do not agree on is the holy "Prosperity Cross" which they promise to send. Would it not be just a piece of metal? Would it be any better than the Israelites' Golden Calf?

There was a testimony from a lady who had not been able to make her house payments before receiving her cross, but God had blessed her two days later with seventy five hundred dollars. She was also blessed with a car. Of course spiritual blessings are mentioned, but seem to play second fiddle to the material things of life.

God always keeps his promises. We know that he answers every righteous prayer in his own way, not always giving us what we ask for, but what we need. The Lord uses natural means in order to bring about a desired end. But the days of miracles ended with the last of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit does not work directly as in the early days of the church. We are to "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). With these things in mind, would I be looked upon as too skeptical if I believe that these people were led to my address by our city directory, instead of the Holy Spirit? — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

An enemy could not afford to take the risk of invading our country. Our juvenile delinquents are too well-armed.

Justice is what we get when the decision is in our favor.

It's easy to take a day off but extremely difficult to put it back.

The idle person is not much better than a dead one and takes up a lot more room.

Why Should I Obey God?

The necessity of strict obedience is a principle that is stressed repeatedly throughout the Bible. But does God have the right to set a code of conduct for my life? Does he have the right to tell me what I can do or cannot do in this life? If God does have such a right, why does he have that right? Throughout history, men have broken God's rules from time to time. But today many people reject the idea that anybody, including God, has the right even to make rules. But God does have the right to govern my life.



RONNIE LOWE

Through his Son Jesus Christ, God set the highest standard of morality in the world. The Christian is to be holy as God is holy (I Peter 1:15). But again, what right does God have to set such a high standard for our lives? We must understand that *all morality begins with God*. The will of God is merely an outgrowth of his nature. Did he choose what was to be right or wrong by casting lots or by chance? Of course not! Rightness and wrongness is determined by what is consistent with God's nature. God cannot say that lying, stealing, or fornication is good, for those things are inconsistent with his nature. All morality begins with God, for he is morally perfect (unlike many so-called gods).

God has the right to govern me because *God is holy*. He therefore hates all evil and loves all good. Nothing in him partakes of that which is evil. "But as he which

hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [living]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16). Even the best of men sin on occasions, but such is not the case with God. He never indulges in the practice of sin. False gods are not so holy. The legends about the gods of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the legends of many present-day religions, tell of "gods" who participated in all kinds of immoral behavior. The true and living God has the right to govern my life because he is holy and morally perfect.

God also has the right to govern me because *God is infinitely wise*. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34). Man is incapable of directing himself spiritually because he is too shortsighted. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Man cannot always foresee the harmful consequences of sin, but God can. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-10). God has the right to govern us because he is not bound by shortsightedness. He is infinitely wise.

Finally, we suggest that he has the right to govern me because *God is love* (I John 4:8). If he were a

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The Bible

(No. 1)

The Bible is still the world's best seller, but perhaps the least read book. Why is this so?

Is it because it tells man he must die? It may be this message is depressing. The writer of Hebrews says, "And in as much as it is appointed unto men once to die . . ." (Heb. 9:27). But the great story is only the body dies. Man exists forever in heaven or hell.

The Bible tells from where man came, where he is and where he is going (Rev. 1:8). What is man's origin? The Bible tells us.

But first let us think of the creator of us all. John wrote, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2). "The word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). These are the beings we read about in the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). A part of the creation is man. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." (Gen. 1:26). We are told how man was created. "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).

God placed man in the garden of Eden. He gave man one restriction. Man was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The devil tempted the first man's wife. He used the mediums of all lust. They are the eye, flesh and vain glory of life. When the devil convinced Eve God did not want her to eat of the forbidden fruit because to do so would make Adam and Eve like God, Eve ate. She then gave to Adam and he ate.

Therefore sin was introduced into the world. Man was given the power of choice. The Bible reveals the nature of God. He did not make man a robot or a puppet. The question is often asked why God allowed man to sin. Paul asked, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?" (I Cor. 2:16). We must accept the wisdom of God. We may as well ask why God constituted water so it will drown a man, but water is essential to the life of man; or why did he make fire necessary for man's warmth and to cook his food, but that same fire will destroy man.

The Bible reveals God's attitude toward sin. In the sixth chapter of Genesis Moses tells us man had sinned, "That every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). We learn in the next verse: "It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart." "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and creeping things, and the fowls of the air, for it repented me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:6).

Except for Noah and his family (8 souls) and two male and female of animals plus animals for sacrifice all were destroyed. Noah found favor with God because of his faithful obedience.

After the destruction of the sinful world by the great flood, there were eight souls upon the earth. The slate was clean again. However, it was not long before man rebelled again. "The whole world was of one language, and of one speech" (Gen. 11:1). When they reached the land of Shinar, they decided to build



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

a tower that would reach heaven. They said, "let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth" (Gen. 11:4).

They decided they could do well without God. God stopped their madness by confusing their language. They could not understand one another's speech. Because of this fact, they were scattered upon the earth. Again sin was in the world. The prophet Ezekiel tells us each man is responsible or accountable for his own sins. He said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20). This passage certainly shows one does not inherit the sins of his parents. The Bible therefore makes clear the fact that in the day of judgment no one can point an accusing finger toward another for causing him to be lost.

But what is sin? It is rebellion or transgression of God's law. John informs us: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). In another form John states this truth: "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (I John 5:17). Sin also is omission or neglect. James describes it, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17). There are many opportunities to do good. Because of the many opportunities we may have to make a choice. But when we fail to make a choice, we sin.

Rebellion or transgression is seen in the works of the flesh. Paul lists some of them in Gal. 5:19-20: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and

such like . . ." Those who practice such things shall not inherit eternal life.

Man often neglects many good things he needs to do. After Jesus had urged the multitudes not to worry, he admonished, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). The kingdom is the church of our Lord (Matt. 6:33). Many do not know the Lord has a church. Society needs to know more about the Lord's church revealed in the Bible. Man must obey the gospel of Christ and let the Lord add him to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38-47). He must be active in the church.

The wise man, Solomon, stated, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Righteousness involves such things as visiting the sick, caring for the poor, rearing our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, studying our Bibles, worshiping as he directs in the word of God, and many other things.

Whom does man sin against? First, sin is against God. When Potipher's wife tempted Joseph to sin with her he answered, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). Second, he sins against his fellowman. We are responsible for our influence. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). A failure to let others see our good works is sin.

What is the penalty for sin? Paul wrote, "For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23). Death is separation. The wages of sin is eternal separation from God. There will be a day when Christ will come "with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 1:7-8). (To be continued). — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

Why Should I Obey God?

Continued from Page 2

tyrant lording it over his people, we could never be sure if he were seeking good for us or evil for us. But such is not the case with God, because he always seeks our best interest. Because of his love, he commands us to do only that which is good for us, and he forbids our doing that which is harmful. Yet some people ask, "Why does God take away all the fun things? Why doesn't he want me to have any fun?" He does not have the goal of removing all the joy from our lives. But rather he provides the needed guidance so that we can escape as much pain as possible and enjoy the best possible life. God is love and, therefore, has the right to govern me.

Not only does God love me, but I must love him in return. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to

"love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). A person *can* outwardly keep God's law without really loving him. But a person *cannot* really love God without keeping his law. Jesus said, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). A person can keep rules for rules' sake and resent them, or he can love the rule-maker and therefore keep his rules for love's sake. King David could say he loved God's law because he loved God. To the loving, obedience is not a drudgery but a delight. We must realize and understand God's right to govern our lives, and that only by following his word can we have the best life this world has to offer and hope of eternally living with him. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, Texas 76470.

The Tragedy Of False Teachers

W. A. HOLLEY

The privilege and opportunity to engage in preaching and teaching the word of God is a trust from God Almighty. It is a trust which should not be betrayed because of the fearful consequences, involving all of God's threats of destruction and death.

"The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith

the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause

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The Tragedy Of False Teachers

Continued from page 3

my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:28-32).

The word of God is strong and mighty! It is like a fire that burns away all impurities; it is like a hammer which beats down and destroys sin and the powers of Satan; it separates the chaff from the wheat (Cf. Hebrews 4:12).

It is bad enough for one to steal clothes or food or other material possessions from others, but it is a sin of the first magnitude for one to steal God's precious word away from the hearts of suffering humanity, because such stealing involves the eternal destiny of countless souls of men (Matthew 16:26; 10:28).

How do false teachers and preachers steal the word of God from honest and sincere men and women so easily? We note:

(1) Satan is a past master in this iniquitous work of destruction. His ministers come well-educated, having excellent personalities, dressed in the latest styles, and oozing with popularity. But, be certain of one thing: they are not the messengers of Christ; they do not preach the truth of God! Satan sends his ministers forth as "angels of light" (II Corinthians

11:9-15). Their purpose is to deceive and to destroy!

Let it be remembered that Satan uses men and women to carry out his purposes in the world. Satan's messengers may be among the most polished, warm, friendly, and highly respected preachers, but they do not preach the truth of God; they preach the doctrines and commandments of men (Cf. Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:5-13). These false teachers know how to use subtlety to beguile the unsuspecting.

(2) Oftentimes these teachers spend their time undermining the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is not the inspired word of God; it is a wonderful book of literature, like the works of Shakespeare; the story of creation and the virgin birth of Jesus are myths and are not to be taken seriously by well-informed people; the miracles of the Bible never really occurred, so they teach; thus undercutting the power and influence of God's Sacred Oracles.

(3) From a vast majority of the people, spiritual thieves have stolen the Lord's church and the Lord's plan of salvation. They continually harp, "One church is just as good as another, and one can be saved outside the church as well as one can be saved in it." There's not an iota of truth to support such an idea! In the same fashion these false teachers assert that

baptism is a non-essential, and that one need not be baptized to be saved. We suggest that honest readers turn, in your own Bible, to Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; and I Peter 3:20-21, and compare the teaching of these passages with the assertions of false teachers. Thus, they have stolen away what the Bible teaches regarding obedient faith and repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. The doctrine of salvation by "faith only" does not meet the demands of the Scriptures (James 2:14,17,19,24,26). These same false teachers have stolen away the Lord's supper and the Christian life, contending that the Lord's supper can be celebrated now and then or never, at one's discretion; and that one cannot fall from grace no matter how depraved and reprobate one may become (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 6:4-6; Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22).

How can you make certain that you are not being misled?? Just follow the divine instruction found in Acts 17:11: "And these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

"Whom Say Ye That I Am?"

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:13-16).



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

"Whom say ye that I am?" This question, asked more than nineteen hundred years ago, still confronts every individual in the world today. It is a very personal question. Who do you say in your heart that Jesus Christ is?

Men still give very different answers to this all-important question. There are some who say that "Jesus was a good man." Others say that Jesus was a great moral example. Some say that Jesus was a great teacher, and still others say that he was one of the world's great prophets. I am thankful, therefore, that we do not have to base our impression of Jesus Christ on the confused and myriad opinions of men. Let us now turn to the pages of Holy Writ and see who Jesus is.

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3-4). Paul, who is Jesus? He is the Son of God. How do you know, Paul? He was declared to be so by the power of the resurrection from the dead. Those who deny that Christ is the Son of God have grave difficulty explaining his resurrection.

Matthew, in his account of the gospel, declares,

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Two verses earlier Matthew records, "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). Jesus is Immanuel; he is God with us, God in the flesh. John wrote, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld this glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). Therefore, it is Jesus who can save us from our sins.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). John the Baptist said that Jesus was the pure, undefiled Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. The Hebrew writer says that Jesus "... was in all points tempted like as

we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). In the Old Testament law, the Jews were told to offer a lamb that was pure and undefiled as the sacrifice to roll forward their sins. In the New Testament law, Jesus is the Lamb of God. He too, is pure and undefiled. He is the Lamb that was sacrificed "once for all time." Thus Jesus became the sacrifice, the propitiation, the offering, the ransom that was paid for your sins and mine.

In the Old Testament there are over three hundred prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, about the one who was to be the Christ, the one who was to be God's Son, who was to come to this earth to save mankind. Jesus came and literally fulfilled every one of the Old Testament prophecies written about him. Surely then, he is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, AL 36609.

"Come And See"

Two of John's disciples were pointed to Jesus. They asked Him, "Rabbi, where do you dwell?" He said, "Come and see."

No doubt Jesus, being the Master Teacher, knew the value of demonstration and personal experience. This is the supreme method of teaching. Too often this lesson is forgotten.

This should be the goal of our Bible School. Those who teach should demonstrate, in their actions, before their student, what the Christian life is.

Is this not a missing ingredient in soul winning. What better way of gaining attention and creating



ANCIL JENKINS

interest than to present to all we know, a life striving to reproduce the life of Christ.

This is the lesson of the home. Children do not hear what we say *as much* as they see what we do. The sins of people such as Isaac, Jacob, and Solomon were actions they had seen in the lives of their parents. Edgar A. Guest wrote the following:

"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day, I'd rather see one would walk with me than merely show the way.

For the eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,

Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear." — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, N.M. 87106.

Juvenile delinquency starts in the highchair and could end in the electric chair.

After saying our prayers we ought to do something to make them come true.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1983

NUMBER 7

Are The Jews Still God's Chosen People?

In Genesis 12:1-3, God chose Abraham to be the head of a nation of people through whom God would bless all families of the earth. These people were the Hebrews or Israelites, later, following their Babylonian captivity (which extended from 606 B.C. to 536 B.C.) and their return to Palestine, to be known as the Jews. Through Abraham's son, Isaac, and Isaac's son, Jacob (whose name was changed by God to Israel), came twelve sons who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (the Jewish people).



HUGH FULFORD

Four hundred and thirty years after the call of Abraham, God, through Moses, gave the law (Old Testament) to govern the Jews in their religious life (Galatians 3:17; Deuteronomy 5:2,3). This Old Testament law was to last until the coming of Abraham's illustrious seed, Christ, who was of the tribe of Judah, and the one through whom God would fulfill his promise to Abraham to bless all families of the earth (Galatians 3:19). With the coming of Christ and the completion of his redemptive work for mankind on the cross, the law of Moses ended. The Jews ceased to be God's chosen people in any special, spiritual sense. The middle wall of partition that had existed between Jews and Gentiles was broken down (Ephesians 2:13-16). The law of Moses was superceded by the gospel of Christ (John 1:17; Colossians 2:14).

Today, "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). Today, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor

female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Today, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28,29). The advantage that the Jews had in Old Testament times in having the "oracles of God" (the law of Moses) no longer exists, because the Old Testament has been fulfilled in Christ (Romans 3:1,2; Matthew 5:17). Now, it is the

gospel of Christ that is the power of God unto salvation, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16,17). This gospel is, therefore, to be preached to every creature in every nation (Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:19,20). Today, all people (Jews and Gentiles) stand on equal footing before God. All nationalities and ethnic groups find their standing and acceptance before God by being "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3-6). — 101 Dow Drive, Shelbyville, TN 37160.

Why Do You Preach?

Preacher friend, why do you preach? What motivates you in your work? Some begin preaching because they are expected to preach. Not wanting to hurt the feelings of friends and well-meaning relatives, they half-heartedly go into the preaching field in order to satisfy the expectations of anxious on-lookers. Such preachers seldom remain preachers for very long.

Many enter the preaching arena because they are lazy. From the outside looking in, no job seems easier. After all, all you do as a preacher is drink coffee all week and then "let them have it" on Sunday by saying whatever pops into your mind at the moment. These view preaching as an "easy, lazy man's job" — that is,




DALTON KEY

before they become preachers. They soon quit when they find out all that preaching involves.

No doubt, some preach only for the money, though most preachers could probably earn a higher salary in some other occupation. Others preach because they love to exercise control over other people. Some preach to hear the praise of men. And a few preach to show off their mental or oratorical expertise. But I am sure none of these are your motivation for preaching.

Perhaps you are motivated to preach by that which motivated Paul. We hope so. "For we must all appear before the judgement 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. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . . For the love of Christ constraineth us" (II Corinthians 5:10-14). Paul preached out of a concern for souls and love for Christ. He was not moved by money; he was not prompted by praise. His motives were neither selfish nor base. He loved God and man, which was then, and is now, motivation enough. — Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.



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— Acts 26:25

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Individual rates are \$80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.



"Great Bible Questions"

The theme of the fourth annual Gus Nichols *Words of Truth* Lectureship will be *Great Bible Questions*. Each speaker's subject will be one of the great questions actually contained in the Bible, and a host of eminently qualified men and women are being enlisted to discuss these great questions. (A complete list of speakers and subjects will be published within the next few weeks.) Daily speakers this year will include Hugo McCord, Franklin Camp, Johnny Ramsey, and Bert Thompson. Special lectures for the ladies will be conducted each day by Lois McCord. Also each day will feature a lecture to ladies by a different daughter or daughter-in-law of sister Nichols and the late brother Gus Nichols.



BOB DUNCAN

The lectureship this year will be September 25-29, with sessions beginning each morning at 9:30. All activities will be in the facilities of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. As in the past, Christians of Jasper

and Walker County will open their homes to lodge out-of-town guests.

The Gus Nichols Preacher's Lectureship was conducted by some preachers in Alabama for a number of years before the death of brother Nichols. It first started when a group of preachers arranged to have brother Nichols spend a week at the facilities of one of the youth camps and lecture to preachers assembled there. Brother Nichols would lecture nearly all day long, and then at night. In later years other outstanding preachers delivered some of the lectures. Even after the death of brother Nichols, this lectureship was continued under the same name.

The *Words of Truth* lectureship had its beginning under the auspices of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in 1979. The year before, the Gus Nichols Preacher's Lectureship had been cancelled by those preachers who were arranging it, and so the eldership of the Sixth Avenue church obtained permission from those who had sponsored it to conduct it the following year. In 1980, the Gus Nichols Preacher's Lectureship and the *Words of Truth* Lectureship were combined, and the name, Gus Nichols *Words of Truth* Lectureship, was assigned.

Many brethren have said they consider this lectureship to be one of the very finest conducted by our brethren. We believe this year's will be even better than those of the past.

A House Divided

"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12:25).



ROY FULLER

The church is God's house in the local sense and in the universal sense. This house is grossly and seemingly irreparably divided in the universal sense. The tragic result of this chaos and division is readily apparent to any discerning viewer, namely, that religious interest, fervor, and zeal is now decreasing at a much faster rate than the increase in population. Church attendance and participation continues to decline. The words of Jesus, "A house divided against itself shall not stand," is a prophetic indictment of the current religious scene. Oh, how his heart must ache, as from heaven's lofty height he views the strife, the wreckage, and the carnage of countless lost souls, because the house for which he died has lost its glory, its unity, and its purpose. While God weeps, men grasp for feeble excuses, and stumble at efforts to justify that which they are too proud and arrogant to rectify, and the house continues to crumble.

Turning to the local scene, a local congregation of God's people, the same condition is all too often found therein. Strife, bitterness, distrust, hatred, and pride are many times the rule, rather than the exception. The end result is just as apparent, perhaps even more so on the local scene. The mission of the church is forsaken. There are no efforts to save those on the outside and no efforts to correct and convert those on the inside. Blatent rejection of God's word, quarreling, blame fixing, false charges against brethren, covetousness, forsaking the assemblies, indulgence in fleshly sins, and disrespect for Bible authority are sometimes so prevalent in a congregation that it cannot be recognized as the true house of God. Yet, they piously proclaim themselves to be the restored "true church," while the world

Continued on page 3

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

"I'm sorry, but I have no lesson today prepared. The weather has been so bad this week that I just didn't feel like getting out in it. Of course my boys and I played in the snow until we were all cold and tired and then the cold hit me. Besides all of that the car has been acting up a bit, and many of you don't listen that well anyway." The preacher pauses for a moment and then says, "What if I told you that this morning?"

What if the minister at your congregation said that to you? What would your reaction be? We all realize that when a job is supposed to be done and it is not done, someone is not very responsible. A man who doesn't want to work, a wife who doesn't want to clean the house, a child that doesn't want to do his homework are all alike in that they shirk the responsibility they must face or suffer the consequences of their slothful actions. The Christian is a responsible person.

The story of responsibility begins at the beginning. When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, there were given to them certain responsibilities (Gen. 1:28-30). God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). It was their responsibility not to eat of it. When they



BARRY FIKE

did, they suffered the consequences of their actions (Gen. 3:16-24). Their children seemed to have some of the same problems. Cain was warned by God about certain feelings that he had toward Abel, his brother, in regard to the sacrifices they had made to God (Gen. 4:6,7). However, Cain paid no heed to these warnings, and killed his brother. When God came to Cain and asked him where his brother was, he said, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9b).

How many times do we hear our brethren say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We are told to love one another (Jas. 15:17); pray for one another (Jas. 5:16); avoid being offensive (Phil. 2:4); provoke each other to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24); serve one another (Gal. 5:13); exhort one another (Heb. 3:13); and comfort one another (I Thess. 4:18). And yet our actions do betray us. Attendance is down on Sunday night and Wednesday night. Some Bible school classes are very poorly prepared for and taught. Backbiting, gossiping, slandering have become the national pastime in some congregations. When the minister brings these matters to the attention of certain members they say in essence, "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13). "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:26). Isn't it about time we practice what we preach? We are our brother's keeper! — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, NC 28612.

The Bible

(No. 2)

We have noted from where man came and where he is when in sin. Now let us see where man can be. The Bible reveals a faint glimmer of hope for man in Genesis 3:15. The Lord said to the serpent that had tempted Eve, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." When Jesus was crucified satan bruised the seed of woman. When Jesus arose from the grave he bruised the head of the seed of the serpent.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY
When Jesus arose from the head of the seed of the

The next promise of redemption is found in Gen. 12:1-3. God told Abraham to leave Mesopotamia and go to a land he would show him. He promised to make of his descendants a great nation and to protect them from harm. He then made the messianic prophecy. He said, "and in thee shall all families be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Paul shows us the fulfillment of this prophecy. He said, "Now to Abraham and his seed where the promises made, He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). The prophetic statement about the seed is found in Gen. 22:18. To Abraham God said, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou has obeyed my voice."

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, had twelve sons. The promised child was to come through Judah, Jacob's Son. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come" (Gen. 49:10). Under the law of Moses the priesthood was in another son's tribe, the tribe of Levi. The priesthood was to change. The writer of Hebrews wrote, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:12-14). This priest was to be "A minister of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2). This priest would not minister in the earthly tabernacle. "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest" (Heb. 8:4).

The prophet Isaiah gives several prophetic statements concerning the Messiah. The virgin birth is predicted. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). Matthew tells of the angel's appearance to Joseph informing him of the virgin birth. The angel said of Mary. "For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Then Matthew says all of this came to pass to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy in Chapter 7 verse 14.

Isaiah chapter 53 contains other prophetic statements. Isaiah wrote concerning Christ: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Verse 3).

Isaiah 53 continues to describe Christ and his mission 700 years before he came to the earth. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our trans-

gressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (verse 4). Without Christ man had no solace for his griefs and no one on whom to lay his sorrows. God gave his Son to be stricken and afflicted by those for which he gave his life's blood.

Isaiah further stated, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Verses 5 and 6). Jesus said concerning himself, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). Paul said about Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, "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 penalty for sin is death eternally. Christ died in our stead.

Christ shed his blood to purchase the church. Luke recorded Paul's statement to the Ephesian elders: "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). Paul wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). To be a part of the Lord's church is to be among the saved.

Are there no conditions of salvation? The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus "by the grace of God tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). Christ died that all may be saved. If there are no conditions, the rapist, adulterer, murderer, liar, thief, etc. would be saved along with the most dedicated Christian. The same Hebrew writer answers our question. He said, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Anyone who teaches that man has no responsibility in his salvation is a false teacher.

We learn the conditions of salvation when we read of the first converts to Christianity. Peter and the other Apostles preached. We have a record of some of Peter's sermon. He said, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death . . ." (Acts 2:23-24). Peter concluded his sermon by letting them know "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). This pricked their hearts. They cried out "unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

The Bible tells man of *life beyond the grave*. Paul taught, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The accounts of people experiencing clinical death and telling about their experiences have revived interest in the subject of life after death.

Those who believe the Bible have hoped through faith in eternal life.

Our *hope of the resurrection* rests on the truth of Christ's resurrection. Paul wrote, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor. 15:12-14). He had just given an account of those who had seen Christ after his resurrection. He had been seen by Peter, then the twelve. After that he was seen by above 500 brethren at once. Then by James, and then all the Apostles. Paul then said he was the last to see him.

Paul illustrated the resurrection. He said, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (I Cor. 15:36-38). We know this truth. When corn is planted it must die for the new plant to come forth.

We must die physically in order to live in immortality. Paul said, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42,44). Paul describes the change: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:51-53). The Christian can say with Paul, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:51).

Jesus said, "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). Both the good and the evil will be raised at the same time. If we live the good, obedient life, we will enjoy the eternal bliss of heaven. If we live the rebellious, evil life, our eternal destiny will be in the devil's hell where "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:42).

John comforts us: "And God shall wipe all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Surely all mankind longs for a place like John describes. He further describes heaven in terms of precious things in earthly material terms. The walls of heaven are of Jasper, and the street was pure Gold. "And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle there, neither light of the sun; for the Lord giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 22:5). — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

A House Divided

Continued from page 2

looks on in dismay and consternation. Such congregations continue to dry up and wither away. They become faithless, fearful, and defensive. They will invite almost anyone into their fellowship without regard for their religious conviction, faithfulness, or moral conduct. What was once a shining light slowly diminishes to a flickering, withering flame. It grows dimmer, dimmer, and dimmer, and finally goes out. Jesus said: "Remember therefore from whence thou

art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5). It doesn't take many jealous, fearful, discord sowing, impatient brethren in any congregation to destroy all of its influence for good. Could it be that you are guilty of helping to remove the candlestick from your congregation?? Think soberly upon these things. — Rt. 4 Box 479 Elba, AL 36323.

“Thus Saith The Lord..”

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, in the long ago, recorded, “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. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16). Jeremiah sets forth the declaration of God using imperatives, a short form of the imperfect verb. It denotes action not yet completed. Hence, a command is found in the declaration for something to be done which has not yet been done. In this passage, man is to stand, see, ask and walk. The standing means to stop all activity and stand still for the purpose of discerning one’s position or condition. The seeing means to see, view, regard or observe. This can be either a delight or grief. The asking means that one should inquire, interrogate, demand or require. The walking means going or journeying. What way is suggested? The “old paths.” The trodden beaten paths; metaphorically, a way of life. The good, the pleasant, agreeable, fair, beautiful, happy, prosperous, cheerful, joyful, right way. This is what God, through Jeremiah had called a nation of wicked, stiff-necked and rebellious people to do.



JOHN G. SHAVER

Their answer? “We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16). They refused to repent, and therefore, were taken into captivity by the Chaldeans. Why had they rejected the pleas of Jeremiah? Why had they hearkened to the false prophets and evil men? Because the false prophets had prophesied “peace, peace” (Jer. 6:14; 8:11), and since no one likes to hear doom and destruction, the people hearkened to the vile and false instruction of ungodly men (Jer. 5:31). Jeremiah had believed God, and had delivered his message, warning the people of impending doom. The result, his life was threatened and he was persecuted. And yet, he was set “as a fenced and brazen wall” (Jer. 15:20), and continued reproving king, nobles and people.

One would think that God’s people down through the ages would heed the warnings and examples of the past (Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11), but such is not the case. As Jeremiah raised the clarion call in the long ago, and for his efforts received persecution and heartache, so it is in our day and age. When faithful gospel preachers raise the clarion call against false teachers and doctrines in the church, they are accused of being troublemakers, jealous, unloving, or failing to understand. Several of the preceding situations have been brought to this writer’s attention by several faithful gospel preachers in the past few months. I realize that there are still many faithful brethren who love the truth, and want it presented in its unadulterated form. But there are many in the church today who do not care for book, chapter and verse preaching. But they revel in the philosophical and psychological preaching that does not condemn specific sin, but allows one to leave the worship services unconverted and unconvicted with a false sense of security. In Kansas, one lady walked out of the services while her preacher was delivering a lesson on “The Sins Of The Flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21). Her reason? “The pulpit is no place for lessons like that!” This attitude has permeated the Lord’s church and must be dealt with.

With such attitudes of ungodliness running rampant in the Lord’s church, we need more men like Jeremiah — men who will preach with a resounding “Thus saith the Lord.” This means that we must teach and train men to preach and teach the pure gospel of Christ without fear or compromise, without

the psychological and philosophical jargon of our day. It also means that the elderships in our brotherhood must select a gospel preacher for his knowledge of God’s word, and not because he is a good mixer, personal worker or has a string of degrees behind his name. It also means that our teaching programs must be upgraded to emphasize the Bible, and not the theories of some man.

Why do we have problems in the church regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, false theories on grace, modern versions, Crossroadism, etc.? Because we have filled our pulpits with many men who are not men of God’s Book, men who preach not for the glory of God, but for praises and pleasure of man (Gal. 1:10). Since the pulpits have been polluted, is it any wonder that the pews are also polluted? When a faithful gospel preacher teaches the truth on marriage, divorce and remarriage, he is often confronted with an oft married and divorced person taking issue with the truth. Then he is approached by the elders relating that in order to keep peace he should refrain from teaching on the subject. When an unlearned member of the church contends that grace omits obedience, and the preacher takes issue with him, he is told by the elders, “Don’t rock the boat.” When the preacher warns of the false doctrines contained in the modern versions, some poor, misguided soul relates that he doesn’t see any harm in them, and once again, he is told, “Don’t antagonize anyone, just

preach the truth, and let the versions issue alone.” When a faithful gospel preacher points out the dangers of the Crossroads heresy, and the false doctrines being taught, he is told, “You’re just jealous of their success,” or “You just don’t understand.” Once again he is told, “Don’t make anyone angry, we don’t want any trouble.” Brethren, with attitudes like this in our brotherhood, we already have trouble! Is it any wonder that more than a few gospel preachers leave the pulpit, rather than put up with such ungodly attitudes?

Dear friend, I realize that there are many faithful gospel preachers who are still standing for the truth, and many faithful brethren who are standing with them. May God bless all those who are faithful to the cause of Christ. But there are many so-called preachers who do not stand on the truth of God’s word, and many who “love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31). Brother elder, when you find a faithful gospel preacher who will stand for God’s truth, stand with him. Preacher friend, when you find a faithful eldership who will defend God’s word, stand with them, and support them with all the strength of your being. Christian friend, when you have a strong, faithful eldership, and a preacher who will stand and defend God’s truth, support them in their work. Brethren, rejoice and be glad when your preacher says, “Thus saith the Lord . . .” — 4010 Rice Rd. Plant City, FL 33566.

The Stamp Of Approval

Weymouth’s translation of Galatians 6:17 states, “From this time onward, let no one trouble me; for, as for me, I bear, branded on my body, the scars of Jesus my master.”

Paul bore in his body the “marks” (scars, brand, owner’s stamp) of the Lord Jesus. The reference here is primarily to the branding marks of a slave. When Paul refers to himself as a “servant” of the Lord Jesus Christ, he does not mean that which the word suggests today — a paid worker. Paul means a “slave” in utter submission to his master. However, this is a submission of love and is a voluntary, rather than forced, subjection. Paul thus bearing these “marks” on his body, there was no doubting as to whom Paul belonged!

Indeed, Paul bore scars aplenty (II Corinthians 11:24-29)! These “marks” certainly made Paul look the part when he referred to himself as a “spectacle to the world” (I Corinthians 4:9), but Paul was interested in suffering and service, not the salute of society!

Nowhere in the New Testament does this writer find that saints of God are expected to be popular, successful, and comfortable in the eyes of this age. When James and John requested choice seats in the kingdom, the “King” of the kingdom answered that he was not offering seats, but suffering and service. The servant is not better than his Lord (Matthew 10:24), and the Lord was “despised and rejected of men,” with “no place to lay his head” (Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 8:20). Scars are a necessary and essential part of “slavery” to such a master!

Heb. 11:35-39 recounts the sufferings of the “heroes of faith” and proceeds to mention those “of



SCOTTY HARRIS

whom the world was not worthy.” One is made to wonder how frequently we remember these “heroes” when we stand in church services and sing so comfortably:

“Our fathers chained in prison’s dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free;
How sweet would be their children’s fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee.”

It seems at times as though we are all in a dither to make Christianity popular and pleasant. Perhaps, to a measurable degree, we have taken away the cross (Matthew 16:24) and have substituted the cushion! But our Lord did not attempt to appease, conciliate, or accommodate the populace of his day. Instead, he exclaimed, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). Jesus Christ has caused more division than any other force in history; he has demanded that men divide themselves from this present world (I Jn. 2:15)!

Jesus demands “death to self” in order that we might “live unto God” (Romans 6:11). This thought brings to mind the story of two young ladies, recently converted from a life of worldliness, who answered an invitation to a dance by saying, “We are dead and cannot come!” It was a scriptural answer (Galatians 5:21)!

Unlike Paul, Christians today are not subjected to literal stonings or stripes with a Roman scourge, but let us have *some* marks of our attachment to Christ Jesus such as: a holy life, self-denial, zeal in the cause of truth, and an imitation of the Lord Jesus (I Peter 1:16; Matthew 16:24; Psalms 69:9; II Corinthians 7:11; I Peter 2:21).

Moffatt’s rendering of Galatians 6:17 is both truthful and thought-provoking: “Let no one interfere with me after this, for I bear branded on my body, the *owner’s stamp* of the Lord Jesus.”

Christian friend, does your life reflect your Owner’s “stamp of approval?” — Route 3, Box 349 Dora, Alabama 35062.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

it speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1983

NUMBER 8

“The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance”

(No. 1)

Three tremendous terms in our title are indeed worthy of brief definition. By the Bible, reference is made to the Scriptures, the word of God, to Jehovah's Divine Library, to the Old Testament (from which we learn needed principles) and to the New Testament (from which we derive current attitudes and actions so essential in living for Christ, and to which we are currently amenable). The Bible is inspired, infallible, inerrant, all-sufficient, powerful, profitable, pleasant and final in all pronouncements. Doctrine means teaching or instruction. Repentance will be defined much more in detail in a later article of this study. Briefly though, it refers to the change of mind that a sinner reflects toward his sins.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

No apology is due when we announce a sermon on repentance or begin a series of articles on this tremendous topic of needed truth. It is an eminently prominent Bible subject, and that gives proper justification for its intense inclusion in preaching and writing themes. The universality of sin makes imperative our frequent proclamation of what the Bible says relative to repentance. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple mentions that "there is no man that sinneth not . . ." (I Kings 8:46). In Romans, chapters 1 through 3, Paul "proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin . . ." (Rom. 3:9). His summary statement later is, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God . . ." (Rom. 3:23). John informs us that any man who denies sin in his life deceives himself, lacks truth, makes God a liar and proves that God's word is not present in his heart and life (I John 1:8,10). Hence, because of the universality of sin we need to preach about and write concerning repentance.

The spiraling record of crime in our land and

throughout the world makes necessary our preaching on repentance. The crime problem cannot be solved by external legislation within a state or national capital. That has been tried repeatedly and found wanting. It will never be solved until people *recognize* their sins, *repent* of their sins and crimes and are *reconciled* to the God whom they have offended by their atrocious acts of highhanded rebellion. Constantly ascending crime accentuates the great need to preach repentance to our wayward world.

God has always demanded that men preach repentance and that all who have sinned come to repentance and do so promptly. Repentance of mind and reformation of life among the teeming masses could have averted that destructive deluge in Noah's era. Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah and Malachi, to name but a few, all preached a message of repentance to their crooked generations respectively. Yet for the most part their penitent pronouncements failed to enter deaf ears and to penetrate hardened hearts. Jonah's case with wicked Nineveh brought a powerful, profane people to the knee of repentance. Jonah 3 portrays the penitent spirit that swept through the Assyrian capital. Jesus alludes to this incident in Matthew 12. He affirms that the men of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. 12:41). The clarion call of the marvelous Messianic Harbinger in the Judaeian wilderness was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). The next chapter depicts the powerful pronouncement of the Magnificent Messiah himself. Jesus preached and said, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Jesus placed repentance in the Great Commission as a condition of conversion, as a stipulation of salvation (Luke 24:47). Peter preached repentance on Pentecost (Acts 2:38). He included it again in his dynamic discourse on Solomon's porch (Acts 3:19). He commanded repentance on the part of the erring Simon in Acts 8:22. Paul preached repentance on Mars' Hill in Athens and depicted this as a command enjoined upon all men (Acts 17:30). Repentance was taught both sinner and saint in the New Testament. It is part and parcel of God's first law of pardon for

aliens and his second law of pardon for his erring children.

We need to preach repentance, and all of us must be brought to its reception in our lives, else we will perish. This is the Lord's anguishing alternative to repenting as he set forth in Luke 13:3,5. Jesus connected it with the remission of sins in Luke 24:47. Peter does the same in Acts 2:38. He connects it with the blotting out of sins in Acts 3:19. He links it with forgiveness for God's erring child in Acts 8:22. Repentance and forgiveness of sins are connected in Acts 5:31. It is connected with life by those who heard Peter's defense for his having taken the gospel to Gentiles in Caesarea. They declared, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

These are some of the courageous and cogent reasons why we need to preach much and write extensively on repentance. Such lessons are needed by saint and sinner alike. This is one subject we will not preach too much about; neither will we pen too many articles pertaining to it. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

If a cause is just it will eventually triumph in spite of all the propaganda issued against it.


Easy Street is still mighty hard to find.

Justice is something that is too good for some people and not good enough for others.

The Bible promises no loaves to the loafer.

Injustice is relatively easy to bear. What stings is justice!

Idleness is the nest in which mischief lays its eggs.



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691 760)

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

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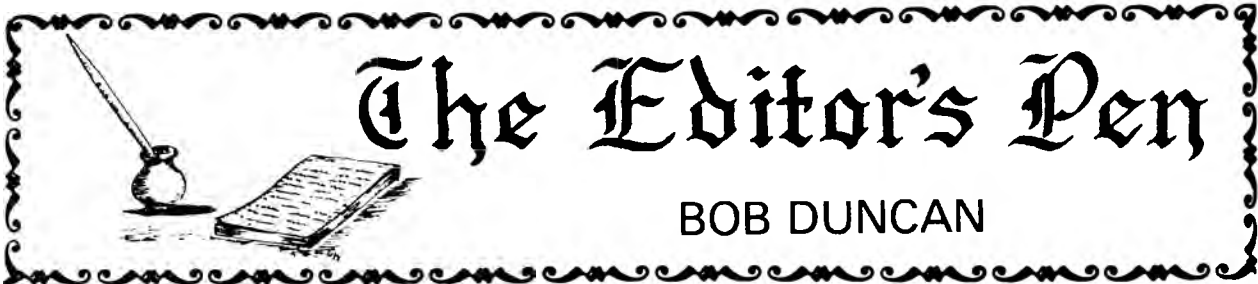
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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"All Things Are Not Expedient"

Paul wrote: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (I Corinthians 10:23). The word *expedient* here translates a Greek word which is also translated *profit* (I Corinthians 7:35; 10:33; 12:7; Hebrews 12:10), *profitable* (Matthew 5:29,30; Acts 20:20), *bring together* (Acts 19:19), *better* (Matthew 18:6), and *good* (Matthew 19:10).



BOB DUNCAN

To say a thing is lawful, but not expedient, is to say it is not inherently sinful, but is not profitable or good.

It seems from some of the things Paul wrote in I Corinthians 10 (see also chapter 8) that some at Corinth were insensitive toward the general welfare of the church. They knew what they wanted, and they were going to have it, unless it could be shown to be inherently sinful. "Is it lawful?" was the only question they considered in determining whether to do a thing they wanted to do. It seems these particular ones never considered whether their actions' overall effect would be good or bad.

In chapter eight Paul discussed the practice of eating certain meats. This practice, while lawful within itself, might actually be so inexpedient as to be sinful. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (verses 11 and 12).

The question of whether a thing is lawful (inherently right) is only one of two questions we should ask before determining to do a thing we want to do. The other question is, "Is it expedient?" If it is not both lawful and expedient, then it should be left off.

When a lawful principle is abused it becomes sin. We have seen this from I Corinthians 8:11,12. As we see it, it must be on this basis that questions about the propriety of such things as churches building gymnasiums must be settled. Brethren who oppose such have said, "It is not lawful." Brethren who favor such have said, "It is as lawful as the large room in the meetinghouse where brethren eat their fellowship meals." Which one is correct? In our considered judgment, neither view is altogether right. Technically speaking, the Bible does not specify what should and should not be included in the buildings we build. What is to be included must be determined by human judgment. From this some have concluded they have just as much right to build gymnasiums as their sister congregations have to build fellowship rooms, and they have not stopped to ask, "Is it expedient?"

Let's consider a matter which is parallel. Most people do not object to the church's having a water fountain. People sometimes are thirsty when they arrive for worship or after the worship is over. It seems expedient to provide a means of quenching their thirst. Does this mean it would be just as right for a church to build a large restaurant on the parking

lot, and have a free buffet meal prepared before and after every service for all who attend? After all, people sometimes are hungry when they arrive for worship or after worship is over. Would you oppose such an arrangement? I would, even though I think such an arrangement would do as much (or probably more) to boost church attendance as would the finest gymnasium. But, like the gymnasium, it would do very little to accomplish the end for which the church was established — the salvation of souls.

I believe practices such as these should be opposed, but not in the same manner we would oppose instrumental music — by saying, "Where is the authority for them?" We should rather oppose them by pointing out they are abuses of a Scriptural principle.

The Drawing Power Of Jesus

In birth, his star drew wise men from the east; in childhood his knowledge drew amazement from scholars of the temple; as an adult, his innocence and compassion drew penitence from a hardened thief. Yes, Jesus has drawing power (influence) (cf. John 12:32).

Even now, his name is the sweetest note in seraph song, sweetest name on mortal tongue, and duplicating his victories over the devil is man's greatest challenge. Though centuries have past through the sand tunnel of time, his word still changes lives, alters eternal destinies, and influences generations yet unborn.

Why such an influence? Isaiah 53 answers this question negatively and positively. Negatively, Jesus' influence did not/does not rely on: (1) His physical prowess (v. 2); (2) his popularity (v. 3); nor on (3) pageantry and orchestrated piety like that of modern charlatans (v. 3). Positively speaking, Jesus' influence may be attributed to:

1. What He Did/Does For Man (vv. 4-6)

(1) "Born our griefs [lit. sicknesses]" (v. 4). Jesus gave strength to sockets that had never withstood the weight of man, sight to eyes that had never sparkled in awesome reverence at the handiwork of God, wholeness to a hand that was withered like a bleached out raisin in the noon-day sun, and cleanliness to lepers that were blemished and socially ostracised (Matt. 8:14-17; 11:4,5). Today he bears the Christian's grief via prayer (James 5:13,14). So when emotionally humbled by physical injury, when surgery is impending, when nagging illness lingers or when faced with that horrifying refrain, "There is no



DAN WINKLER

Gus Nichols Yet Speaks

For over fifty years, people thrilled at the great preaching of Bro. Gus Nichols of Jasper, Alabama. Although Bro. Gus is no longer with us, we are still able to hear his mighty words of truth. Through the generosity of the Nichols family, we have permission to publish a collection of his gospel sermons on cassette tapes. Volume I contains the following lessons: "I Believe God," "Dangers Facing the Church," "Jesus Learned Obedience," "Keys to a Happy Home," "The Holy Spirit," and "The Blood of Jesus." In the year this album has been available it has been eagerly bought by our brethren.

Now we are privileged to offer a *second* volume of sermons. The topics are: "Spiritual Growth," "Christ the Hope of the World," "Right Attitude Toward Truth and Error," "The Elders and Church Problems," "Biblical Principles of Interpretation," and "What Is Relevant Preaching?"

The sermons are reproduced on the best quality C-90 cassettes and each group is packaged in an attractive vinyl album making it suitable for your bookshelf.

To encourage the circulation of these valuable lessons, easily worth \$26 each retail, we offer either of them as a gift to all who send a \$16 tax deductible contribution to the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, Tennessee 37921.

Albums are also available by Hugo McCord, Virgil Trout, E. Claude Gardner, and John Waddey for the same consideration.



JOHN WADDEY

The Difference Between Righteousness And Evil

There is only one way to judge or discern right from wrong. That is by the use of God's word. The Hebrew writer said, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). He is saying that those who are able to judge between good and evil are those whose senses have been exercised by continual use of



BOBBY NORRIS

God's word. Regular study of God's word is spiritual exercise which strengthens our spiritual muscles (mind), and sharpens our sense of right and wrong.

Doing right requires definite thought, planning. You'll never be better than you plan to be. Solomon said, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). We become what we think about. Paul said we should think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and things that are of good report. He further said, "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). But no thought or conviction is required to be evil. You can become worse than you ever meant to be. Surely, David never set out to be an adulterer and murderer. Certainly, Judas never intended to betray innocent blood, nor to be a son of perdition. Surely, righteous Lot did not believe that his daughters would grow up in Sodom and learn of their ways, and that he would be the father of his own grandchildren, when he decided to pitch his tent toward Sodom.

Evil is the way of the majority while righteousness is the way of few. Jesus said there is a broad way and a narrow way (Matt. 7:13,14). The children of Israel were commanded, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). In matters of right and wrong, the majority is usually wrong. If "everybody is doing it," it would be wise to avoid it for that very reason.

Evil will disguise itself as righteousness to make itself acceptable. But never does righteousness disguise itself as evil. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:14,15). The wolf dresses in sheep's clothing, but never does the sheep dress in wolf's clothing (Matt. 7:15). This is why there are hypocrites in the church. They are unfaithful, but want to have the appearance of faithfulness. The opposite of this would be impossible. A faithful Christian could not remain so while putting on the appearance of wickedness. Such a charade would negate faithfulness.

Evil appeals to the sensual, carnal part of man, while righteousness appeals to the spiritual part of man created in the image of God. Compare the works of the flesh to the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-24). Paul said the Corinthians were carnal, though they were Christians. They still delighted in the carnal, sensual things (I Cor. 3:3). Compare this with those who are attracted to that which is true, honest, just, pure and lovely (Phil. 4:8). James compares the two appeals like this: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:15-17).

The righteous know they are serving God, while the wicked think they are doing just as they please, but are actually serving Satan. Jesus said, "Whosoever

committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Paul said, "His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16). The gossip, the drunkard, the drug addict, the fornicator, the homosexual, and the wilful absentee all think they are doing their own thing, but are doing the devil's thing. They are enslaved to him while thinking they are free. But the righteous know they are not free to do anything their heart may desire. They must constantly exercise self-control in order to please their master.

The righteous seek to become better and better. "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16). But the

wicked get worse and worse. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). The faithful want to continue to grow (Eph. 4:12-16; I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 3:18), and be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). The wicked could repent and obey God, if they would. It is God's wish that they should do so (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9). But while living in rebellion to God, there is no way they can get better, only worse.

Only by regular Bible study will we be able to distinguish good from evil. But this is only the starting point. We must be obedient to God's word. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). — 260 Scott Road Toney, AL 35773.

The Drawing Power Of Jesus

Continued from page 2

hope," remember to pray (Phil. 4:6).

(2) "Carried our sorrows" (v. 4). Amidst the turbulence of Galilee and the apostles' despair, were the words, "Peace, be still" (Matt. 4:35-39). Before the tomb of Lazarus and tears of Mary and Martha, Jesus wept and beckoned, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:17-44). In the face of his own death he comforted those on Calvary's way with, "Weep not for me" (Lk. 23:28). Today he is touched (lit. sympathizes) with his brethren's infirmities (Heb. 4:15). So remember when disappointed by a brother or sister in the Lord; when suffering ill-treatment from a non-Christian; when forsaken by a Christian companion to tread the Christian path alone; when difficulties arise at work; when the pangs of childbirth reveal an infant distorted or deranged; when challenges of teens seem almost too much to bear; or when the death angel leaves hollowness of heart, an empty chair, and a void in one's life . . . he cares!

(3) "Wounded for our transgressions" (v. 5). "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4), and for such Jesus was wounded from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. A diadem of derision pierced his beloved brow. Rugged Roman spikes penetrated those hands that tenderly placed moistened clay on the eyes of a blind man and those feet that dared to walk on the sea of Galilee. A razor-sharp spear head thrust into his side leaving a wound that would later challenge the faith of Thomas. For whose transgressions?!

(4) "Bruised for our iniquities" (v. 5). Prophesied and fulfilled in Jesus was the promise, "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more" (Jer. 31:31ff; Heb. 8:12). The beatings Jesus experienced were involved in making such possible (cf. Mk. 14:65; Lk. 22:63,64; John 18:19-23). For whose iniquities?

(5) "The chastisement of our peace was upon him" (v. 5). Peace with self (Matt. 22:39), others (Rom. 12:18), and with God (Phil. 4:7) are made available through Jesus. "Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin. The blood of Jesus whispers peace within." For whose peace?

(6) "With his stripes we are healed" (5). He was scourged with an implement so cruel it was known infamously as "the scorpion." Such was a whip of leather thongs loaded with lead and armed with sharp spikes, jagged bone, etc. which severed the flesh, exposed the sinew, and caused blood to run red and deep. For whose health did he undergo such?

Sum it up? "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6). In short, Jesus influences so many lives because he vicariously gave himself to suffering and death (Matt. 20:28; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; 8:9; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 2:24).

II. *What He Did Among Man* (vv. 7-9)

(1) "He did no violence" (v. 9). Per man's humanistic standards, he had all the right to submit to

violence. At the hands of others he experienced: (a) Injustice (vv. 7,8); (b) ingratitude (v. 8); and (c) insult (v. 9), though he was innocent (v. 8). For far less, riots have broken out in streets and nations have risen against nations. But he did no violence!

(2) "Neither was guile found in his mouth" (v. 9). One lie would have saved him from torture and death. All he had to do was name a father to his accusers. But he was the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Doing the will of his Father, his speech was seasoned with righteousness (Prov. 25:11). He never disguised a lie with a half-truth. He never gift-wrapped a lie within the frills of flattery. He never hid the truth behind the mask of hypocrisy. He always spoke the truth (cf. John 14:1-3).

Sum it up? Peter uses this same terminology with reference to Jesus' sinless example (I Pet. 2:21,22). (a) His example was immaculate! (v. 22) His eyes refused to wonder where they should not. His lips refrained from hasty slips. His ears never dried and cracked being exposed to the hot air of a whispering tongue. His conduct was checked and blameless rather than unrestrained and reckless. No impure thought made its home in his mind, and his heart was meek and lowly. (b) His example therefore, Christians are to immitate (v. 21; cf. II Cor. 3:18; Phil 2:5).

III. *What He Offers To Man* (vv. 10-12)

(1) "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand" (v. 10). The pleasure of Jehovah is the salvation of man (cf. I Cor. 1:21). Looking through the telescope of predictive prophecy, Isaiah saw that God's plans to save man through Jesus were safe. Such plans would prosper! He offers SALVATION (I John 4:14).

(2) "he [God] . . . shall be satisfied" (v. 11). The satisfaction of divine justice is termed by Paul as "justification" (Rom. 3:23-26). He offers JUSTIFICATION (Rom. 5:9).

(3) "Bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (v. 12). He offers INTERCESSION (Rom. 8:32-34; cf. I Tim. 2:5).

Conclusion

The saddest refrain of the whole chapter are the words, "we esteemed him not" (v. 3). Imagine that! The creator of worlds; the one who holds the secret of life itself; the one in whom is all authority in heaven and earth; and the one deserving of all preeminence, and "we esteemed him not." Every man, woman, and child should grip tightly the teaching of Isaiah 53 and shout with Paul, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" — Rt. 2 Box 240, Woodbury, Tennessee 37190.

Many of the most firmly held beliefs are based solidly on ignorance.



Winfred Clark



E. L. Whitaker



Ben F. Vick, Jr.



J. T. Marlin



Lindon Ferguson



Bert Thompson



J. F. Camp



Kenny Andrews



Basil Overton



J. H. Renshaw



Leon C. Cole



John G. Priola



R. L. Curry



Kenneth Burleson



Glenn M. Lee



James W. Boyd



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.



Keith A. Mosher



R. J. Hearn



Max R. Miller

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

MARCH 20-24, 1983

Memphis School of Preaching

4400 Knight Arnold Road

Memphis, TN 38118

GENERAL THEME: "Ancient Truth and the Restoration"

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

Sunday, March 20, 1983

- 10:30 a.m. E. L. Whitaker
- 6:00 p.m. J. F. Camp "Basic Principles of the Restoration" No. 1

Monday, March 21, 1983

- 9:00 a.m. R. L. Curry "Mysteries of the Bible"
- 10:00 a.m. Keith A. Mosher "Standard of Authority in Religion and its Source"
- 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Emily Huffard "Coping with Stress" (Ladies Class)
- 11:00 a.m. J. F. Camp "Basic Principles of the Restoration" No. 2
- 11:50 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
- 1:10 p.m. Leon C. Cole "The Gospel versus Liberalism"
- 2:10 p.m. Glenn M. Lee "The Restoration: Preach the Word"
- 3:10 p.m. R. J. Hearn "One Kind of Preaching Needed Today"
- 4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER
- 7:00 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
- 7:15 p.m. John G. Priola "Keep That Which is Committed to thy Trust"
- 8:10 p.m. Max R. Miller "Evidences of the Deity of Christ and the Virgin Birth"

Tuesday, March 22, 1983

- 9:00 a.m. Kenny Andrews "Planting the Seed of the Kingdom and Results"
- 10:00 a.m. Charles B. Myers "Things that Cannot Be Moved"
- 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Emily Huffard "Coping with Stress" (Ladies Class)
- 11:00 a.m. James Moffett "We Must Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel"
- 11:50 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
- 1:10 p.m. Winfred Clark "Dangers Involved in Taking Liberties with God's Word"
- 2:10 p.m. E. L. Whitaker "Need for Continued Emphasis of the Restoration"
- 3:10 p.m. James W. Boyd "The Digger of Old Wells"
- 4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER

Tuesday, March 22, 1983 (continued)

- 7:00 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
- 7:15 p.m. Winfred Clark "The Need for Bible Preaching versus Human Philosophy and Theology"
- 8:10 p.m. J. T. Marlin "The Church the Falling Away and the Restoration"

Wednesday, March 23, 1983

- 9:00 a.m. J. H. Renshaw "Evidences of the Inspiration of the Bible"
- 10:00 a.m. Max R. Miller "Wonders of Creation"
- 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Emily Huffard "Coping with Stress" (Ladies Class)
- 11:00 a.m. Bert Thompson "Paleontology and the Fossil Record"
- 11:50 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
- 1:10 p.m. Paul Sain "Genuineness of Genesis One and the Days of Creation"
- 2:10 p.m. Robert R. Taylor, Jr. "Clear-cut Arguments against Evolution"
- 3:10 p.m. Kenneth Burleson "Power of the Gospel versus Gimmicks in Reaching the Lost"
- 4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER
- 7:00 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
- 7:15 p.m. Basil Overton "Evidences of the Existence of God"
- 8:10 p.m. Bert Thompson "Evolution a Threat to the Christian Home"

Thursday, March 24, 1983

- 9:00 a.m. Willie Bradshaw "Fight the Good Fight of Faith"
- 10:00 a.m. Basil Overton "Theistic Evolution Refuted"
- 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Emily Huffard "Coping with Stress" (Ladies class)
- 11:00 a.m. Bert Thompson "The Bible, Science and the Age of the Earth"
- 11:50 a.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
- 1:10 p.m. Lindon Ferguson "Holding Fast the Pattern of Sound Words"
- 2:10 p.m. C. A. Cates "The Doctrine of Special Creation"
- 3:10 p.m. Roger Jackson "Awakenings of the Restoration"
- 4:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER
- 7:00 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
- 7:15 p.m. Ben F. Vick, Jr. "Ancient Truth and the Restoration"
- 8:10 p.m. Robert R. Taylor, Jr. "Influence of Christianity versus Evolution"



James Moffett



Roger Jackson



Mrs. Emily Huffard



Willie Bradshaw



Charles B. Myers



C. A. Cates



Words Of

(USPS 691-7)

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— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1983

NUMBER 9

A Man Who Arose In The Night

Nehemiah was an outstanding leader among the people of God. One of the qualities that marked him such a leader was his ardent interest in the plight of his people Israel. When notified of the condition of Jerusalem in its desolation, Nehemiah "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven" (Neh. 1:4). So moved was he by his "sorrow of heart" that



JERRI MANASCO

his mood reflected itself in his countenance (Neh. 2:1-3). When asked by the Persian monarch (whom he served as cupbearer) why he was so troubled, Nehemiah explained the cause of his distress to be the fate of Jerusalem. This great Jewish man even had the boldness to request that the king grant him authorization to return to his land to assist in the rebuilding of the fallen walls (Neh. 2:4-8)!

Upon being granted his request Nehemiah made his journey with the protection of a military accompaniment (Neh. 2:9). Although this "grieved" Israel's enemies Nehemiah would not allow himself to be thwarted in his purpose, but continued his trip as planned. After settling in, Nehemiah "arose in the night" to begin a secret survey of the work that needed to be done (Neh. 2:12-17). From this point a great task was begun and ultimately completed, even in the shadow of much opposition. What a man was this Nehemiah!! How we do envy his zeal!!

That he "arose in the night" suggests to us some pertinent observations:

1. It suggests the caution exercised in his initial survey of the ruins. He had but "some few men" with him (2:12), and even these had apparently not been informed of his intent. Going out by night would provide some insurance that their enemies would not prematurely develop suspicions and wreck the work even before it was begun. It is sometimes a mark of wisdom to keep some things to oneself before revealing it to others. "A fool uttereth all his mind:

but a wise man keepeth it in til afterwards" (Prov. 29:11). Nehemiah would have betrayed a folly unbecoming a real leader if he had launched out upon a building program without first carefully analyzing the problem in order to develop a practical and workable plan of action. Prematurely inciting the people to work would have revealed incompetence and doomed the work to failure. Good leadership in churches first has a good mental picture of what they want to accomplish; when they know where they want to go and why, their flock is sure to lend an enthusiastic following (Neh. 2:18; 4:6).

2. Rising up in the night suggests the convenience of a time of quiet solitude. The best time for reflection is when one's mind will be least influenced by outside intrusions. "In the night his song shall be with me" (Psa. 42:8). What better time for the soul to be lifted to the heights of its greatest possibilities than the moments of private contemplation? Jesus withdrew from the multitudes, and even from the Twelve on occasion, to be alone in prayer (Mk. 1:35; Matt. 14:23). In the stillness of the night Nehemiah could look upon the ruins of his beloved city and, in the

absence of the bustle and rush of the day, devote his mental energies to the solution of the problems at hand. Elders of the Lord's church would be much more effective if they, too, would withdraw into their solitudes to survey the problems of the local church and plot the direction to be taken.

3. Rising up in the night suggests the conscience that will not rest until the work is done. How beautiful this is expressed in the Psalm: "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (Psa. 132:3-5). How calloused is that leader of God's people who can rest lightly and sleep well when his heart is full of the knowledge that there are some in his care who are bitter, whose lives are floundering on the shoals of sin, and whose future is haunted with despair! It ill becomes the elder and hardly befits the preacher to find ease when the walls of the desolate city need to be raised from the rubble! We cannot wait for the morning light to begin our task. — Rt. 2 Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

Youth: Be A Credit To The Generation Gap

W. A. HOLLEY


"There is a generation that curse their father, and bless not their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men" (Proverbs 30:11-14).

There have been generation gaps throughout history. Those of us who are older have but to look back to our days of youth, and recall our own feelings of frustration and insecurity and lack of direction, to see the differences that existed then between the old and the young. At certain ages, most young people

think they know far more than they really do. One person said, "When I was ten years of age, I thought my parents knew everything; but when I reached the age of sixteen or seventeen, I had begun to doubt that they knew anything, and by the time I reached twenty-one, I was certain that my parents were ignoramuses of the first magnitude. Later, I married and became the parent of a child, and it is amazing just how much my parents have learned since then." Solomon, Socrates, and other ancient sages bear witness to this fact.

In the words of our text, we have mentioned four generations and their characteristics set forth. What

Continued On Page 3



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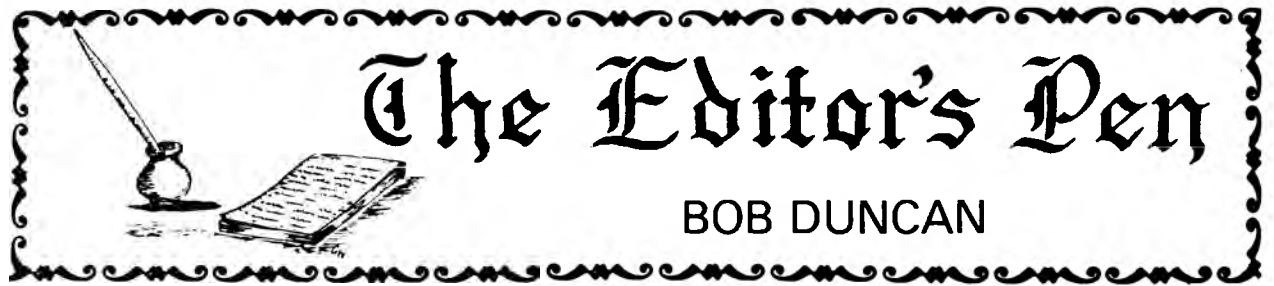
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Individual rates are \$1.80 per year. All bills payable to Northwest Alabamian, Box 430, Haleyville, Al. 35565.



Nakedness

Dear Abby has missed it again. A reader had written to ask advice about a certain problem she had with her fiance. It seems the young lady and her fiance were made for each other except for the foolish inhibitions of the lad with reference to nudity. For some strange reason, he would not agree to visit the nudist colony and parade around in the altogether, as the young lady and her family had been accustomed to doing on somewhat of a regular basis. His strange reluctance to do so was a problem of major proportions so far as their marriage was concerned, for the bride-to-be just could not imagine herself deprived of such a pleasant and important pastime. How could she possibly spend the rest of her life with one who refused to go naked in public? Dear Abby's answer was to the effect that perhaps the young lady could persuade the young man to try it, and maybe he would like it, once he sees how healthy and wholesome a practice it is.



BOB DUNCAN

The fact such silly advice would be published is an index to the moral decay of our society. The very idea that it is thought strange that one would refuse to go naked would be funny if it were not so sad. Some of us are old enough to remember when the idea of visiting a nudist colony would not be mentioned in polite society, but now the odd-ball is the one who refuses to do so.

The people of God need to remember that, in God's word, nakedness is always associated with sin and shame. Adam and Eve recognized, only after their sin, that they were naked, and they were ashamed of it, and hid themselves (Genesis 3:7-11). Noah became shamefully naked while he was drunken (Genesis 9:21-23). The Israelites which worshiped the golden calf were naked to their shame (Exodus 32:25).

It should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with these Old Testament incidents that, in the New Testament, nakedness becomes symbolical of sin and shame. The Laodiceans were naked and didn't know it. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). It is sad when people are naked, but it is even more sad when people who are naked do not know it. The sin of lukewarmness which was the blight of the church at Laodicea is the curse of many churches today.

The Ephesians were taught to "put off" certain things and to "put on" others (Ephesians 4:22-24). It is not enough just to "put off" that which is evil; we must also "put on" that which is good. But it must be remembered that one cannot "put on" that which is good until he first "puts off" that which is evil.

Those who have been baptized into Christ have "put on" Christ (Galatians 3:26,27). It is only in Christ that we can be new creatures (II Corinthians 5:17). Those who reject baptism are naked so far as

Christ and salvation are concerned.

In II Corinthians 5:1-4 Heaven itself is referred to as being clothed. "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. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

From a spiritual standpoint we think Dear Abby and all others who would advise visiting the nudist colony are already more naked than they realize.

What Are Your Plans?

J. C. CHOATE

Often in the Lord's work we get bogged down in a series of activities and that becomes our routine, week after week and month after month. We are doing something, but not accomplishing very much. It may be that we have even forgotten the reasons and purposes behind all of these things. It is even possible to become bored and weary in well doing.

Let me ask you point blank, what are your plans? Do you have any plans? Do you have any goals? If you don't have any, you need to make some. How can your Christian life be exciting; how can you measure your work; how can you know where you are and where you are going without any plans and goals for the future?

Is it any wonder that the church is not growing, that souls are not being converted, that the erring are not returning to the Lord when we as leaders in the church just drift along year after year? It is easy to use the excuse that people aren't interested any more. It is easy to be lazy and unproductive. But this kind of thing will eventually kill the church, and it will destroy us.

We are living in exciting times. The world needs the gospel more than ever because there are more souls now to save than ever before. Satan and all kinds of sin are challenging us. People all around us are crying out for help. What are we going to do? Will we close our eyes to all of this? Or will we open our eyes to the needs and opportunities all around us? How we need to look upon the fields and see that they are white unto the harvest (John 4:35). We also need to remember the command of Jesus that we take the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15,16). The gospel of Christ is still the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16,17). The sword of the Spirit, the word of God, is still sharp and able to pierce the hearts of men and women if we will but use it (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12)

As preachers, teachers, leaders, and Christians, we need to wake up, get up, and go to work. We need

Good Works

God's word has much to say about the Christian and good works. In fact a man cannot be a faithful Christian unless he reflects the proper spirit and attitude toward good works for God. Jesus 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).

We are saved "unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). Before the church was planted on earth, God planned that good works would be part of the Christian vocation. We are saved that we might be "zealous of good works" as his children (Titus 2:14).

God works in the world through his people who do good works in his name. As we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, it is God working in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13). Paul praised God for supplying every need (Philippians 4:19), but he thanked the brethren at Philippi for sending him financial assistance on many occasions (Philippians 4:15-16). As a poet once put it, God has no hands but our hands to do his good deeds for men.

Good works are like sacrificial gifts unto Christ. In the majestic judgment scene of Matthew 25, Jesus taught that when Christians feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the sick we are actually doing it unto him (Matthew 25:34-40). Our reward for such will be to hear him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . ." Paul likened the gifts of the Philippian brethren to "an offering of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18).

Christian good works are those which God authorizes and approves. Inspired Scripture furnishes us completely unto every good work (II Timothy 3:17). Whatever good works we do must be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus", i.e., by his



JOHN WADDEY

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The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

(No. 2)

The initial article suggested a number of cogent reasons why we should preach on repentance. Now we turn to another fundamental facet of the Bible Doctrine of Repentance.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Within the realm of religion there exists a number of misconceptions relative to the topic we are examining. Some seek to make sorrow and repentance into synonyms. Even though there is a kindred relationship between the right

kind of sorrow and repentance, yet sorrow in and of itself is not repentance. The man caught in theft may feel sorry. The executive who is caught with his embezzling hands in the company till may experience sorrow. The person who is caught in flagrant falsehood may feel sorrow. The murderer who is apprehended and charged with homicide may feel sorrow. The couple caught up in a lascivious and illicit liaison of fornication or adultery may shed tears of sorrow. The DWI may feel sorrow when sobriety returns and he faces a criminal charge for having killed a couple while he was too drunk to know what he was doing. All the foregoing may feel sorrow because they have been caught, because their crimes and sins are now widely known, because they may face arrest, a trial and even a prison sentence. They may experience sorrow because their sins have found them out (Numbers 32:23) and due to the fact they are now receiving the kickback (no longer the kicks) of their sins. Now they are sensing personally that the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13:15). Yet not a single one of these may ever actually repent of his crimes. This is seen in a number of Bible incidents.

The closing period of Saul's reign over the tottering Hebrew polity exhibits his sorrow that God was no longer on his side. Yet he did not genuinely repent or turn from his disloyalty to Jehovah God and disservice to his nation. Wicked Herod Antipas experienced sorrow when the sensual Salome, after her lascivious dance stood completed before the lusty audience, requested John's head in a platter. Herod lost his head *figuratively* when he promised her anything up to half his kingdom. As a result John the Baptist lost his head *literally*. Yet Herod performed the dastardly deed within a sense of sorrow. Matthew 14 and Mark 6 relate this depraved deed. Mark 6:26 informs us that the atrocious Antipas "was exceeding sorry." Yet the subsequent verse, Mark 6:27, observes his execution of the just John, one of the best men who ever lived. Herod sorrowed but not to repentance, and not into an amended life of love and loyalty to God and man. In II Corinthians 7:10 Paul affirms that "the sorrow of the world worketh death." This is what all the foregoing had.

Some feel that sorrow with a confession on the lips equals repentance. But this is not necessarily so. Saul, the mad monarch, confessed to Samuel the prophet, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words . . ." (I Sam. 15:24). His subsequent life proves his total lack of real repentance. Samuel refused to be taken in by Saul's lip service (I Sam. 15:26ff). Judas Iscariot experienced sorrow. He even returned the blood money to his former colleagues in the crimson crime of the centuries — the betrayal and murder of the Marvelous Messiah. He confessed that he had sinned in betraying the innocent blood (Matt. 27:3). Relative

to Judas, brother B. C. Goodpasture once said, "His heart was swept with regret and remorse, for such is the meaning of the word in the original." His sorrow drove him to suicide — not to real repentance and amended life.

Repentance is often confused with godly sorrow. They are related but are not synonyms. In II Corinthians 7:10 Paul affirmed that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of . . ." These two are related as cause and effect. Godly sorrow is cause; repentance is effect. Repentance is the product; it succeeds godly sorrow; godly sorrow precedes it.

Again, repentance is frequently confused with

reformation of life. Again they are related but in a cause-effect realm as with godly sorrow and repentance. Repentance is the cause; reformation of life or amended life is the effect. Repentance precedes reformation; an amended life succeeds repentance. John the Baptist told the proud Pharisees and the skeptical Sadducees to "Bring forth therefore fruits meet [worthy] for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). Repentance exhibits itself in a reformed life; this is its fruit or effect. The next article will define repentance positively. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Youth: Be A Credit To The Generation Gap

Continued From Page 1

are they? The first, those who do not honor, but evil treat their parents. The second, those who are self-righteous, supposing themselves pure, but were not so. The third, those who were full of pride, vanity, and insolence. The fourth, the cruel, greedy, and oppressive to the poor.

We do not argue that all young people are bad. We recognize that many thousands of our youth are gold, silver, and precious stones. For many young people it is almost impossible to be ashamed and to blush (Jeremiah 3:3; 6:15; 8:12). Sin has case-hardened their minds, seared their consciences, and removed all pity from their hearts. It may be that youth has been given a bad image because of the conduct of a few unpatriotic and pro-revolutionaries, who claim to be leaders of all youth.

How can we account for the unrighteous conduct of so many young people? One report says that there are 50,310,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 24, and of that number only 12,577,500 have some confidence in organized religion. These figures apply to our own nation! This means that we are producing in America today a nation of spiritually underfed and religiously illiterate youth.

Mr. George Gallop, the pollster, in a recent survey, disclosed:

(1) One-fourth of all teen-agers never read the Bible.

(2) Fifteen percent cannot name even one of the 10 Commandments and only three percent can name all 10.

(3) Teen-agers lack a basic knowledge of our religious history and traditions.

Mr. Gallop described the general trend of religious training stopping in childhood or early teens: "Thus," he said, "we find people who may have a Ph.D. in aerodynamics and yet only a third grade knowledge of religion."

We are alarmed! The churches of Christ need to recognize a crisis exists in reaching our young people with the gospel of Christ. This fact is true more than ever! Millions of young people have never heard the simple truth of the gospel. Parents, elders, preachers desperately need to awake to their responsibilities! Truth preached will change lives and save souls (I Peter 1:22-25; Romans 1:16-17; Acts 2:36-38). In a day when we must fight humanistic philosophies, man's opinions, and questionable values, the only solution is a return to the word of God! (John 8:30-32; 12:48; Galatians 1:6-9).

Some of the greatest human needs are: (1) Parents

who really care about their children; (2) Parents who will assume their responsibility; (3) Parents who possess the courage to say "NO" when it ought to be said; (4) Parents who abdicate not their authority and place as parents, no matter what the pressure may be.

What can youth do so as to be a credit to the generation gap?

(1) Try really hard to be honorable in your dealings with others; to treat others right will reflect honor upon yourself.

(2) Seek to associate with the best people you can find. Friends are important but they can either make you or they can break you. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals. Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak this to move you to shame" (I Corinthians 15:33-34).

(3) Youth should learn early in life that too much familiarity, outside of marriage, breeds contempt. A girl who permits herself to be fondled will soon find that she has lost her virtue and self-respect too. Boys cannot really respect a girl who permits them too much liberty. There is something about this evil that makes the participants feel cheap and washed-out. Parking and heavy petting lead to destruction of both character and the soul. Who wants a wilted rose??

(4) Win the confidence and trust of your parents. If you have any true friends in the world, they are your parents. Do what you say you will do; refuse to tell them lies; always tell the truth even if it shows you in a bad light. When in trouble you will be forced to fall back upon your parents, so start building bridges of communication now. Thus, take your troubles to your parents. And, parents, if you wish to exercise some measure of control over your children, be ready to try honestly to understand their personality and problems.

(5) Young people, set high goals of achievement and sincerely try to reach them. You may be the means of building up the church and thus saving it in your own generation (Joshua 24:31; I Timothy 4:16). You may be the driving force that redirects the course of our nation and the world (Proverbs 14:34).

Thank God! The young do not have to be rebellious and riotous and profligate!! Youth: Be a credit to the generation gap. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Do not expect a thousand-dollar answer to a ten-cent prayer.

Good Works

Continued From Page 2

authority (Colossians 3:17). We are to do all things whatsoever he has commanded (Matt. 28:20). Paul reminds us that we ought to seek to please God in all our activities (I Thess. 4:1). A faithful disciple will never engage in the kind of works that would displease God, for example, such as to promote religious error or division, or such as would compromise the church or the gospel before the world. Needless to say he would not participate in any activity that supports sin and wickedness.

Good works have great teaching value. When men see our good works, they will glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Good works by Christians can stop the mouths of evil doers who would try to discredit us (I Pet. 2:12). God is glorified when we bear much fruit for his name (John 14:8).

Good works must be seen in proper perspective. Our salvation is not of works lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9). It is by grace through faith. Works

done in righteousness which we do ourselves cannot save. We are saved by God's mercy through the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5). These verses teach that we are saved by the grace of God. Grace means unearned or unmerited favor. We could never do sufficient good works to earn salvation. It is the *free gift* of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). Thus God saves us, "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ . . ." (II Tim. 1:9). Our good works then are a reflection of our faith and love for our Lord (John 14:15).

There are two attitudes toward good works. The faithful brother will bear "fruit in every good work" (Col. 1:10). As Paul exhorts, we will be "rich in good works" (I Tim. 6:18). We will avoid all ostentation in our works (Matt. 6:1). We will provoke our brethren unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24). Preachers

especially are to charge their hearers to be rich in good works, ready to share their prosperity (I Tim. 6:17-18). All should be careful to maintain good works

that have been launched (Titus 3:8). Unfaithful disciples are reprobate unto good works (Titus 1:16).

Be assured that "God is not unrighteous to forget [our] work and love which we showed toward his name in that [we] ministered unto the saints . . ." (Hebrews 6:10). When the Lord Jesus comes with his holy angels and sits upon the throne of glory, those who have been rich in faith and full of good works will hear him say "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and ye gave me to eat . . ." (Matthew 25:34-35). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

What Are Your Plans?

Continued from Page 2

to make some plans and then work those plans. We need to get some goals and then be determined to reach them. Once that is done we should set our goals a little higher. We cannot become satisfied with what we are doing. We cannot allow ourselves to think that we are doing enough. It is not that the Lord is forcing us to do more or that our brethren are making us do it. But we are doing it because we love the Lord, and the souls of men; we love our own souls and we want to stay alive spiritually; we want to go to heaven.

We are the ones who must take the initiative. If there are no opportunities then we must create opportunities. If things are going slow then we must

take on some new work. What about your own community or city? Take a close look at what you are doing. Ask yourself, what can I do to help change things here? Once you begin to work on this problem, and you begin to produce, then you are going to get excited. And the more you do, and the more you produce, then the more you will want to produce.

Brethren, we just must get out of the negative and out of the mood we are in. We can overcome; we can win souls; we can grow; we can be successful if we will only allow the Lord to work in us to accomplish his purposes. Let's take a new lease on life. Let us show ourselves and prove to the Lord and to the world that

we are not dead, but that Christianity is alive in us and that we are going out to fight the good fight of faith with every confidence that we will obtain victory in Christ.

My brother, my sister in Christ, what are your plans? What are your goals? As a preacher, teacher, leader, as a Christian, whoever you are and wherever you are, what are you doing? What are you going to do? Surely all of us can do more and must do more, and we will do more if we will make plans and set goals that will move us forward to do so. May God help us to begin to do that now. — Rt. 2 Box 156 Winona, MS 38967.

Lessons From The Book Of Job

JOHNNY RAMSEY

One of the richest sections of Holy Scripture is the fabulous treatise on human suffering known as Job. This neglected book's emphasis is the patience of God and the endurance of its titled character (James 5:11). There are at least ten major passages in Job that project lessons we all need to learn. Let me share with you several outstanding points in Job and then make application of these gems of Biblical revelation.

Satan's Energetic Work. Even though Jehovah surrounds us with His infinite love the Devil tries incessantly to overwhelm us. Due to the frailty of our humanity the great enemy of our soul often is victorious. As Jesus stated in Luke 22:31 Satan does indeed desire to capture us but we must not give him any opportunity (Ephesians 4:27). If the restless adversary (I Peter 5:8) did not fear to tempt Jesus face to face (Matthew 4) we may be forever sure that he will confront us also! Chapter one of Job proves that the Devil has "unmitigated gall."

We Must Be Humble Before Our Maker. One of the unique features of this quaint book is the struggle within Job himself. At times this treatise reminds us of Paul's personal battle in Romans 7. There are mountain peaks of devotion and deep valleys of despair in the life of Job. Moments of doubt and depression blend with grand vows of faith. In chapter 1:21 and 13:15 then finally in 42:5-6 we thrill to the ardent conviction of one of God's great heroes. Job admitted that he brought nothing into this world and would take nothing out. And, even though God would slay him yet would Job trust the Almighty. In the last chapter of the book, penitent and humbled, Job confesses his respect for the dignity of the Creator.

There is a richness in the tones of Job's contriteness that "rivals" even the pathos and tenderness of Psalms 51. Job learned that God's will shall be done whether we do it or not!

The Short-Lived Prosperity of the Wicked. In Job 20:4-9 we powerfully learn how shallow and brief are the wages of sin! When we contrast this passage with Psalms 119:67-71 we plainly see the value of suffering even for a season if we let such tribulation make us more spiritual as over against the brief joy of earthly pomp and the enduring nature of torment for the wicked. A great commentary on this thought is Luke 16:19-31 and Matthew 6:19-21! Job's days were "swifter than a weaver's shuttle" and would "soon flee away" (7:6; 9:25) but he could look forward to an enduring reward.

The Light Christ Sheds On The Old Testament. We have often said that the Old Testament concealed and the New revealed. Graphically our study in Job illustrates this principle. In 9:33 of Job we read of the *longing and need* for a mediator or advocate to plead that ancient patriarch's case. Yes, someone between God and man — heaven and earth — to assist Job in his pitiable plight. That man's wife, three best friends, and a young, self-appointed prophet only added additional sorrow to his life. How lonely was Job without a daysman to make intercession! But, today, Christians do have what Job longed for. (Please read I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25.)

A Yearning View of the Future. Job 3:17 definitely belongs in the hall of fame of beautiful verses. In the midst of intense pain and bitter tears of loneliness the man of God longs for the place "where the

wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest." He knew that his Redeemer was alive and would bless all men in the last days (compare Job 19:25 with Acts 2:16-17). Just as "Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (42:12) so shall God's tomorrow be brighter than today for all the faithful.

Jesus answered the longing cry of Job 14:14 — "If a man die shall he live again" — in the famous setting of John 11 when he raised Lazarus from the grave. The only real suffering will belong to those who so live as to miss the triumph over death which Christ provides! Thanks be unto God for the victory that overcomes death, the grave and even the world (I Corinthians 15:55-57 and I John 5:4). — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

The favorite cereal of juvenile delinquents is "Wild Oats."

* * * *

Another war worth waging is one against the poverty of ideas.

* * * *

Those who pray only when in trouble at least know where to turn for help.

* * * *

The man with a new idea is often considered a crank until the idea succeeds.

* * * * *

Ideas are like children. No matter how much you like other people's, you can't help thinking your own are best.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Methods Of Discipline Which Will Work

In the churches of Christ the matter of discipline (which often must result in disfellowship) is both properly used and grossly misused. Some congregations neglect it altogether; others exercise it too seldom or indiscriminately; still others enact it with harshness and as punishment. And only a few are really successful with it.

Yet the Bible is very clear as to its necessity, the administering of it, and the Christian attitude with which it is to be exercised. The scriptural idea of discipline is loving correction, not punishment and vengeance. Paul instructs, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness . . ." (Galatians 6:1). Vengeance and wrath do not belong to us, but rather to God (Romans 12:17-19). Therefore, discipline is corrective, not punitive.

However, this fact should never cause us to be disinclined to carry through with discipline. God must have some way to keep us faithful and correction is that way (Hebrews 12:5-13). The Bible also is clear in its commands to exercise it (II Thessalonians 3:6, 13-15; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:1-13), and we flagrantly disobey when we neglect it or administer it wrongly. But the fact remains that it is designed to be corrective, and if that fails, then a purging for the church.

Since scriptural discipline is designed to be corrective, then a Godly attitude *MUST* be exhibited. Our perfect example of a loving spirit is that spirit which God, the Father, has when he corrects us (Heb. 12:6; II Pet. 3:9). In the congregation it should be initiated and overseen by the elders (Acts 20:28;



RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

Heb. 13:17). It should be done in love for the soul of the fallen person (II Thess. 3:15), and for the welfare of the church (I Cor. 5:6-7).

The problems among us usually do not arise from **WHAT** to do, but rather **HOW** to do it. But if we follow the scriptures, principles of genuine love, and just use plain old common sense, **CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE CAN WORK**. And, isn't it our purpose to "restore such an one"?

The writer would like to share some methods which the church here at Warrington in Pensacola, FL, has used; and they worked. We feel that other congregations might benefit in considering some of these expedients. 1. The elders and preacher met specifically to discuss and pray for those who needed correction. In our congregation of 300, there were 23. (Percentages will probably be higher in congregations who have not exercised discipline in quite some time.)

2. A very *tender* and *loving* letter was mailed to each fallen member from the elders asking them to consider the dangers of their sins. Enclosed was an excellent tract written by Bro. Tom Estes entitled, "We Miss You." The tract is well-written and asks people to evaluate their spiritual situation. The letter also included an urgent entreaty for them to attend services on two specified Sunday mornings when the preacher would deliver lessons designed to remind them of their responsibilities to God, and the end result of failure to meet them (including disfellowship).

3. At the same time, an announcement was made to the congregation without naming names and a request was made that they contact fallen members and try to restore those on whom they could have most influence.

4. The elders and then the preacher visited with every fallen member in his home. The purpose was not to discuss the weather, but rather the serious condition of their souls.

5. Some time was given (about four weeks) for each person to come to grips with himself and make changes. Too often we don't allow people sufficient

time to repent and change.

6. To those who had not then responded, a second letter was mailed in the same spirit of love and care as the first.

7. At the same time the names of the individuals were announced to the congregation and they were again asked to contact them and attempt to restore them.

8. The elders then contacted members in the congregation who were closest to the fallen ones (relatives or closest friends in the congregation) and asked that they personally contact them. This accomplished two things. First, it placed the strongest influence to repent upon them (friends and relatives). And second, those closest to them had no room for anger or offense if withdrawal became necessary.

9. The elders made another visit in the homes of the unfaithful with sincere efforts to restore them.

10. Another period of time was given to effect change (four weeks, plus).


11. To those who had still not repented, a third letter was sent, again very lovingly, stating that if repentance had not been shown by a certain date (two weeks hence) a public announcement of withdrawal of fellowship would be made. Throughout all this time the congregation was continually urged to work diligently with these people.

12. On the pre-announced Sunday a statement of withdrawal from those who had not returned was read before the congregation according to the injunction in I Corinthians 5:4. The announcement was loving and left the door open, and even begged for repentance at any future time.

13. A final letter was mailed that same day to those still in error informing them of the withdrawal and stating the same love and entreaty as was expressed all along. Great efforts were made to word the letters in such a way as to make it clear to an honest heart that the door to return and repent would remain open.

14. Letters stating what action we had taken were

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"He Was Speechless"

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:11-13).



BOB DUNCAN

These words constitute the conclusion of the parable of the wedding of the king's son. It will be remembered that the ones originally invited to the wedding insulted the king and his son by refusing to come, by making light of the invitation, and even by spitefully entreating and slaying the king's servants. These the king punished by destroying them and burning up their city. The wedding was then furnished with guests when the servants were sent out into the highways to gather in all they found, both good and bad. In the parable, all but one of these clothed themselves in wedding garments and came to the wedding of the king's son. Why this one man did not have on a wedding garment we are not told. When asked about the matter, he was speechless.

The words *was speechless* are from a passive Greek verb, indicating the man was rendered speechless by the question asked by the king: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?"

The question itself refers not to how the guest was able to get into the premises without the customary wedding garment, but rather to how he could bring himself to do such a shameful thing. None of these guests deserved to be invited to this wedding; all of them had replaced the original guest list by the grace and goodness of the king, their host. Obviously the king himself even furnished the wedding garments, since all the guests had been gathered up from off the streets. How could one be so ungrateful as to insult the king, the son, the bride, and the wedding itself by failing to dress in the proper garment?

No wonder he was speechless! What could he say? "Your Majesty, I did not know a wedding garment was required"? No, he couldn't say that. Every other person present had on a wedding garment, and it had been made clear to all. "Your Highness, there was no wedding garment available to me"? No, he couldn't say that, for the king himself had seen to it that wedding garments were furnished all the guests. There was simply nothing he could say. "He was speechless."

If this wedding guest without the wedding garment represents those who are lost (and he does), then this parable illustrates a truth abundantly taught throughout the word of God, i.e., that man is a creature of choice. The Calvinist is wrong in trying to prove unconditional election by this parable. He says since the king furnished all the guests their wedding garments, this proves our salvation is altogether of

God, and not of ourselves. True, the king furnished the wedding garments, but each guest was responsible for accepting his wedding garment and putting it on. Otherwise, this man would not have been speechless. His reply would have been, "King, you already know why I am not dressed in a wedding garment. You failed to furnish me one, and I had no choice in the matter." The fact this guest had no answer and stood speechless disproves the Calvinistic theology.

Actually, those who are turned into hell will be "speechless" in so far as any legitimate argument with God is concerned. While some will question the judgment of God (Matthew 7:21-24), that judgment is immutable.

Friend, are you without a wedding garment? Do you not realize how gracious and good the King is to include you to be among those invited? And he even furnishes everything you need to be fully clothed as he would have you. But you must choose to accept the wedding garment, and put it on. How dare you insult the King, his Son, and the bride by your refusal to wear the wedding garment? What do you plan to say?

Methods Of Discipline Which Will Work

Continued from page 1

then sent to area congregations for informational purposes.

The greatest thing of all was that out of the original twenty-three who were fallen, *twenty repented* and were restored. *Only three* had to be disfellowshipped! We thank God! Brethren, it proves that if we obey God's commands to discipline, if we exercise it in the spirit of Christian love, and if the whole congregation is involved in the effort, **IT WILL WORK**, just like God said! — P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, Fla. 35207.

Where Is Our Faith?

SAM SOPER

A few days ago while looking at the local newspaper I read an article which I found to be very interesting. The article was concerning the amounts of donations that had been received by various denominations and religious groups throughout the United States. In particular it talked of the "T.V. Ministries" and I have listed below the top eight as well as the amounts received by each. I think it would do us all some good to reflect upon this matter very seriously.

1. The Armstrongs..... \$65 million
2. Oral Roberts 60 million

Continued on page 3

Send Sister Nichols A Card

On March 29 our beloved sister Nichols, widow of the late brother Gus Nichols, will celebrate her birthday. She will be eighty-nine. Her health is still reasonably good, and she rarely misses a service of the church. She is an inspiration to the rest of us, as she attends Wednesday nights, Sunday nights, Tuesday mornings, as well as both day and night services during gospel meetings.

Sister Nichols is at home with a daughter and son-in-law, brother and sister Frank Young, at 500 3rd Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501. What if every reader of this journal should send her a birthday card?

It Must First Come From The Home

Genesis 2:18-25 records the beginning of one of God's divine institutions, the home. God intended for the home to consist of one husband and one wife who are to devote themselves to one another and if they have children to rear them up in the way of the Lord. This is the way God designed the home and that's the way it should still be today.

Ephesians 6:4 reads, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he



RUSS CROSSWHITE

Continued on page 3

The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

(No. 3)

Reasons have been offered touching why it is imperative that we preach on repentance. A negative look at what repentance is not, occupied the gist of the previous article. Now we turn to a positive framework.

Godly sorrow precedes repentance. Paul so affirms in II Corinthians 7:10. Repentance results in reformation of life and restitution as far as is humanly possible. But precisely what is re-



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

pentance? Webster's second definition for *repent* is, "To change one's mind with regard to past or intended action, conduct, etc., on account of regret or dissatisfaction." Thayer, the eminent Greek lexicographer, defines the Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, in his Greek Lexicon as "a change of mind: as it appears in one who repents of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done . . . the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds . . ." (pp. 405-406). Bagster, in his Greek Lexicon, defines *metanoia* as "a change of mode of thought and feeling" (p. 266). In his classic work, **THE GREAT PREACHERS OF TODAY**, brother B. C. Goodpasture has a monumental sermon on repentance. It is one of the best sermons ever delivered on this timely topic. He defines repentance literally as meaning "a change of mind which results in a change of conduct" (p. 6). Rather comprehensively he says that repentance requires changed thinking, changed emotions and a changed will or volition. This is why one observes a definite change in a penitent person's speech, habits and daily deeds. He no longer goes to sinful places where he once went; he no longer loves the company of the wicked which he once relished and no longer does he disdain the company of the redeemed which he once held in utter contempt. Now he loves what he once hated and hates what he once loved. Repentance will move him to dissolve sinful states and corrupt relationships such as adulterous marriages in which he formerly lived. Repentance requires an about face. It does not mean to say, "I am sorry," with the lips and allow the same life style to stay in vogue. Repentance does NOT MEAN staying in sin and rebellion to Jehovah God.

A survey of some Bible cases will fully reflect what these definitions have stated. Jesus declared, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. 12:41). Just what did the former adamant Assyrians do when they repented? We turn back to the prophet's own book and the third division of it for our answer. In Jonah 3:2 Jehovah commanded the formerly reluctant prophet but now convinced Seer to "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." Jonah's crisp message was truthfully terse and fundamentally forceful. He "cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). The next verse informs us that they believed God, proclaimed a fast and donned sackcloth. This was done throughout the city (Jonah 3:5). The Ninevites believed God, but this was not repentance. This referred to their faith and had to

precede their repentance just as it does in our case today. They changed their minds toward sin and amended their wayward ways as exhibited repentance. The Assyrian monarch commanded each citizen of the apparently doomed city to vacate his evil ways and to eliminate violence from his hands. The Bible says they did this with an anticipation that God perhaps would lift the forty day penalty of total destruction (Jonah 3:9). The Bible says in Jonah 3:10, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." They repented and exhibited such by amended lives.

The prodigal son in the "Pearl of the Parables" or "The Parable of the Wonderful Father," as the Scottish people have called it, repented while in the far-off country of sin. He purposed to arise and return

to his forsaken father with a full confession on his lips (Luke 15:18,19). The subsequent verses depict his doing that. He truly repented. That is why he did not stay in the far-off country of sin and in the hopen of shame and degradation.

In the Parable of the Two Sons Jesus told about the Father's command that each go into the Father's vineyard. One said he would not go. Later he repented and went. The other promised compliance and went not. Which did the Father's will?, Jesus inquired. The audience answered that the first one obeyed the father. In this they were eminently right. His repentance is seen in the fact that he changed his mind and *went*. He did not say simply, "Father, I am sorry," and still refuse to go. Repentance demanded his going!! This is what Biblical repentance is all about. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

It Must First Come From The Home

Continued from page 2

will not depart from it." The training of children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" must *first* begin in the home. The writer of this article has had a lot of people outside of his family to influence him for good for which he is thankful; but the foundation came from the training received at home while growing up. Coaches, Bible class teachers, Youth ministers, etc. can do a lot of good with young people, but the foundation for character building must first begin in the home. That is the way God intended for it to be and we need to emphasize that point today.

Many times parents want to blame everyone but themselves if their children start taking the wrong road in life. Remember, it must first begin in the home where the foundation is laid. And if the

foundation has been laid properly, then the chances of a child's going astray are slim. I have had the opportunity of working with the young people of different congregations, and in the majority of the cases the young people who get involved have parents who also are involved in the work of the church. Those who do not get involved do not have much encouragement from home.

Character, good morals, respect for authority, etc. are things that must first be taught in the home. When this happens, the chances of a child's growing up and living for God are greatly enhanced. Let's work on making the home the kind of institution God intended for it to be. Remember, it must first begin in the home. — 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

Where Is Our Faith?

Continued from page 2

3. Christian Broadcasting Network . . . 58 million
4. Billy Graham 38 million
5. Jerry Falwell 33 million
6. 700 Club 30 million
7. Rex Humbard 18 million
8. Robert Schuller 11 million

These eight ministries received donations totaling some \$313 million dollars. Add to that figure the countless scores of other preachers who, week after week, from pulpits across America, plead and cry for funds to keep their works going, and the totals soon become so large it is beyond expectation.

Among these eight listed, is involved three churches, five schools, one hospital, Television and Radio ministries, mission works and more. All this effort for the purpose of teaching to a lost and dying world the doctrines of man, and confusing the issue as to the truth contained in God's word.

If these men who are preaching ideas contrary to God's word can raise such sums to do their deeds, why then, is it that Christians, the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:14) are not doing equally as much to spread the gospel of Christ to a lost world? Brethren, is it a lack of faith on our part? Is it a lack of money or the ability to raise the much needed funds? Most of the people who support works like those which we have listed are working people, much like we are.

Why then are they able to raise such sums to support their teachings, while within the church of our Lord there are congregations in need of financial

support, which often can't raise the needed money or do so only after long periods of time. Why are there missionaries who must compass this country over seeking to raise the much needed support to go out of this country to preach, often with less money than they might have received by staying "stateside" with a large congregation. They travel for several months and many thousands of miles trying to raise the help to make it possible to go and do what the Lord has commanded us to do. Brethren, is it a lack of faith, or do we not believe it necessary to do as the Lord has commanded?

If those who proclaim error can raise the money necessary to spread their doctrines of deceit, shouldn't we be sure there is always someone there to see that the truth is also taught? Let us show our faith, by our works (James 2:18). — Rt. 1 Box 86-D Pantego, NC 27860.

Godly Exercise

ANCIL JENKINS

"Exercise thyself . . . unto godliness" (I Timothy 4:7b).

We live in a time when exercise is almost obsessive to some. Many are regular and dedicated to their program of physical fitness. This is good because the body of the Christian belongs to God (I Corinthians

Continued on page 4

Keepers At Home

MARZEE KINGTEW

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain . . ." (Genesis 4:1). The first family came into being; and families have been the nucleus of all other institutions, such as churches, governments and schools. And from the beginning, God provided the pattern for family living. Man was instructed to till the ground (work for the livelihood) and woman was told to bear children.

The home is the nesting place for families. It is the most important place in the world. It has been said, "No nation has ever been able to survive the breakdown of home and family." Nor can the church survive. Delinquency and divorce are a result of sinful attitudes. And basic attitudes are learned inside the home.

God has promised: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

I believe in God's promises! When woman can convince herself that children need *her* more than they need things money can buy, she will be glad to stay at home. Looking back, I regret every day I worked outside the home. And even though I stayed inside eighteen years before going to work, I missed something I can't go back and pick up. I missed being my children's main solid influence. And I missed a great deal of joy. Being a wife and mother, the axis on which the family rotates, can be the most fulfilling role in any woman's life. I have come to realize it is the way her longings are satisfied.

The Apostle Paul admonishes women to be "keepers at home" (Titus 2:5). It is her privilege not only to keep the nest clean and attractive, but to provide nutritious food, and to be present in the every day one-on-one teaching that is vital if our children are to be dedicated Christians.

For four months, I worked as a maid in a house where there are four boys, ages ranging from ten to nineteen. I saw first hand how they were robbed of a mother's best efforts. The mother left home before eight and returned after five. When she did get home, she was both physically and mentally drained.

Woman can give more reasons for working than you can count. My daughter (whose maid I was!) was temporarily helping in the family business. Back when I went to work, my excuse was, "I'm bored at home." I did not stop to think whether or not I was pleasing God. One of the most common reasons I hear today is, "I want to assure my children a college education." While education is desirable, it is not necessary for entrance into heaven.

We (women of today) have gradually absorbed worldly attitudes. A common cry is, "With the economy the way it is, both parents *have* to work." Not so, or God would not have promised the necessities if we seek his righteousness *first*.

It is not the purpose of this article to tell any one family how to arrange its life; the purpose is to get us to re-evaluate the importance of mother in the home. Consider this. Everything we do consumes time, and when we approach the idea of making the family serve individuals, time is the key factor. Bearing children is only the beginning of woman's work. She is to nurse and nurture that child, under the protection and guidance of the child's father. When she carries part of the burden of earning the livelihood, time is taken from her "keeper at home" privileges.

With mother in the work force, houses are empty; and empty houses fail to draw its inhabitants back into this four walls for succor, for rejuvenation, for love and acceptance. Mother away from home, is not the same as Mother, warm and relaxed, inside her home.

Fashionable clothes, spacious houses, and formal education are not prerequisites to dedicated Christian lives. Daily Bible study, prayer, and worship *are*. Are

we exchanging one for the other?

I'm afraid a generation of people has lost sight of the true meaning of the oldest institution. Children are the losers; they are taken to day-care centers even though they beg to stay home; they are sent to school when they are sick because mother's first priority is her job; it is hard for them to develop the home-feeling, and love one for another, because they aren't at home enough to absorb the value of family. No wonder there are so many divorces.

One of the oldest Bible commentators, Adam

"And to the church in Sardis write; these things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art DEAD" (Rev. 3:1).

Some churches grow and flourish while others strangle and die. Why? The answers are numerous and vary from congregation to congregation. However, there are some distinct and observable signs which are characteristic of paralytic and dying churches. In view of the continuing decline of interest in religion and the decline of the Lord's church in particular, perhaps it might be well to look at some of the "signs of death" and hopefully make some needed changes.

The Signs: 1. Lack of knowledge of God's word, even among those who by reason of years in the kingdom should now be teachers themselves.

2. Rejection of Bible authority, the current trend being to accept what we like and reject what we dislike.

3. Failure to discipline both instructively and correctively in spite of plain Bible commands to do so.

4. Liberal attitudes toward sin, characteristic of many members today.

5. Acceptance of a no growth philosophy. "Not possible in our day." "We're doing good just to hold our own." Such are but admissions of a lack of faith in the power of the gospel.

6. No serious efforts being made to fulfill the great commission, locally or otherwise.

7. An overemphasis on "proper worship" as the primary work of the church. The mission of the church is to SAVE; worship is a privilege for those who have been saved.

8. Lack of aspiration for leadership and responsibility in spiritual matters.

9. Failure to indoctrinate. The tendency to spare feelings and avoid controversy has led to timidity in the pulpit and has resulted in a social, unconvincing, unconvicting, non-saving message.

10. The pastoral concept of discipleship. Tragically, many in the Lord's church have the same concept of discipleship as the denominational world. "Whatever the preacher says is alright with me." "I don't believe my pastor would mislead me." Such attitudes indicate a complete misunderstanding of the Lordship of Christ. Christ is Lord, Priest, King, and Savior. His word is all sufficient, all authoritative, absolute, and will judge every man in the last day (Jno. 12:48). Preachers and ministers have a God

Clarke, makes this statement concerning women being keepers at home. "A woman who spends much time *visiting*, must neglect her family. The idleness, dirtiness, impudence, and profligacy of the children, will soon show how deeply criminal the mother was in rejecting the apostle's advice."

Substitute Mr. Clarke's word *visiting* with *working outside the home* and you get a grave picture of what is happening in our country, and in the Lord's Church. Isn't it time we got back to the Bible? — Route 1, Box 47-T, Titus, AL 36080.

Signs Of Death



ROY FULLER

given role to fulfill, but to trust our soul to the care and keeping of any man is to substitute him for the only sure and certain source of salvation, Christ our Lord.

A lengthy discussion and elaboration of these signs is not practical in this short article, nor is that the purpose of this writing. To state these signs as symptoms and conditions which point to decaying and dying churches should be sufficient to cause any caring soul to investigate them more thoroughly in the light of his own discipleship and the state of the congregation where he worships. If ever there was a time for re-evaluation of our purpose, commitment, and our relationship to God it is now. If ever there was time for God's people to take a stand for truth, righteousness, and holy living, it is now. We will never convince those about us that Christianity is really "the way" as long as we adopt, endorse, and engage in the ways of the world. Just exactly as Israel of old continued to decline under those conditions, so also will the Israel of today continue to decline until we awaken and return to God. — Rt. 4 Box 479 Elba, AL 36323.

Godly Exercise

Continued from page 3

6:19-20).

The apostle Paul recognized there is some profit in bodily exercise (I Timothy 4:8), yet he pointed out that godly exercise is much more profitable. The reason is that godly exercise profits for all times, and not just this life.

How much better would our spiritual life be if we gave the same degree of diligence and effort to godly exercise some give to physical fitness. There are many ways to exercise ourselves to godliness, but we only list a few.

Fighting the good fight of faith (I Timothy 6:12). ("Fighting the air" [I Corinthians 9:26b] is not profitable.)

Running the Christian race (I Corinthians 9:26a).

Laboring to enter the rest (Hebrews 4:11).

Pressing on to the prize of God (Philippians 3:14).

Fleeing from sin (I Timothy 4:11).

Lifting up our eyes to see the harvest (John 4:35).

Walking:

In steps of faith (Romans 4:12).

Not after the flesh (Romans 8:4).

Honestly in sight of all men (Romans 13:13).

By faith (I Corinthians 5:17).

Worthy of calling (Ephesians 4:1).

In Love (Ephesians 4:1).

As Jesus walked (I John 2:6). — 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

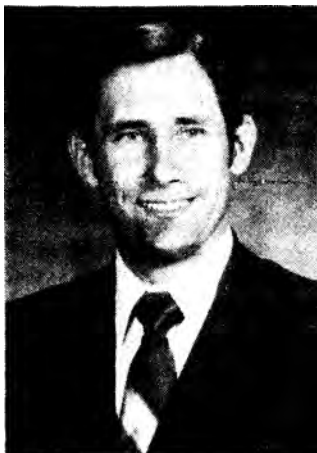
VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 1983

NUMBER 11

"He Sat Down Confounded"

Israel had returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. This captivity was both punitive and reformatory. They had been guilty of spiritual adultery and thus had incurred the wrath of God. Yet when the captivity was finally over, they had yet fully to learn their lesson. Ezra writes, "Now when these things were done, the princes drew near unto me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests



RONNIE LOWE

and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my robe, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and *sat down confounded*" (Ezra 9:1-3).

As I look around our enlightened world today, I too stand confounded at what is going on. But more tragically, I stand confounded at what is being condoned and supported by God's people. We, like Israel of old, have failed to separate ourselves from the "people of the land."

I stand confounded as I observe the rising tide of immorality within the church. As twentieth century man observes his world, it becomes abundantly clear to him that he is living in a society saturated with filth. Yet ours is not the first society to experience such moral decay. Think of the depraved condition of the world during the days of Noah when "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). We well know the reason for the downfall of ancient Israel. They ran the gamut of corruption: political, social, and religious. Their moral decay was the underlying cause of their

ultimate destruction as a nation. Solomon wrote, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Are God's people of today far different from his people of Israel? It no doubt brings tears to the eyes of God as he witnesses the influx of immorality making its way into the church and oftentimes doing so unopposed. Let us learn the lesson from Hosea — the tragedy of spiritual adultery. We have become a people whose heart is far from God. An increasing number of church members no longer see anything wrong with social drinking. The number of unwed mothers is increasing in the church almost as fast as in the world. Church members (men as well as women) can be seen wearing certain styles of clothing (even in worship) that are so revealing and immodest that they should be shunned by all. For too few preachers are willing to stand up and be heard on these issues and tragically far too few elders are willing to arise and support them when they do preach against the immoral practices of our time.

In Ezra 9:6, Ezra writes: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face unto thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens." In James 1:21 we are told, "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." If we are to overcome the flood of immorality, it will be through preaching, believing and practicing God's word. We must learn the lesson Israel learned too late — to separate ourselves unto God for his service.

Like Ezra, we are confounded by what is going on around us. But also like Ezra, we must do something to improve the situation. We must realize that the situation is not hopeless.

I also stand confounded as I see those who want to re-structure the church and pattern it after a failure. In times past we prided ourselves on our distinctive nature. Now many are taking pride in the fact that we are becoming more tolerant toward and more similar to the denominations around us. Last year in an Adult Quarterly of the Southern Baptists, the church of Christ was commended for becoming more tolerant toward them, and more like them. Some in the church applaud such a statement while the true children of God are broken down with sorrow and their hearts are filled with tears.


Why should we want to pattern ourselves after a failure? Many denominational congregations have a membership of several hundred, if not thousands. Yet their auditoriums have a seating capacity of only 50-75 percent of their membership, and they don't even need that much seating except on two or three days out of the year. We must understand that the denominational concept of Christianity is totally foreign to the Scriptures. A denomination is an entity smaller than the universal church, and yet larger than the local congregation. Nowhere in the New Testament does the word "church" appear in such a sense.

Isn't it time that we get back to the Bible — that we begin again to speak where the Bible speaks? Why is it that the church of Christ is no longer the fastest growing religious body? The answer: we have left our unique plea and have become like the nations around us. Could our fate be any different from that of Israel as they left God and joined the other nations?

I stand confounded that so many fail to understand the teaching on divorce and remarriage. It is amazing how some brethren can dissect the word assigning some commands to the Christian, some to non-Christian, and some to all men. Last year, Bobby Duncan well wrote that "none of the Bible was designed to tell the disobedient and wicked people of the world how to live as disobedient and wicked people. When one says that God's law of divorce and remarriage to saints is thus and so, but his law of divorce and remarriage to sinners is something else, he seems to be implying that part of God's law is designed to teach sinners how to live as sinners." To hold to such an idea is completely absurd and void of reason.

We understand the meaning and weight of the word "except" in John 3:3-5, and yet fail to see the weight of the same word in Matthew 19:9. We see the need to repent as a condition for salvation. We would demand that one return a stolen cow as a sign or requirement of penitence. Yet many claim there is no need to return another man's wife as part of repentance. In Ezra 10, Ezra condemned the people for having foreign wives, which was not lawful for the Jews. He required of them that they put away their wives. Could God expect any less of us today? Let's

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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“He Sat Down Confounded”

Continued From Page 1

take God's word for what it says and not practice a "pen knife" religion by cutting out certain passages as the denominations have been doing for years.

Ezra was confounded that the people wouldn't live the type of life God required of them. They had failed to learn completely the lesson of the captivity. Let us learn from them without having to suffer the consequences ourselves (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). Let us determine to return to the Bible as a source of faith and practice. For only by doing this can we remain God's people and once again become the fastest growing religious body. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, TX 76470.

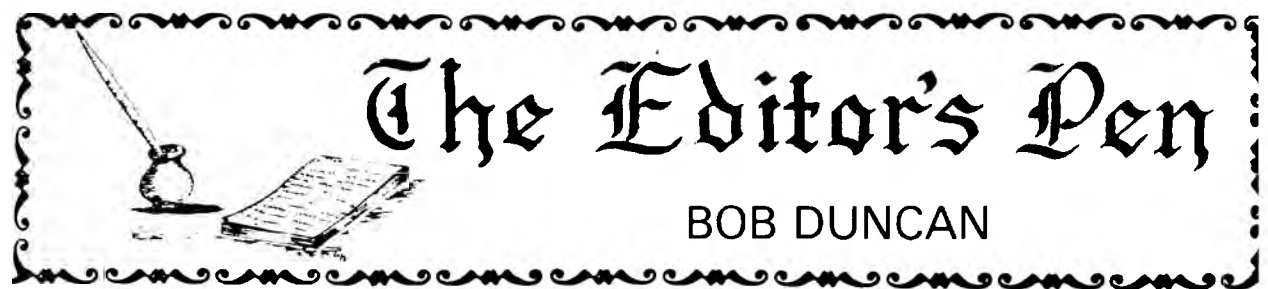
Too Much Crust

WINFREY HENNESSEE

Those of us who claim to be authorities on the subject will most readily agree there are only four kinds of good pies — hot pies, cold pies, big pies, and little pies. We who have no trouble burning up calories during the run of a normal day will loudly testify to this truth, and we tend to get excited at the mere mention of the word pie.

In days gone by, when times were less affluent, most people enjoyed various flavors of pie. However, as the warm months slowly turned into winter, the fruit supply would sometimes dwindle away, thus placing an extra burden upon the cook, and sometimes demanding all of her ingenuity. With the dried and canned fruit supply completely gone, one could only look forward to spring when the first berries would ripen. Many times our impatient appetites would not allow adequate time for enough berries to ripen, so with only half enough berries to fill the pan, this is where the "inventiveness" of the cook was put to good use. In order to compensate for not enough fruit more dough would be added to the pie.

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Washing Feet

Does the Bible teach that we are to wash feet, along with the Lord's supper and other acts of worship? Some say that it does, and that we are inconsistent in insisting upon eating the Lord's supper every first day of the week, while never having a foot washing service. If the washing of feet were taught as an act of worship like the Lord's supper, and to be observed in connection therewith, we would be in error to fail to observe it. But what does the Bible say?



BOBBY DUNCAN

A part of the misunderstanding with reference to this matter grows out of the fact that some think that Jesus instituted the washing of feet in connection with the Lord's supper. Such is not the case. As a matter of fact, Jesus did not institute foot washing at all. It was practiced many years before he became flesh. The hospitality of Abraham to the three men who visited him in the plains of Mamre involved the washing of their feet (Gen. 18:1-4). Abigail asked that she might wash the feet of the servants of David (I Sam. 25:41). Jesus issued a mild rebuke to Simon the Pharisee, because Simon had failed to provide for the washing of the feet of the Lord when he entered into his house (Luke 7:44). This incident in the life of the Lord was a long time before the incident recorded in John 13. The washing of feet was already being practiced, and had been practiced for centuries, before the Lord was born into the world. But it was always an act of hospitality, or courtesy, and never an act of worship to God.

Furthermore, a careful reading of the thirteenth chapter of John will reveal that it was in connection with the Jewish passover, and not the Lord's supper, that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. In the Authorized Version there are two statements that, at first glance, seem contradictory. One is in verse one, the other in verse two. Verse one says, "Now before the feast of the passover . . ." Verse two says "And supper being ended . . ." Now, was it before the feast of the passover, or was that supper already ended? The seeming contradiction disappears when one understands that the passover feast was served, but had not yet been eaten. It was before the feast was eaten. Supper was ended in that its preparation was finished, and it was ready to be eaten. It was at this point that Jesus girded the towel about him and proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples. It was after the eating of the passover meal that the Lord's supper itself was instituted (Cf. Luke 22:20). This makes it plain that the washing of the disciples' feet was in connection with the passover feast, and not in connection with the Lord's supper.

But why was the act performed in connection with the feast of the passover? John 11:55 shows that certain bathing for purification was performed in preparation for eating the passover. It was customary for the Jews to bathe in preparation for the passover, but their feet were washed again after they got to the place where the feast was to be eaten. They

considered that, because of their having walked to the place of eating, their feet needed washing again. This is evidenced by two things: (1) the very presence in the room of the water, the basin, and the towel, and (2) the statement of the Lord to Peter in verse ten, that one already washed "needeth not save to wash his feet." Please observe carefully that statement of the Lord. It clearly shows that Peter's feet *needed* washing, in order for him to be clean. Goodspeed's translation of the Lord's statement to Peter is as follows: "Anyone who has bathed only needs to have his feet washed to be altogether clean."

Why did Jesus do the job of washing their feet? Without question, it was to teach his disciples a much needed lesson on humility. Ordinarily the feet of the master would be washed by the servant. For any one disciple to gird the towel about himself and wash the feet of the others would be an admission (in their thinking) that his rank in the kingdom was somewhat below theirs. None of them were willing to make such an admission. In fact, there was already a "strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Lk. 22:24). The Lord used this occasion to teach them that greatness is measured in terms of service rendered, and not in terms of service received.

After the church was established, did the saints practice the washing of feet? Yes, just as it had been practiced for centuries. But they did not practice it as an act of worship of God. In I Tim. 5:10 the washing of feet is listed with such things as brining up children, lodging strangers, and relieving the afflicted. It is never mentioned in connection with New Testament worship. The Lord's supper, on the other hand, is mentioned or alluded to numerous times after the church was established; and it is always clearly an act of worship.

One final observation is in order. Some claim that the washing of feet is to be performed in connection with the Lord's supper. If such were the case, would it not seem strange that the two are never, ever mentioned together? Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell of the institution of the Lord's supper, but do not say anything at all about the Lord's washing the feet of his disciples. John, however, mentions the washing of feet, but does not give an account of the institution of the Lord's supper. It seems that God was exercising special care in seeing that those writers who wrote about the institution of the Lord's supper did not write about the Lord's washing the disciples' feet, and vice versa.

The Meaning Of Life

W. A. HOLLEY

All of us know that life is as a vapor, as grass, as a flower which appears for a little time and then vanishes away (Job 14:1-2; Psalms 90:5,6,9; James 1:10-11; 4:13-15). As we grow older we all become more conscious of the brevity of life and the certainty of death (Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:30-31). Thus, we

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Too Much Crust

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Many times the end result would be too much crust. A pie which only a true "pie lover" could love.

Some preachers we hear on the radio (mostly denominational) are very much like the pie described here. They use very little of their time telling what the Bible says, and then they say "praise the Lord" over and over many times before going on to another scripture. They have not enough fruit for their pie, so they must revert to more dough — a pie with too much

crust.

The same might be said of some of us who lead a public prayer. "Vain repetitions" help one stall for time while he thinks of something constructive to say, but when we say "dear Lord", "please Lord", and "Lord" many, many times throughout our prayer to God, then we have done a poor job in leading our brothers and sisters in an effective petition. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen

do" (Matt. 6:7). Does the Lord become tired of too much crust?

We might think we have run a good race, and fought a good fight, only to be told on judgment day, "You have an odor of a sweet smell, we love your flavor, your tartness is just right, but your crust is too thick. Where is your fruit?" — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

Dead Babies

About 2,000 years ago King Herod the Great ordered the death of the male babies two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and the borders thereof (Matt. 2:16). Herod's motive for perpetrating this grievous atrocity appears to have been to rid his domain of anticipated competition to rule the Jews (Matt. 2:1-18). Though the Child Jesus escaped, the sinister result of Herod's decree was dead babies!



LOUISEVERETTE
RUSHMORE

About ten years ago, in January of 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that unborn babies are not persons protected by the Constitution. (Similarly, in 1857, the predecessors to this high court ruled that blacks were not persons protected by the Constitution.) Consequently, the grievous atrocity of abortion has since 1973 exceeded a national tally of 9,959,633 murdered infants; about 1,500,000 abortions are being performed annually in the United States. The sinister result of elective abortion in America is dead babies! The number of babies killed in our nation through abortion since 1973 would about equal the complete annihilation of New York City!

Ironically, many of the facilities and doctors performing abortions are the same to whom people customarily turn for medical care and life saving services. Neighbors may be surprised to learn that their hospitals and doctors perform a dual function concerning human life.

Brethren may also be surprised to learn that pro-lifers in some parts of the country envision the churches of Christ as pro-abortion. Biblically, we are not and cannot allow ourselves to be viewed as in favor of this national crime; our nation has reproached itself with the sin of abortion (Prov. 14:34). Therefore, we should assess the grounds on which such evaluations are made of us and change if and wherever change may be merited and consistent with Bible truth.

Apparently there are two factors from which pro-lifers mistakenly presume the churches of Christ favor abortion. One: relatively few preachers and members of the churches of Christ speak out or actively work against abortion; most pro-lifers are Catholic and Lutheran. Two: the designation "church of Christ" is similar to the names of some denominations which endorse abortion, for instance, "The United Church of Christ."

About two years ago when I joined the Illinois Federation Right to Life and the National Right to Life Committee, pro-lifers in Illinois were surprised since they believed our fellowship endorsed abortion. With the Illinois Federation Right to Life, I mailed letters to the churches of Christ throughout Illinois to acquaint

our brethren with the evils of abortion and offer them free information concerning the same. Brethren from two congregations responded. How can we expect pro-lifers and our communities to believe we are anti-abortion or pro-life when our brethren will not even acknowledge a pro-life position and certainly will not work against this terrible and rampant evil?

Though we obviously cannot and should not change the Biblical designation by which we are known, preachers and brethren should announce their pro-life position before their respective communities. In addition to correcting the misconception that we participate in this national sin (II John 9-11), the announcement in our communities of our pro-life stance quite probably could have a positive effect on as of yet unknown prospects for conversion. Actions, however, speak louder than words. Christians should: (1) educate themselves with the facts, statistics, and sad picture of abortion in America, and (2) commit some of their prayers, money, and/or time to the fight for the lives of unborn babies. (Pro-life groups at national, state, and local levels welcome opportunities to educate the public with literature and film presentations.)

Admittedly, there are subjects with which the churches of Christ must concern themselves which are more crucial than abortion. Our concern for lost souls should be greater than our anxiety for the innocent souls of aborted babies; the souls of unaccountable children are neither blackened with even a single sin nor in the least danger of fiery judgment (Ezk. 28:15; Matt. 18:2,3).

However, abortion must be at least as significant a moral subject as "dirty T.V." and "gay rights." Abortion directly affects those who are murderously consumed by it and indirectly takes its gruesome toll

on our society and nation. Such things as "gay rights," though themselves a reproach to our nation, affect our society and nation more indirectly.

Elective abortion is the irresponsible murder of unborn life. That life does occur prior to birth should be evident from passages which indicate that the unborn are persons (Jud. 13:5,7; Luke 1:15,36,41,42,44). Murder, the wanton taking of life, is unquestionably sinful (Rev. 21:8).

As ardent disciples of God's word, we must let our voices be heard! We must publicly condemn abortion for the sin it is. Abortion, uncondemned, will eventually affect even the church adversely, as other subjects like marriage-divorce-and-remarriage have injured our beloved brotherhood. How many of our daughters have had or will have abortions because the brethren have not been warned? Fornication is a sin; murder is also a sin (Gal. 5:19-21)! Two sins DO NOT make one righteous any more than do two wrongs make a right! The sin of abortion simply adds itself to the sin of fornication.

Finally, we owe the lost the proclamation of God's word to include the sin of abortion. If we don't believe in abortion, we must not endorse it. Further, if we believe (have faith) that abortion is murder, we are morally obligated to try to do something to thwart America's abortive course. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:17,18). "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

We MUST tell our fellow brethren and the world about the sin of abortion too! — 909 Golf Road Waukegan, Ill. 60085.

Abraham, The Father Of The Faithful

Abraham is called father by more people than any man this side of Noah. His descendants are the Jews, Magians, Sabines, Indians and Mohammedans.

God called Abraham in Mesopotamia, his native land. He was commanded to leave his father's house and go "unto a land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1). God promised to make of him a great nation. Also he pledged to protect him from his enemies. The

greatest solemn declaration of God was, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Paul in his letter to the Galatians comments on God's covenant with Abraham. He stated, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gal. 3:6). Paul applied this kind of faith to Christianity. Those who have Abraham's faith, "the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). The promise to bless all families of the earth was fulfilled in Christ. Paul said, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

TODAY ONE DOES NOT BECOME A CHILD OF ABRAHAM BY FLESHLY BIRTH. He can be a child of Abraham spiritually. Paul said, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). This is the spiritual birth. Paul continued, "And if ye be Christ's then ye

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Abraham, The Father Of The Faithful

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are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (3:29).

In the Hebrew letter, we read of Abraham's faith in action. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"

(Heb. 11:8-10). Because of his faith in the eternal reward of heaven, Abraham obeyed.

The Jews of the first century attached great importance to being heirs of Abraham. They thought this relationship would get them to heaven. They had to be faithful even when under the law of Moses.

We are heirs with Abraham, if we have the same kind of faith. The ultimate test of Abraham's faith is seen in his sacrifice of Isaac. The writer of Hebrews asks rhetorically, "was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son upon

the altar?" Then he comments, "seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect" (James 2:21-22). The extent of Abraham's faith is seen in a statement in Hebrews eleven. God's promise was given through Isaac. Yet God told Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burning sacrifice. Abraham obeyed, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead . . ." (Heb. 11:19).

LET US IMITATE ABRAHAM'S FAITH. — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.

The Meaning Of Life

Continued From Page 2

come to understand that we are but fellow-travelers from time to eternity; and that, despite all we can do, we cannot buy back a single day or even one fleeting minute (Job 31:24-28; Psalms 49:5-7; Ecclesiastes 8:8).

According to the Holy Bible, we are God's creation. He made us and gave us a body and soul, and he sustains us until he is ready to call us from these earthly scenes. In some ways life is like a fantastic dream and when we awake life has passed us by.

But, what is the meaning of life? Why are we in the world? and what shall we do? and where are we going?

Jesus taught: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?" (Matthew 6:25). Jesus is teaching us that money may purchase food, but God gave us life; money may supply clothing, but God gave us the body. Thus, the true meaning of life cannot be found in things — land, money, houses, gold, fur coats, cars, and the like.

We suggest to our readers that it is our duty to sow the seeds of truth in the hearts of men, that Christ and his influence may flourish upon the earth (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16; Luke 8:4-15). There can be no greater work than, through the power of truth, endeavoring to change the world for the better. Millions of lost people need to know what to do to be saved, how to worship God acceptably, and how to live the Christian life (Acts 2:1-47; John 4:24; Titus 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10). Efforts of this kind will add meaning to your life.

In the next place, it is our sincere duty to scatter a little sunshine wherever we chance to go. Dark clouds are so depressing. Surely, we who are Christians can afford to share a little cheer and encouragement, a little guidance, to the lonely and downtrodden, as we make our way through the trials of this life. Gloom and doom have never urged anyone onward.

Moreover, a meaningful life absolutely demands one's willingness to assume, in a satisfactory manner, the responsibilities of living from day to day. It is not easy! Rather, it is an uphill battle! Life for Paul was hard and difficult but he kept trudging onward (Philippians 4:11-13; II Corinthians 11:23-33). To merely fold our hands and live a passive life is to fail God and to waste our opportunities. Hidden resources lie hidden deep within us, and these can be utilized for good if only we will. Each person will be wonderfully surprised at what he can accomplish if he will but put forth an honest effort.

Verily, a meaningful life is work and play; service to God and to man. It is honest effort given to an honest cause. Honest work is an indispensable vitamin. Work is the cure for worry, the one way to make life worthwhile, and the only method of keeping a sound body and mind. In fact, if one wishes to cure nine out of ten neuroses, one should take work in heavy doses. This same principle applies to working for the Lord. A

working church will hardly have any serious problems at all.

Peter, the apostle, teaches us that God has given us an extension of life so that we might make the necessary corrections, if we are to meet God in peace (II Peter 3:8-15). Sixty years of disobedience represent sixty years of negligence; how much better if these wasted years had been spent in productive preparation!!

One who spends his years in weeding out the briars and thorns, and cultivating good seed reaps a harvest of golden grain. To lead a meaningful life, one must pluck out all hypocrisy and embrace the good and the

true. All unfair criticism, all ungodliness and worldliness, all discord and lusts should be rooted up (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:30-32; Proverbs 6:16-19).

Dear reader, what kind of life should you live? If you should die in your present condition, what would your eternal destiny be? You are urged to live so that after the minister has ended his remarks, those present will not think they have attended the wrong funeral. Strive to be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to be submerged by trouble. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Remember Where The Power Is!

How strange to contemplate that 12 faithful men in the first century formed the nucleus of the most successful stab at world evangelism the Lord's people ever engaged in. "Their sound went out into all the world . . . all creation heard . . . They went everywhere preaching the word."

It is not wrong to use every energy and avenue of scriptural endeavor to extend the truth but when we think the plan of God, the One who rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:25), needs help from our schemes and fancies we are sadly mistaken (Acts 7:48-50).

The church purchased with divine blood (Acts 20:28) is fully capable to discharge every obligation incumbent upon it and to meet every opportunity of scriptural expression confidently. Whether in the fields of benevolence, evangelism or edification, the Lord's church, at work, can always get the job done (Acts 6; I Timothy 3:15; II Peter 3:18). Christ equipped this all-sufficient organism with the power and plan to train its own preachers, care for its own impoverished and strengthen its membership spiritually (II Timothy 2:2; I John 3:17; Acts 20:32).

The most unique feature of Christianity is its all-sufficiency in things pertaining to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). The cause of our Lord needs no bolstering from the projects and promotional agencies of men. The gospel of Jesus Christ can stand on its own merits as the one and only message of redemption (Romans 1:16). The Holy Scriptures truly supply us with the complete revelation of all that mankind needs for time and eternity (II Timothy 3:16-17). The system of faith, once delivered, shall never need replacement or repair (Jude 3).



JOHNNY RAMSEY

Therefore, the sectarian notions of "still, small voices," "direct operation of the Holy Spirit," "an inner light" or superior philosophies are, at best, redundant, superfluous and vain. Factually, however, they are anti-biblical (II John 9).

This brief introductory material ought to be well-known by anyone espousing the religion of the Son of God. Perhaps we have taken for granted that such foundation stones were solidly laid in the hearts of all brethren. It is exceedingly clear, as one reads the New Testament, that God's power does not rely upon our creative minds. We are made clean by his word (John 15:3; I Peter 1:22), not by our wisdom!

In the eternal mind of our Creator was embraced the glorious church of our Lord (Ephesians 3:9-11). Once established it was destined to manifest unto the powers in heavenly places the everlasting purpose of God. This being true, surely the church can let all earthly beings know the will of the Father! May God help us to be content with the perfection of his plan. We do not need that echo of the past: "Give us a king that we may be like the nations round about us."

One step away from the all-sufficiency of Christ, the church, and the word, can remove us from the ancient landmarks that adorn the old paths of God's highway of holiness. Fellowship in the church of the Lord is based upon allegiance to Truth — not loyalty to men and their programs. In closing let us notice an awesome parallel. Centuries before Roman Catholicism existed God ordained marriage as a divine institution. It is therefore the height of ridiculous fancy for popery to infer that no one is really married unless Romanism sanctions it. Also, centuries before our projects, schools, and papers began, Christ and the apostles established another divine organism, the church. Can we seriously suggest the church will fail without our wisdom? No congregation belonging to the Savior need ever feel dependent upon secular enterprises.

Let us preach the Word, live the Christian life and give God the glory (I Cor. 10:31). — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.



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 19

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God's Woman, Her Role And Duties

No greater influence for good exists in the world than faithful Christian women. Without their holy lives and faithful service, the home, the church and society would be poor indeed. Surely they are the salt that flavors, heals, and preserves a world that is awash in sin.

To understand the heaven ordained role for women in the home and church, we must look at the origin of woman and the family unit.



JOHN WADDEY

being beguiled hath fallen into the transgression . . ." (I Tim. 2:12-14).

Another passage from Genesis provides a backdrop for the domestic roles for man and wife. "Unto the woman [Eve] he [God] said . . . and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16).

Woman's Role in the Home

God's ideal plan for all women is expressed by Paul. "I desire, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling" (I Tim. 5:14). It is recognized that not all women are so fortunate as to find a husband, nor can all wives bear children. These exceptions do not nullify God's plan. Those wives who marry must "be in subjection unto [their] own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church But as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it . . ." (Eph. 5:22-23).

Scripture knows nothing of the modern feminist concept of marriage. God ordained that husbands be the head of the family and that wives respect and submit to their authority. These are not the eccentric views of Paul, the bachelor woman hater. Rather the things he wrote were the commands of the Lord (I Cor. 14:37). Instead of oppressing women and imposing unjust restraints the man who loves his wife as Christ loved the church will be a wonderful mate for her.

As a wife and mother, she is to love her husband, love her children, to be sober-minded, chaste, a worker at home (Tit. 2:4-5). It is a mistake to assume that any girl growing up will automatically reflect these virtues. Observation tells us that many young ladies enter marriage totally unprepared. Mothers must train their daughters to fill the domestic role. Older Christian women must share their wisdom with the younger sisters. Even as Lois and Eunice taught young Timothy the sacred writings, so must today's mothers educate their little ones (II Tim. 1:5, 3:15).

Guidelines For Her Personal Life

Women are to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with

braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (I Tim. 2:9,10). *Modest* suggests far more than just covering the erogenous parts of the anatomy. It forbids extravagance and giving undue attention to the outer man. Peter wrote, "whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit . . ." (I Pet. 3:3-4). Such scriptures do not forbid jewelry or hair styling, any more than they forbid apparel. They do tell a woman to place her first and major emphasis on the inner man rather than the outer.

A modest woman will be shamefaced, i.e., able to blush when her modesty is violated, capable of shame when she has been exposed to wanton eyes, even by accident. O how this is needed today. All that God's woman does must be as *becometh* a woman professing godliness. Everyone knows that there is a pattern of speech, a standard of conduct, a style of clothing, a kind of recreation, that is becoming to a Christian. Likewise one can act unbecoming in all of these.

Although women cannot teach or have dominion over men, they can be saved through childbearing, "if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety" (I Tim. 2:15). Granted this is a difficult passage to comprehend. It cannot make literal motherhood a condition of salvation, since not all are capable of being mothers. I take it to stand by metonymy for fulfilling the domestic role which God ordained. Note though that being a good wife and mother alone is not sufficient to save. There must also be faith and love for God and a saintly life of sobriety.

Her Role in Religion

In Christ there is neither male nor female, said Paul (Gal. 3:26-28). All have equal access to salvation. All are God's children. All have the common hope of heaven. The God who made the race and the church, appointed certain roles for men and women to fill. In the church as in the home, the man is the head of the woman (I Cor. 11:3). It was the universal practice of the apostolic church that "women keep silence" in


God Created Woman to Fill a Definite Role in Life

Man was made first, then woman was made to be his help meet (Gen. 2:7, 18). The expression "help meet" means a helper suitable for him. Every other creature had its mate, but the man had none "answering to" him (see footnote on Gen. 2:18). "God therefore caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man . . . and he took one of his ribs . . . and . . . made he a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:21-22).

When Paul would establish reasons for man's being head of the woman, he argued that man "is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man . . ." (I Cor. 11:3, 7-9). Thus woman's role in the church today is based upon her place and purpose in the creation.

Woman was the first to bring sin into the world. This too is a reason for her assigned role in religion. Moses relates in Genesis how Satan led Eve to sin (Gen. 3:4-6). She was beguiled; Adam sinned with full awareness of the consequences (II Cor. 11:3). When Paul wrote forbidding sisters to teach or have dominion over a man, he appealed to the Genesis record noting: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman

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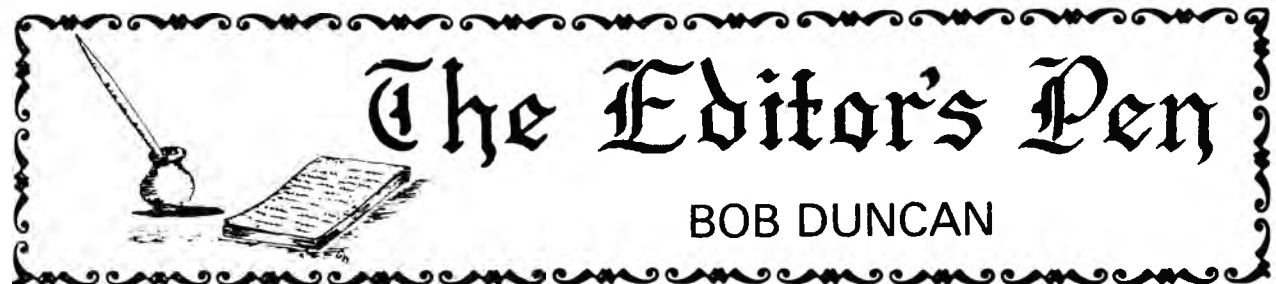
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"The Disciples Were Called Christians"



BOB DUNCAN

The latter part of Acts 11:26 states: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Those who insist it makes no difference what name the people of God wear contend that the name *Christian* was given in derision by the enemies of the saints, and that it, therefore, is not a name which God intended his people to wear. Is it possible to know whether the name was indeed given by God or by the enemies of the saints? We believe it is possible to know.

While contextual considerations are significant in determining the answer to this question, we believe the most conclusive argument is in the text itself. The passage says the disciples were "called" Christians. As a rule, our English word *call* is translated from the Greek word *kaleo*. But in Acts 11:26 it is from *chrematidzo*, which is used in the New Testament only in referring to statements which originated with God. While the Greek word *kaleo* occurs some one hundred forty-nine times in the New Testament, and is translated by our English word *call* one hundred twenty-five times, the Greek word *chrematidzo* occurs only nine times in the Greek text of the New Testament. In each case it definitely refers to a statement or warning or admonition from God. Let us notice these occurrences.

In Matthew 2:12 *chrematidzo* is translated, "being warned of God," and refers to the warning the wise men received not to return to Herod and tell him the location of the child who had been born King of the Jews. In verse twenty-two of the same chapter the word is used again to refer to the warning which Joseph received from God not to return to Judaea, but to go into Galilee. The rendering in the King James Version is, "being warned of God." Please note that the Greek word for God (*theos*) is not in the text, but the translators felt it was inherent in the verb *chrematidzo*.

The third occurrence of this verb is in Luke 2:26, where it is translated, "revealed." A reading of the verse shows clearly that the revelation was one given by the Holy Spirit to Simeon, assuring him that he "should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

The fourth occurrence of *chrematidzo* is in Acts 10:22, and is translated in the King James Version, "was warned from God." The reference is to the appearance of the angel to Cornelius to instruct him to send for Peter.

The fifth occurrence of the word is in Acts 11:26, the passage which tells of the naming of the disciples.

The word occurs for the sixth time in Romans 7:3, where it is rendered in the King James version, "shall be called." The reference is to the fact that a woman who marries another man while her husband is living will be called an adulteress. There can be no

question who calls her an adulteress, if one is familiar with the teaching of the Bible. (Cf. Matthew 5:32 and 19:9.)

The seventh occurrence is in Hebrews 8:5, where the word is translated, "was admonished of God." The entire verse reads, in the King James version: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

Occurrence number eight is in Hebrews 11:7, which reads as follows: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." It is the phrase *being warned of God* which is translated from the single Greek word *chrematidzo*.

The ninth and last occurrence of the word is in Hebrews 12:25. Here it is rendered by the single word *spake*. The context will show that the speaking which is under consideration is that which was done by Moses as he instructed the people concerning God's law. Berry's Greek-English Interlinear New Testament renders the word in this passage, "divinely instructed."

A single noun form of this Greek word appears in the New Testament, in Romans 11:4, and is translated, "answer of God."

In view of these uses of the word *chrematidzo* it should not be difficult for the honest truth seeker to see that the word is not employed in Acts 11:26 to denote the doing or saying of something by some man or some group of men.

It is interesting to note also that this Greek word is a word that was used by the Greeks in referring to a response given when they consulted their gods. Marvin R. Vincent (*Word Studies in the New Testament*) points this out in his discussion of *chrematidzo* in Acts 11:26.

As we said earlier, there are other considerations of a contextual nature that strongly support the idea that the name *Christian* was given by divine injunction, but the use of this particular Greek word in Acts 11:26 seems to be a conclusive argument. Why was this particular word selected by the Holy Spirit unless he meant to convey the idea that the name *Christian* was given by the Lord?

Those who say the name was given in derision by the enemies of the saints simply make an assertion without offering a shred of evidence to prove what they assert.

The darkest ignorance is man's ignorance of God.

* * *

We should give freely and generously and in accordance with what we reported on our income tax.

* * *

A man without a single idea is less of a bore than a man with only one idea.

God's Woman, Her Role And Duties

Continued from page 1

the assembly (I Cor. 14:33-34). She is not permitted to teach or have authority over men (I Tim. 2:11-12). No woman can serve as an elder or bishop with God's approval. Nor can she occupy a role of teacher over men in the church. Elders are always spoken of as men (I Tim. 3:1). A preacher is a *man* of God (I Tim. 6:11).

This is no insult to women; it is no humiliating denial. A godly woman will gladly honor God's prescription for the church. She can teach women without offense (Tit. 2:3-4). She can teach children (II Tim. 1:5). She can even labor in the gospel as men do so long as she does not usurp authority over men (Phil. 4:3). Many great women, like Pricilla, have assisted their husbands in teaching the lost without presuming to take the authority from them (Acts 18:26). It is noteworthy that a woman can perform every *action* in the church if there are no men for her to displace. If a congregation had no males present, a sister could pray, lead the song, teach the lesson, administer the communion, baptize a sinner, or handle the treasury. Such cases have been known. When, however, men are present, a holy woman will graciously surrender all these to them as God has ordained.

In a day when the Biblical precepts for women are being ignored and disobeyed, scorned and attacked, may all of God's women gladly accept the divine standards which God ordained for them. Thus they will truly be the salt of the earth, the light of the world and the leaven of righteousness. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

A man doesn't always get paid for what he knows, but he seldom escapes paying for what he doesn't know.

* * *

It takes a mighty honest man to tell the difference between when he's tired and when he's plain lazy.

* * *

Some people never let ideas interrupt the easy flow of their conversation.

The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

(NO. 4)

Why preach on repentance, what repentance is not, and what it is, by way of definite definition and clear illustrations, have already received emphasis in the three previous installments on this timely topic. Another fundamental facet of this overall theme now deserves equal emphasis. What produces repentance?



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Recognition that it is a command of God is a major motive of repentance. In the giving of the Great Commission Jesus made repentance a condition of conversion, a stipulation of salvation. Luke states tersely and truthfully, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Repentance was not a new or novel command of the Christ at this time. He had preached its necessity throughout his personal ministry both in precept and principle, both in parable and illustration (Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:1-5; 17:3,4; 15:11ff; Matt. 21:28-32). Likewise it was to be part and parcel of the soon-to-come Christian covenant. That is precisely why Peter commanded the convicted audience on that memorable Pentecost to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Subsequently on Solomon's porch he told an aroused audience to repent and be converted (turn again-ASV) to have the blotting of their sins to occur. This is why Paul stated in crystal clear terms that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). The Pauline ministry across the years had told both Jews and Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). Repentance is as much a command as leaving Ur and Haran was for Abraham, as building the ark of salvation was for noble Noah, as preaching to Nineveh was to Jonah, as delivering Israel was for the shepherd of Sinai, as becoming fishers of men was for Peter, Andrew, James and John and as selling all goods for distribution to the poor and taking up dedicated discipleship in the Lord's cause was for the rich young ruler.

Fear constitutes another major motive for bringing men to repentance. Jonah made a direct appeal to this emotion when he said Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days (Jonah 3:4). Paul appealed to this emotion when he told his Athenian audience on Mars' Hill to repent in vital view of that sobering judgment that awaited each of them and all mankind (Acts 17:30,31). In II Corinthians 5:10 Paul referred to judgment. The subsequent statement from the powerful Pauline pen is, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (II Cor. 5:11). Paul spoke of judgment to Felix and Drusilla in Acts 24:24,25. It prompted the Judaean Governor who was living in notorious immorality with the beautiful and daring Drusilla to tremble. Fear of God's displeasure, of placement on the left hand in a coming judgment and of an eternity in hell (Gehenna) is surely a major motivation for bringing men to penitent positions before God Almighty and the Mighty Messiah.

God's goodness is another major motivation in producing repentance. Early in his powerful, profound work to the Romans Paul wrote: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the

goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). When the sinner reflects on the air God gives him to breathe, the water to slake his thirst, the food to sustain his body, the earth upon which to live and labor, the house that shelters his head, the family that brings him contentment and meaning of life, his job, his friends, his health and all the manifold blessings available in Christ, surely he should be motivated toward a state of repentance. If not, he is to be pitied.

Reward is another major motivation for repentance. Peter held out the reward of redemption from sin to penitent believers who were baptized in Acts 2:38. The blotting out of sins was the proffered reward to the penitent who turned again in Acts 3:19. Forgiveness or pardon is the reaped reward to the penitent Christian who confesses his sins (Acts 8:22; I John 1:7).

To know or renew a right relationship with God is a major motivation for repentance. Sin separates us from God. The alien sinner cannot know God in his

impotence. The erring Christian can only be renewed and retain again his good conscience by repentance. Repentance is productive of joy in the presence of angelic beings in heaven. Jesus so attested in Luke 15. This is another major motivation for it. Such causes joy in heaven and in the hearts of good men on earth. It is true that God grants repentance as we learn from Acts 11:18. This means he permits us the privilege to repent, a privilege he apparently never granted fallen angels. Why, I do not know. I would like to know more about that but am so grateful that he does grant such to us — the wayward sons and daughters of a wrecked race of human beings. But let it be stated with ascending emphasis that Jehovah God does not grant repentance to us with our being PASSIVE recipients. We are truly to be ACTIVE in repentance as we play a decisive role in changing our mind toward sin—the basic meaning of Biblical repentance. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Grace And Obedience

Paul declares that men are saved by the grace of God. "But by the grace of God I am what I am . . ." (I Cor. 15:10). The apostle penned these words about himself. To the Romans he wrote, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). This same apostle declared that the Ephesians were saved by grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). There cannot be any doubt that



NOBLE L. McKNIGHT

salvation is by the grace of God. To conclude, however, that salvation by the grace of God makes gospel obedience unnecessary is to make a mistake. The Bible says that Christ is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

The grace of God saves only when faith leads to obedience. It is by faith that one has access to grace (Rom. 5:1-2). The Bible still demands belief and baptism before salvation is achieved. Jesus still says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mk. 16:16). The Bible still says, "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).

The Ephesians were saved by grace, yet the scriptures reveal that Paul baptized them into Christ (Acts 19:1-6).

The Romans were saved by the grace of God (Rom. 3:24), and yet, they were baptized into Christ and into his death. Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized

into his death" (Rom. 6:3). Paul, himself, was saved by the grace of God, but not without obedience to the gospel. Ananias said to him, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

The grace of God which brings salvation is made known to man by Christ through the gospel. The scriptures declare, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us . . ." (Titus 2:11-12).

Grace is not destroyed or annulled when it is based upon stipulations and conditions. The apostle urged his listeners "to continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43). Yet, uniformly and consistently, Paul called upon people to meet the conditions of conversion, or the stipulations of salvation.

The apostle Peter affirmed the universal application of grace, based upon conditions, as he spoke at the Jerusalem conference declaring that both Jew and Gentile were saved alike by the grace of God (Acts 15:11). Yet, a thorough study of Acts, Chapters 2 and 10, will establish that both Jew and Gentile were required to obey the gospel. Peter informed those inquiring Jews, in Acts 2, that they must repent and be baptized for remission of sins (verse 38). He commanded the household of Cornelius, in Acts 10:48, "to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Repentance and baptism, commanded by the inspired apostle, were conditions for remission of sins. Yet, their remission of sins was by the grace of God. The grace of God would never have saved them had they refused to obey Christ. The same thing is true today. — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.

"Singing In Spirit AND In Truth"

DOUG MILLIGAN

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). How often have we heard these words of Jesus quoted and explained? Yet we sometimes fail either to see the full

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“Singing In Spirit AND In Truth”

Continued from page 3

significance of our Savior's words or fall short in applying them properly. Often our exegesis runs something to this effect: "Jesus told us to worship in spirit, that is from the heart, *and* in truth as well. From our Lord's prayer in John 17:17, we learn that God's word is truth. Therefore, whatever we do in worship must not only be from a sincere heart, but must be in accordance with and in compliance to God's inspired word."

Thus we reason, with reference to the music God desires and accepts in worship, that mechanical instruments preclude worship in spirit and in truth, since they are an unauthorized addition to the truth of God's Word. This is an excellent argument on which to base an objection to mechanical instruments of music in worship. Yet, have we consistently applied this principle? In fairness to our denominational friends, should we not "remove the beam from our own eye" and cease the singing of songs in worship which are themselves contradictory to the truth of God's Word?

Brethren, how can we continue to use songs in worship, at area singings, lectureships, youth meet-

ings and the like, when they are in direct opposition to the teaching of God's word! Two very popular songs spring to mind immediately. "Jesus Is Coming Soon," and "Just A Little Talk With Jesus" are plainly unscriptural.

"Jesus Is Coming Soon," teaches the premillennial view of Christ's second coming, especially with reference to the "signs" of Matthew 24. This doctrine is clearly a false teaching. The idea that the kingdom will soon *be* established denies that Christ is now on his throne, reduces the glory of the eternally proposed church to a spiritual "parenthesis" in time, and elevates man to the level of knowing that which Christ does *not* know, that is, when the end will come (Mark 13:32).

One brother will object and say, "but Jesus is coming soon compared to how long it has been already." Brethren, the truth of God's Word is, we don't know when Christ shall return and it is wrong for us to give the impression to others that we do, by singing this unscriptural song.

The song, "Just A Little Talk With Jesus," teaches salvation by faith only. Notice the words of the first verse. "I once was lost in sin, but Jesus took me in,

AND THEN A LITTLE LIGHT FROM HEAVEN FILLED MY SOUL; It bathed my heart in love and wrote my name above, AND JUST A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS MADE ME WHOLE." (Emphasis mine. DWM)

Beloved, this song clearly teaches salvation by direct operation of the Holy Spirit and "praying through" to "accept God's grace." How can we expect to teach the truth that we are saved by grace through faith, but an *obedient faith*, not faith only, if we sing songs such as this? It is certain that there are individuals who will believe these objections to be "blown out of proportion," yet we must remember Colossians 3:16. "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."

The songs which we sing in worship are a means of teaching. Beloved, we dare not forget, the curse of God rests upon *anyone*, man or angel, who would presume to pervert the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-9). Let us take heed, therefore, that our singing in worship be both in spirit AND in truth. — Route 1 Box 159 Fayette, Alabama 35555.

Did God Approve Rehab's Lie?

One of the most perplexing events in the Bible is the lie which Rehab the harlot told to protect the two Jewish spies who came to Jericho (Joshua 2). Put simply, she hid the spies and misrepresented their whereabouts to protect them — "they went that a' way." In return for her assistance, she and her family were saved when Jericho was finally destroyed (Joshua 6:17). In addition to being saved from death, she is cited in the New Testament as an example of one who had a living faith (Heb. 11:31, Jas. 2:25).



EDDIE J. MILLER

The question is this: Is this an example of God approving a lie in order to achieve a "higher good?" Does God approve of lying today under some circumstances? The situation ethicists point to this account and answer yes. As a result, they recommend a hierarchical system of ethics based on context. Hence, they say, if the situation demands it, a lie is O.K. to save life, stealing is O.K. to feed the hungry, adultery is O.K. to keep a family together, etc. I ask, are they right?

I contend that the defenders of situation ethics are wrong, and that Rehab's example does not prove a lie is acceptable to God. For one thing, there is no evidence that the two spies knew she had lied when they promised to save her. Since they were hiding on the roof, it is most likely they *did not* hear her tell the lie. In the second place, it would be a mistake to argue that her being saved from death is equivalent to God's approval. Even if one takes Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 as implying God's approval, it can only be argued that he approved of her *in spite of the lie*, not because of it. Noah became drunk (Gen. 9:20ff), yet is an example of faith in other areas. Abraham lied

about the identity of his wife (Gen. 12:12,13), yet is still an example of faith. David was an adulterer and a murderer, but was forgiven and later accounted righteous. So Rehab can be a good example in one respect, without being considered an example in all areas. After all she was a harlot! Would anyone try to defend her immoral conduct in this regard?

One final point: the person who argues for situation ethics by using the example of Rehab is making a serious mistake in terms of sound Biblical exegesis! He has taken one sketchy, obviously incomplete story about a prostitute who lied, to overturn many clear

statements of scripture (Exo. 20:16, Col. 3:9, Eph. 4:25). Surely that is not dealing honestly with the Bible text. (Incidentally, how would they deal with God's disapproval of the lies of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-6?) The truth is that proper interpretation takes place when we allow explicit statements of scripture to explain or modify the examples, *not vice versa*.

Situation ethics has no support in the example of Rehab, and telling the truth is always right regardless of the situation. — 800 Gunter Ave., Guntersville, AL 35976.

Facts, when combined with ideas, constitute the greatest force in the world.

* * *

The recipe for perpetual ignorance is to be satisfied with your opinions and content with your knowledge.

* * *

Our country was in better condition when there were more whittlers and fewer chiselers.

* * *

Only hungry minds can become educated.

* * *

Unless you are willing to admit your ignorance, you will never be able to acquire knowledge.

* * *

The best way for any business to keep on the upgrade is to stay on the level.

* * *

It's easier to get people to exchange ideas than to change them.

* * *

Ignorance needs no introduction; it always makes itself known.

* * *

A well-rounded character is square in all his dealings.

* * *

You can judge your age by the amount of pain you feel when you come in contact with a new idea.

There's no limit to the height a man can attain by remaining on the level.

* * *

What America really needs most are those things which money can't buy.

* * *

Poverty is no disgrace, but ignorance is.

* * *

Always trust a fat man. He'll never stoop to anything low.

* * *

Too many people run out of ideas long before they run out of words.

* * *

It's not necessary for some people to put out the light to be in the dark.

* * *

An honest executive is one who shares the credit with the man who did all the work.

* * *

Unexpressed ideas are of no more value than kernels in a nut before it has been cracked.

* * *

A person can accumulate a lot of ignorance in the course of a lifetime.

* * *

It is generally agreed that no honest men are successful fishermen.

* * *

It is better to have no ideas at all than to have false ones.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, m... but speak forth
the Words of Truth... ss."

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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NUMBER 13

The Conquest Of Canaan

FRANK CHESSE

Many centuries before the sword of Israel was unsheathed against the land of Canaan, God promised Abraham, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. 12:7). Sometime later, God informed Abraham as to the reason for the future as opposed to the present fulfillment of the promise: "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). Subsequent to the death of Moses, promise became reality as Joshua led Israel into the land of Canaan. Thus, "the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein" (Joshua 21:43).

The land of Canaan had been occupied for hundreds of years. Moses enumerated seven nations that inhabited the land (Deut. 7:1). The apostle Paul referred to the destruction of "seven nations in the land of Canaan" (Acts 13:19). The divinely wrought transfer of Palestine from the Canaanites to the Israelites was a manifestation of the following:

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. God is the "possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19). He rules over "all kingdoms of the heathen" (II Chron. 20:6). "He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them; he enlargeth the nations and straiteneth them again" (Job 12:23). With regard to those in heaven and in earth, "none can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:25). "But our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Psa. 115:3). The gift of Canaan to Israel was an exhibition of God's supreme power and unmitigated authority over all the nations of the earth.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD. God is absolute holiness, untouched by even the shadow of sin. He is of "purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). In repetitious form, the inspired text describes him as, "the Holy One." Centuries prior to God's judgment upon Canaan, though the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full, they were rapidly approaching the mark which would necessitate their destruction (Gen. 15:16). By the time God instructed Joshua to cross over Jordan and take the land, the iniquity of the Canaanites was overflowing the full mark. God's holiness made judgment upon Canaan a divine necessity.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD. "Justice and judgment are the habitation" of God's throne (Psa. 89:14). It is rhetorical to ask, "Doth God pervert judgment? or

doth the Almighty pervert justice?" (Job 8:3). Persistent sin demands punishment. By the time of the conquest, the Canaanites were unredeemable. Moses reminded Israel that their conquest of Canaan was not due to their own righteousness, but rather "for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee" (Deut. 9:5). God's gift of Palestine was not divine favoritism manifested toward Israel. It was an act of divine justice upon Canaan.

THE MERCY OF GOD. If in the city of ancient Nineveh, there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand who could not "discern between their right hand and their left hand" (Jonah 4:11), the number of innocents in Canaan was no doubt exceeding large. Had these babies and small children been allowed to grow into adulthood, they would have adopted the idolatrous ways of their fathers, to thus live and die without God and hope for both time and eternity. In his mercy and their death, God spared them this awful fate.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD. Hundreds of years had passed since God's statement to Abraham concerning the iniquity of the Amorites (Gen. 15:16). By the time of Moses, the Canaanites were ripe for judgment. However, forty years prior to the execution thereof, God was manifesting his deity "throughout all the earth" by means of miraculous wonders upon Egypt (Exo. 9:16), thus granting the Canaanites another opportunity to behold the inexpressible contrast between him and the lifeless idols to which they paid homage. Four hundred years later, the Philistines were still talking about the mighty display of God's great power upon Egypt (I Sam. 4:8).

Similar revelations of his Godhood were characteristic of the forty years from Egypt to Jordan. However, of all the inhabitants of Canaan, only Rahab and her house benefited from the patience of God and from such exhibitions of divine power. Having referred to several such instances, Rahab declared, "for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11).

Approximately twenty years before the fan of divine judgment swept Judah into captivity, God affirmed, "I am weary of repenting" (Jer. 15:6). For many years, Judah had deserved only judgment from the hand of God. Though often on the verge of rendering such judgment, God had continued to

manifest mercy and longsuffering. However, Judah had exhausted even the patience of God. He would relent no longer.

Such was the condition of the Canaanites at the time of their destruction. They had sinned away the day of grace. There is a point, past which even the patience of God cannot extend.

THE WRATH OF GOD. Only sin can cause the "wrath of God" to be revealed from Heaven (Rom. 1:18). It was Israel's sin that caused God to "swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest" (Heb. 3:11). Because of sin "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. 3:6).


Many years prior to the conquest, the infamous nature of Canaanite life was proverbial. Repetitively, God admonished Israel utterly to destroy the Canaanites, "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations" (Deut. 20:18).

The idolatry of the Canaanites and the profuse sins which flowed therefrom were inexcusable. God had revealed himself to them in nature, for "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork" (Psa. 19:1). This revelation alone affirmed their accountability, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

Moreover, they were blessed with the light of God in the lives of such men as Melchisedec, the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God; Abraham, the friend of God, Isaac, the son of promise, and Israel, the prince of God, who lived and labored in their midst. They beheld God in his annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah, his miracles upon Egypt, the cleaving of the Red Sea, and his marvelous wonders in the wilderness. They experienced the vanity of idolatry as they "fainted by reason of the famine" (Gen. 47:13), and as their "hearts did melt" and their courage dissipated (Joshua 2:11). However, all went for naught, for the attitude of Canaan toward their idols was the same as that manifested by Judah many years later: "There is no hope, no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go" (Jer. 2:25).

In "Morals and Dogma," the Bible of Masonry, God's judgment upon Canaan is described as the

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"This Generation Shall Not Pass, Till..."



BOBBY DUNCAN

Generally speaking, careful students of the Bible have little difficulty in understanding that a part of Matthew 24 has to do with the overthrow of Jerusalem, which took place in 70 A.D., and part of the chapter has to do with the final judgment, which is, of course, yet to come. But some difficulty is encountered when we begin to try to determine just which part applies to which event. Verses 29-31 contain language which seems at first to describe events connected with the final judgment. Yet these verses are in that part of the chapter which describes events connected with the overthrow of Jerusalem. I believe a careful consideration of the facts will enable us to resolve this seeming difficulty.

Look first at the word *immediately* in verse 29. What is the meaning of this word? Some who have erroneously applied these verses to the final judgment day insist that *immediately* in this case means "next in the series of great events," and that it could be *immediately* even though thousands of years later. But the word *immediately* simply does not mean that, and neither does the Greek word from which it is here translated. Most will admit that this is a definition forced upon the word in order to escape the conclusion that the events of verses 29-31 were to take place soon after the events described in the preceding verses. Once we are not afraid to let the things said in verses 29-31 apply to events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, we will be willing to allow the word *immediately* to mean "immediately."

Look now at verses 32 and 33: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The Lord is here emphasizing that the observant disciple would be able to see the signs pointing to the coming destruction of Jerusalem. But this statement immediately follows those verses which have been erroneously applied to the final judgment. Question: Is the final judgment to be preceded by signs to let us know it is at hand? If not, then the language of verses 29-31 must apply to something other than the final judgment.

Notice another reason why it is not good Bible exegesis to apply the things said in verses 29-31 to the judgment which is yet to come. Jesus said in verses 34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." If Jesus told the truth — and certainly he did — then the things he had prophesied in this discourse up to that point came to pass before that generation passed, including the things in verses 29-31. It is impossible, by any acceptable rule of exegesis, to separate verses 29-31 from the statement in verse 34. It is safe to say that

the "these things" of verse 34 includes every prophecy recorded in the chapter up to this point. It is significant also that the parallel accounts in Mark 13 and Luke 21 have the very same arrangement. If, indeed, the statement recorded in Matthew 24:29-31 applies to the final judgment, it is signally strange that all three of the inspired writers place it squarely in the context of things that were to happen in connection with the overthrow of Jerusalem, and not in that part of the record that deals with the final judgment. It is strange also that in all three of the records, the Lord's statement to the effect that all these things would happen before that generation passed, was made shortly after he mentioned these specific events.

If one has difficulty believing that the language in these verses could apply to the destruction of Jerusalem, perhaps it will help to remember (1) that prophecy is more often than not set forth in symbolical language, (2) that the overthrow and destruction of kingdoms or nations is sometimes presented in the figure of a tumult or shaking amid the heavenly bodies, and (3) that God's judgment against a nation, though inflicted by other nations, is nonetheless a judgment of God. As illustration of these things, consider the prophecy of Isaiah 13 concerning God's punishment of Babylon. Verses 4 and 5 show that it is the Lord who "mustereth the host of the battle." Verse 6 and verse 9 refer to the time of Babylon's punishment as "the day of the Lord." Verse 10 speaks of the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, and verse 13 speaks of shaking the heavens and removing the earth out of her place. The casual reader might erroneously conclude that this language refers to the end of time, but verse 1 of the chapter clearly states that it is a prophetic description of the overthrow of Babylon. Why, then, should we think it incredible that strikingly similar language be used in prophesying of the overthrow of Jerusalem?

It is sometimes objected that Matthew 24:29-31 must refer to the end of time, for verse 30 talks about "the Son of Man coming," and Jesus did not personally come when Jerusalem was overthrown. But does the Lord's *coming* always mean a personal coming? David, in celebrating a victory which God gave him over his enemies, said: "He bowed the heavens also, and *came* down; and darkness was under his feet" (II Samuel 22:10). Isaiah, in admonishing the people to trust in God, said: "So shall the Lord of hosts *come* down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof" (Isaiah 31:4). And Jesus warned the Ephesian church: "Remember . . . and repent, and do the first works; or else I will *come* unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick . . ." (Revelation 2:5). All these passages refer to the Lord's *coming*, but they do not refer to a literal, personal coming of the Lord. Why, then, must the Lord's *coming* in Matthew 24:30 be a literal, personal coming?

That the destruction of Jerusalem is spoken of as a "coming" of the Lord may be further seen from an examination of Matthew 24:33 in the American Standard Version: "Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that *he* [not it] is nigh, even at

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"Ready To Reason"

SCOTTY HARRIS

"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). Essentially, Peter commands, "Be ready . . . to reason."

The importance of Biblical reasoning is clearly demonstrated in such passages as Acts 17:2,3, where Paul "reasoned . . . out of the scriptures" with those in Thessalonica. Again, Acts 24:25 records that Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come . . ." Indeed, Paul was ever "ready to reason."

This article proposes an application of the aforementioned passages to the following observation: It is frequently discovered these days that more and more young people, reared in the church, are fundamentally lacking in their ability to offer logical, well-formulated, scriptural *reasons* for their religion. They have difficulty in presenting "facts for their faith."

For example, our young people know that we do not employ mechanical instruments of music in worship. Mere observance of the worship assembly itself suggests this. But, is it enough for them simply to observe that we do not, or shouldn't they also know *why* we do not? Still further, will it suffice, when their

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The Conquest Of Canaan

Continued From Page 1

"ruthless extermination of all people of all sexes and ages, because it was their misfortune not to know the God of the Hebrews, or to worship Him under the wrong name, by the savage troops of Moses and Joshua" (p. 164). Those who would thus brand the conquest of Canaan as cruel, ruthless and barbaric, have failed to grasp both the nature of sin and the nature of God. — Route 5 Thomson, Ga. 30824.

The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

(No. 5)

Previous articles in this short yet vital series have depicted reasons why we need to study repentance, what repentance is not (a negative view), what repentance actually is (a positive view), and several major motivations deliberately designed to induce repentance. Now we turn to other vital aspects of the tremendous theme.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Knowledgeable students of the Bible have frequently reflected that it is the most difficult of all Biblical commands toward which submission is demanded. Perhaps you have thought either faith or baptism is the Bible's most difficult command. Not so!! Many have been convinced by the overwhelming evidence in Holy Writ that Jesus is God's Son. Yet they remain impenitent. Many have never submitted to the watery ordinance known as baptism or immersion. Their real hindrance is not baptism; it is repentance. Lead a person to a *penitent* disposition subsequent to his faith and, like the treasurer from Ethiopia in Acts 8, he will demand baptism in water. Like the jailor in Acts 16 he will be ready to be immersed the same hour of the night, even though it be past midnight, as was true with the convicted jailor and his entire family. I firmly and fully believe that a rejection of repentance will send more souls to Eternal Gehenna than will a repudiation of immersion for the remission of sins.

Repentance is the Bible's most difficult command because it calls for a complete turn around in a person's life. It means breaking off a relationship with a mate to whom one is illegally married, such as in the case of Felix and Drusilla in Acts 24. It means ceasing a live-in relationship with a woman or man to whom the person is unmarried. It means to cease turning each date into a carnal conquest with one of the opposite sex. It means to cease all lying and cheating, anywhere — everywhere. It means ceasing the use of profanity. It means ceasing domestic violence in the family framework. It means quitting a dishonorable profession and seeking out a job that can be performed in harmony with justice and right. It means ceasing to attend the dens of the devil such as dancing and drinking spots, R-rated and X-rated movies and having and showing such in one's home by means of HBO, or rentals from a local Video Center, aimed primarily to provide just such moving picture pornography. On the positive side repentance means to live a life of loyalty to Almighty God and his only begotten Son — Jesus Christ our Savior. Repentance is the Bible's most difficult demand because it is the most revolutionary act ever commanded by God and directed to humanity.

When the people of Nineveh repented they ceased their evil and they resorted to walking the route of righteousness (Jonah 3). When apostate Israel repented at the powerful and penetrating preaching of the Mighty Messianic Harbinger they were baptized and sought to make ready themselves for membership in the coming reign of heaven on earth. When stubborn and rebellious Israel faced a far greater than John — Jesus himself — and repented they changed their course of life from a downward plunge toward hell to an upward thrust toward heaven on high. When the convinced and the convicted on that memorable Pentecost repented they were ready to be baptized straightway, and immediately they continued steadfastly in apostolic doctrine (teaching), in fellowship, in the Lord's Supper, and in prayers (Acts 2:38-42). Subsequent

chapters relate the beauty of their benevolence, the uniqueness of their unity, the loveliness of their lives, the selfless service they rendered their Savior and the courage of their convictions.

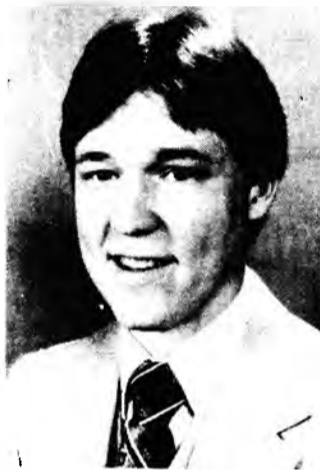
When people today truly repent they will not quibble about the necessity of baptism. They will not renege at worship's demands of their lives. They will not complain because they cannot go where they used to go, associate with the ones they used to fellowship, think like they once thought, talk like they used to talk and do as they once did. Real repentance will not allow a man to keep an adulterous wife. If he lived in adultery prior to baptism, it will still be adultery subsequent to baptism. Baptism does not WASH away husbands and wives that people never had a right to in the first place!! Continuation in an

adulterous marriage proves conclusively that impenitence remains, that real or genuine repentance has not occurred. A man who has repented cannot continue to buy, sell and relish in the world of alcoholic consumption or the realm of dope. A penitent person will not continue a job that Heaven is sure to frown upon or engage in a business that is of the devil from beginning to end. I once heard of a man who was building a dance hall. Before completing it he was converted to Christ. He never opened it!! That is repentance regardless of how much expense he was out. A penitent person will seek honorable work even if it means a demotion and less take-home pay each week. The implications of real repentance are far, Far, FAR deeper than many have realized. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

An Unpopular Commandment

In the parent-child relationship there has to be constant discipline. In the business world there has to be constant discipline. The same is true with the State. But it's not true in the church, is it? Or is it?

The way many of our affairs within the church are handled would prove that last statement true. How many congregations within the brotherhood today tolerate sin to the same degree that those at Corinth did according to I Cor. 5? Or has it reached the degree that it had in the church at the city of Thyatira (Rev. 2:20-22)? Whatever the case, church discipline and



BARRY FIKE

the command to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" is virtually ignored in many congregations of our Lord. I have never been a part of a congregation that disfellowshipped anyone until recently, when the procedure had to be carried out. In twenty-eight years I can't believe that there wasn't one person in five different congregations in three states that didn't need some discipline. Either we have brethren that adhere very closely to the word or some leadership that doesn't pay attention to that word.

Disfellowshipping is always done in the "name of the Lord" (II Thess. 3:6) for the purpose of restoration (I Cor. 5:4,5). And yet I'm sure you've heard, as I have, that such a practice is virtually unnecessary and totally alienated from the Christian's concept of loving your brother and sister in Christ.

Wasn't it the God whose very essence is love that

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"Ready To Reason"

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faith is assaulted by the sectarian religious world, for them merely to recollect from past sermons that the preacher *said* that the church of Christ is an undenominational, exclusive institution; or, shouldn't they further be able to offer *reasons* which support the undenominational nature of the church? In a word, can they produce "book, chapter, and verse?"

In far too many cases, young people in the church are simply "inheriting" the handed-down faith of mom and dad, with no genuine convictions of their own — no real faith of their own! Mom and dad often feel that the regular attendance of their children at Bible class and worship services will vouchsafe faithfulness to their children. Such is not the case. Young people need to be taught the "whys" and "wherefores" of New Testament Christianity. This will enable them to offer *reasons* for their religious beliefs and practices

This kind of equipment for doctrinal understanding is born solely of intense training and diligent study, above and beyond what is learned by mere church attendance. This is the work of the home in particular (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:3-9; Eph. 6:4). Timothy was a remarkably blessed young man in that his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois respectively, taught him the "holy scriptures" from the time that he was a "babe" (KJV), according to II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15.

How tragic the thought of Deuteronomy 32:20: "children in whom is no faith." May God truly hasten the day when parents realize the urgent need to "reason from the scriptures" with their children, at home! Only when such is done, will our young people truly be "ready to reason" concerning their religious beliefs and practices. — Route 3, Box 349, Dora, Alabama 35602.

"This Generation Shall Not Pass, Till..."

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the doors." The footnote in the King James Version also supplies "he" instead of "it." If this is a correct rendering, then it seems we should have no trouble at

all applying everything up through verse 34 to events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem.

An Unpopular Commandment

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disciplined Cain (Gen. 4:1)? Wasn't it the same God that disciplined the people in the day of Noah (Gen. 6:5-8); the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24,25); the rebellious Israelites (I Cor. 10:5); and Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5? By the way, did you notice the result of such discipline in Acts 5:11-14?

But some do not think this will produce good or will work. Have we now taken the place of God in telling him how to run the business of the salvation of souls? We need to realize that we are not responsible for the results, but only for doing what God commands us to do. We need to be concerned about doing his will, not hurting the feelings of brother or sister so and so.

If we love the guilty party, we will disfellowship him. But do remember that this procedure is the last step in a train of activities that precede it.

First, guilt has to be established (Deut. 13:1-18;

Matt. 18:15-17). The false teacher has to be exposed (I Tim. 5:20). Paul had already done this with Hymenaeus and Alexander (I Tim. 1:20); Demas (II Tim. 4:10); and even with the apostle Peter (Gal. 2:10).

Secondly, with the guilt established, the disorderly has to be impressed with the wrong he is guilty of. This is done in the hope he will be brought back to repentance (Tit. 3:10,11) without our having to disfellowship him. In doing this we need to remember: "ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Be gentle with the erring soul and go with the attitude of, "We love you, and since you have fallen into sin we are here to help you return back to your first love."

If all of this fails, then an announce-

ment to the entire congregation needs to be made announcing the intention to withdraw from that person, thus allowing the congregation to put forth all efforts to bring the wayward back to repentance (I Cor. 5:4,5). If all else fails, then note the man and have no company with him for the purpose of making him ashamed. We must so completely withdraw from and ostracize the guilty party, that he feels and knows that he is truly unworthy of the company of Christians in any way. Such a person is truly a social outcast from the company of the saints, as well as excluded from all spiritual efforts. The separation is so complete that we are not even to eat with such an one (I Cor. 5:9,10).

When it is carried out in the right and proper way, the procedure will have to be done to less than one might think! — Route 2, Box 806B, Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

The Miracles Of Christ

There are 36 recorded miracles Christ performed while here on earth. The purpose of this article is to look at two main lessons: (1) What is a miracle, and (2) for what purpose did Christ employ them?

First, what is a miracle? Many today think that strange occurrences, birth, or some other great event is a miracle. This is not so. In the *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary* a miracle is defined as



GEORGE REED

"an event or effect that apparently contradicts known scientific laws and is hence thought to be due to supernatural causes, especially to an act of God." To this definition we would give a hardy amen. The Greek word for miracle is *dunamis*. Vine defines the word as meaning "power, inherent ability, is used of works of supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means." The word is used 120 times in the New Testament. Sometimes the word is translated "power" (Mt. 6:13; Mk. 13:25,26; Rom. 1:16; Acts 1:8; 4:7; 10:38; I Cor. 1:18; 6:14; 15:24,43; II Tim. 1:7; Heb. 2:4, ASV; I Pet. 1:5; II Pet. 1:3; Rev. 11:17), "mighty (wonderful) works" (Mt. 7:22; 11:20,21,23; Mk. 6:14; Lk. 19:37; Acts 2:22, ASV), and "might" (Eph. 1:21; 3:16; Col. 1:11,29). It is translated "ability" in Matthew 25:15. Next, John translates the word for "signs" (*semeion*) "miracle(s)." The word *semeion* means "a sign, mark, token, to give a sign, is used of miracles and wonders as signs of Divine authority" (Vine). Signs, powers, and wonders are all found in Acts 2:22; II Thessalonians 2:9, and Hebrews 2:4. Vine says, "A sign is intended to appeal to the understanding, a wonder appeals to the imagination, a power indicates its source as supernatural."

Second, what were Christ's miracles for? Let us note five examples:

1. *Power over nature*. Jesus showed his power over nature when he walked upon the water (Mt. 14:22-29), and when he rebuked the sea (Mk. 4:35-41).

2. *Power over disease*. There are numerous examples of this: healing a leper (Mt. 8:3), a paralytic (Mt. 9:2), the nobleman's son (Jn. 4:50), the invalid (Jn. 5:8), and the ten lepers (Lk. 17:11-19).

3. *Power over demons*. By Jesus' casting out demons, he showed the world he had power over Satan and his angels. The Bible records Jesus'

healing a demoniac man (Mt. 9:33), a demoniac girl (Mt. 15:28; Mk. 7:29), a demoniac boy (Mt. 17:18; Mk. 9:25; Lk. 9:42), and one who was both blind and dumb (Mt. 12:22; Lk. 11:14).

4. *Power over material things*. He turned water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11), and fed five thousand (Mt. 14:13-21), and later the four thousand (Mt. 15:26).

5. *Power over death*. Jesus showed his power over death by raising Lazarus (Jn. 11:1-44), the widow's son (Lk. 7:14), and Jairus' daughter (Mt. 9:25; Mk. 5:41; Lk. 8:54) from the dead.

Christ's miracles were instantaneous, complete, and were done in the sight of many witnesses (Acts 2:22). Some might argue that the account in Mark's gospel of healing the blind man was not instantaneous (Mk. 8:22-26). No matter what explanation might be given, the miracle occurred in a matter of minutes, and not days.

Now let us look at the purpose of Christ's miracles:

1. To show he was the Son of God (Jn. 20:30,31).
2. To induce belief; Jn. 20:30,31; 11:11; cf. 2:11).
3. To show the people he was from God (Jn. 6:14;

1:49; 3:2; 7:31,36; 9:16; Acts 2:22).

4. To show that he was the Immanuel (Mt. 1:23). This happened when he raised the widow's son (Lk. 7:16).

5. To show the unbelieving Jews that the kingdom is coming regardless of the demons (Lk. 11:20).

6. To establish his word (Mt. 7:29; Mk. 1:22). Note Mark 1:27: "And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

7. To show that the Son of man has power to forgive sins (Mk. 2:1-12). Note their astonishment: "We never saw it on this fashion" (v. 12).

In this study we have noticed the definition, purpose, and use of the miracles of Christ. Truly, the miracles Christ performed proved him to be the Son of God with power. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

An honest merchant is one who puts up a "going out of business" sign — and then goes out of business.

One of the secret ambitions of many people is to be able to enjoy some of the evils which go with having too much money.

A man doesn't always get paid for what he knows, but he seldom escapes paying for what he doesn't know.

The true measure of a man is the heights of his ideals, the breadth of his sympathy, the depth of his convictions, and the length of his patience.

What America really needs most are those things which money can't buy.

It is possible that you can stop an army of a million men, but you can't stop a good idea when it comes along.

Stand still and watch the world go by - and it will!

Prayer must not be taken out of the public schools. That's the way, the only way, many of us got through.

Hem in both ends of the day with prayer, and then it won't be so likely to unravel in the middle.

A preacher in Richmond, Virginia, reports that he has four hundred active members in his church - two hundred active for him, and two hundred active against him.

The person who gets down on his knees occasionally is better able to stand up to the problems of life when he has to face them.

Too few preachers know the difference between a sermon and a lecture.

The spirit in which a man preaches is as vital as what he says.

It is impossible to preach with one eye on the conscience and the other on the collection.

Perhaps you can improve your preacher's preaching by being a better listener.

We may ask for information, but we are usually only interested in what confirms our opinions.

No Christian is strong enough to carry a cross and a prejudice at the same time.

Two people can't hate each other if they both love God.

If you are honest only because you think it's the best policy, your honesty has already been corrupted.



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 19

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NUMBER 14

"They Have Rejected Me, That I Should Not Reign Over Them"

NEIL EVANS

From time to time various programs of work are initiated to reach others with the gospel or to restore the unfaithful. In most instances these programs are carefully and prayerfully planned by elderships endeavoring to see souls saved. Subsequently, these plans are presented to the congregation with great anticipation and excitement in an effort to "sell" the program. A few anxiously accept the opportunity of service just as Paul admonished (Gal. 6:10); unfortunately, the majority are indifferent. The question is often asked, "Why are so many members of the Lord's church unwilling to work in these various programs?"

There are various answers which we may cite in answer to this question: (1) failure to recognize the great need, (2) too many activities of a secular nature which result in the reply, "I just don't have the time," (3) lack of love for the lost, (4) pride, but it seems to me that all of these answers may be summed up by saying one is not really converted to Christ if he lacks interest in the programs of work of his individual congregation. It may seem many church members feel that a particular work is incapable of ever attaining the goal with which it was begun; or maybe they, for some reason, did not agree with the way the goal was to be accomplished. Often, because of personality conflicts, one refuses to participate in an organized program of work.

There is little doubt that obtaining maximum participation in any work of the church is a problem, but may we approach a possible solution from this perspective. God in his infinite wisdom planned for the salvation of men, and such was to be accomplished through his Son (Eph. 1:5, 10) as head of the church (Col. 1:13-18). It is through the church that God carries on his work (I Peter 2:9). Christ maintained while on earth that his purpose was one with the Father's (John 10:30; 17:21), and that purpose was to draw men unto him for salvation (John 6:44; 12:32, 46-50). Men are drawn to Christ through the gospel. After learning and obeying the gospel, Christians ought to be interested in teaching others

(Heb. 5:12). Most of the programs of work organized by a local congregation are for the intent of teaching one how to become and remain a Christian. It seems, however, that many members of the Lord's church have an attitude that if the elders (or leaders of the congregation where elders have not yet been appointed) initiate a program, it does not directly apply to them. According to Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28, and I Peter 5:1-5, God has ordained, appointed, or given authority to elders for the purpose of overseeing, watching for, and feeding the church, purchased by his Son. These commands are explicit and certainly underscore the awesome responsibility of these men appointed as elders in the Lord's church.

Some would argue that Christians should not think that apathy toward many organized programs of work is wrong because such programs are of human origin. However, as we have pointed out, elders have the God-given authority to enact such programs and Christians should be submissive to their pleas as

long as they are in harmony with the will of God. When we develop an attitude of resistance toward the work of the church, we are in fact resisting God. In I Samuel 8:7, Samuel felt as though the Israelites had rejected him because they desired a king to rule over them as did the other nations. God recognized that the problem was not with Samuel, but with the people, for they had developed an attitude which caused them to reject the will and authority of God. The Bible teaches that for one to be pleasing to God, he must do that which God has authorized. We recognize the authority God has given to elders regarding matters of judgment. We must be careful and prudent when addressing the matter of involvement in the work of the church, lest we develop an attitude like the Israelites in I Samuel 8:7, and reject God. We should also realize that we will be held responsible for our decisions, and strive to avail ourselves of every opportunity.—704 4th Ave., Jasper, AL 35501

The Rejected Christ

It is hardly conceivable that anyone as wonderful as Jesus Christ would have had as many enemies as he did. As our minds retrace the beautiful life he led, the perfect pattern he set, we are amazed to recall the fact that many in his day coldly rejected him. How could anyone spurn such an unselfish love? Even though we cannot answer these questions completely, it remains a sobering, heartbreaking fact that thousands of his day turned a deaf ear to Heaven's will, expressed so




JOHNNY RAMSEY

capably in Jesus, the Son of God.

During the time that Christ walked and talked upon earth the hatred and animosity of the Pharisees was expressed in various forms. And we are all familiar with the crowning achievement of their hatred-coupled with the sanction of the Roman rulers — yes, the cruel crucifixion of my Lord. Jesus was unwelcome at birth, opposed throughout life and when he died, the highest ambition of many had been realized. Why did he offend? Why was he rejected (Galatians 5:11; Romans 9:33; John 1:11)?

I would like to suggest first of all that Jesus was rejected by many in his day because he emphasized the *spiritual* above the *temporal*. The Jews of that day looked for and expected an earthly kingdom. They had read the Old Testament prophecies of a coming

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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The Rejected Christ

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King who would sit upon David's Throne. This Messiah was to be King of kings and Lord of lords. But, due to their emphasis on material values they failed to realize that the kingdom of Christ would never be an earthly empire. As we follow the life and teaching of Jesus as revealed in the New Testament we can see plainly the misconceptions the religious leaders of that day had. On one occasion Jesus had to hide himself because the Jews were trying to make him a king by force (John, chapter 6). Even the close disciples of Christ seem to have had a misconception of his Lordship. But Jesus made it plain that he was not a rival of Caesar for earthly power when he stated: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). One of the saddest scenes in all the Bible is that found in the sixth chapter of John after Jesus tells his followers of his spiritual rather than material emphasis. The record states that so many of the multitude ceased to follow Him. So great was this falling away from the masses whom Jesus looked to for friendship that he pathetically asked the intimate few, the twelve disciples: "Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67). What changed the attitude of the people? At one time they had praised the name of their leader, Jesus of Nazareth. But now, in disappointment they turn away and follow Christ no more. C. R. Brewer has well-expressed this scene in these words:

"A Hero stood amid a throng--
And heard them cry His name
They praised His deed in word and song . . .
And shouts of loud acclaim
A King they said -- A King of men--
We want no other guide
Bring forth the crown and let Him reign
There's no one else beside.
This was their loud, exulting cry
Throughout the livelong day
But ere a second night drew nigh--
Their hearts had turned away
How quickly did their praises die--
The Hero stood alone
While some in silence passed Him by--

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Subjective Argument

In a present radio and television advertising campaign conducted by the Baptist churches in Alabama we are bombarded with a great number of arguments of a subjective nature. One man says he was a successful business man for many years, but came to realize something was missing in his life. Then he accepted Christ. Afterward, he was going through certain health crises, Jesus really meant a great deal to him. Another person, a woman born in a foreign country which was torn with war, mentions the losses of home, family, and friends because of the war. But now she has accepted Christ, and has a wonderful husband and family, good neighbors, and a happy life in the United States.



BOB DUNCAN

In the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* one definition of *subjective* is, "Existing only within the experiencer's mind and incapable of external verification." The above-mentioned testimonies are of this nature, and actually encourage unbelief on the part of those who tend to be logical in their thinking. I think if I were an unbeliever and were trying to decide if Christ is real, upon hearing such testimony I probably would point to the thousands of people who are serving Christ, but who are having to endure some of the most serve hardships imaginable. Where is the Christ they serve? If good fortune's coming to those who serve the Lord proves Christ is real, what is proved by misfortune's coming to them? Or, if good fortune's coming to those who serve Christ proves Christ is real and it pays to serve him, then what does it prove when good fortune comes to those who serve Buddha? The Atheist is laughing up his sleeve at such reasoning, especially if he is enjoying what he considers to be prosperity and happiness in life. After all, according to the logic of our Baptist friends, wouldn't his happiness and prosperity prove it pays to be an atheist?

What about the bumper sticker which reads: "GOD IS NOT DEAD. I TALKED TO HIM THIS MORNING."? Now, that's catchy and cute, but it does not logically argue that God is not dead. If it does, then what would be the logical conclusion you would draw should you see on the bumper of a faithful Moslem's car a bumper sticker which reads: "ALLAH IS NOT DEAD. I TALKED TO HIM THIS MORNING."?

Are our brethren ever guilty of subjective reasoning? Do they ever assert as proof of a thing that which exists only within their own minds, and is incapable of external verification?

Consider the words of a song often sung in our worship periods:

I serve a risen Savior,
He's in the world today;
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy,
I hear his voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives?
He lives within my heart.

Now let's be honest, brethren. Wouldn't the same kind of logic prove also that Buddha, or Allah, or my great grandfather is living today?

When we make illogical, subjective arguments to try to prove that which could be proved logically and objectively, we are making our position appear weak, and we are providing the atheist ammunition with which to do battle against us.

Some Evil Tendencies In The Church

W. A. HOLLEY

In II Thessalonians 2:1-12, the brethren in Thessalonica, were warned by the apostle Paul, of the coming of "the man of sin . . . the son of perdition." This warning was as early as A.D. 54. Just a few years later (A.D. 60), Paul forewarned the Ephesian elders of the danger of departure from the faith that would arise from among themselves (Acts 20:28-32). Five years pass and Paul feels compelled to warn Timothy, saying, "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats . . ." (I Timothy 4:1-4, A.D. 65). Then, just one short year later, Paul, again forewarneth Timothy of the storm of wickedness of the last days, and even describes the enemies of the truth of God Almighty (II Timothy 3:1-13, A.D. 66). Jesus, as early as A.D. 31, told his disciples to watch for wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15-16). . . .

What are some of these tendencies which can be

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The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

(No. 6)

Why preach its necessity, what repentance is not, what repentance is, what the major motivations of repentance are, why it is the most difficult demand of God's will to obey and some of the intense implications that flow from it have been covered in previous segments of our study. Two more aspects remain. We shall consider one of them in this article and the second in a subsequent study for WORDS OF TRUTH.



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Impenitence extracts high costs from the hardened hearts and calloused consciences of rebels to God's government over their lives. Impenitence caused Noah's generation to perish in the watery grave of that Universal Deluge (Gen. 7:17-24; II Pet. 2:5). Impenitence caused the sinful cities of the Jordan Plain—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim—to perish amidst the fire and brimstone rained upon them from an offended heaven on high (Gen. 19). Impenitence caused the sinful Israelites in the wilderness to perish by the hundreds of thousands short of Canaan's inheritance. Impenitence is a thread that is interwoven throughout the Old Testament. People sinned. God sent them prophets. Pleas to repent were called for by the clarion voices of preaching prophets crying in the wilderness of waywardness and in the camps of corruption. Ways of escape were offered by repentance of minds and amended lives. Yet they refused to hear and heed such. They marched right on holding high the black banners of Satan and sin.

Impenitence permeates much of the New Testament. Those who were impenitent in

John's day and in the Lord's personal ministry were unready to enter and unprepared to receive the Messianic kingdom when it came with power and profit on Pentecost in Acts 2. Not all by any means obeyed the gospel in Jerusalem in Acts 2 and the subsequent chapters. Yet they heard a message that demanded godly sorrow, then repentance, then amended lives. They could enter into Christ with their immersion in water that memorable Pentecost. There is no real Biblical repentance unless it is produced by godly sorrow and results in reformation and restitution, Paul challenged his Athenian audience to repent in Acts 17:30. For the most part they rejected his plea and refused an extended hearing of his vital message (Acts 17:32ff).

Here is a lingering look at what impenitence extracts by way of high costs. (1) It means a total failure to obey one of the precepts of our Maker. Repentance is an obligation. In our Lord's personal ministry he sent out the twelve on what we call the Limited or Restricted Commission. The Bible says in Mark 6:12, "And they went out, and preached that men *should* repent." Repentance is enjoined upon us in the Christian age. Luke 24:47 makes it a mandatory part of the Great Commission. Peter inculcated its intense necessity in Acts 2:38 and 3:19. Paul told his Athenian auditors on Mars' Hill that God "now commandeth all

men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). (2) Men will perish in the absence of repentance. Jesus powerfully and pointedly presented the two great alternatives in Luke 13:3,5—repent or perish. As long as the prodigal remained in the far off country of sin he perished with hunger (Luke 15:17). (3) Men will never have remission of sins without repentance. Jesus linked repentance and remission of sins in Luke 24:47. Peter linked repentance and remission of sins in Acts 2:38. This same apostle connected repentance and the blotting out of sins in Acts 3:19. Simon Peter told Simon, the erring Samaritan sinner, that he was to repent and pray if he desired any chance of making himself right with God (Acts 8:22). Hence, repentance is a stipulation of God's first law of pardon for alien sinners; it likewise is a necessary condition in his second law of pardon for his erring children. (4) Void of repentance, men will remain in their sins. This is true of sinner and saint alike. Paul spoke of erring Christians in Corinth who had sinned and yet had not repented of their uncleanness, their fornication and their lasciviousness (II Cor. 12:21). For all the impenitent, both those outside the church and those in it, hell is the final consequence of their utter rejection of God's proffered pardon. How extremely high is the cost extracted by impenitence.—P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063

Gems Of Joshua

The book of Joshua is a wonderful book that needs to be read and studied by all mankind. In this good book I find that Joshua is one of the stalwart characters of the word of God. I believe that Joshua is truly an unsung hero of the Old Testament.

One of the best lessons to be learned from this book is the importance of leadership. Leadership has been a problem in all facets of life throughout the history of man.

Today, as in every age, we need better leadership in government, schools, the home, and in the church. "On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel: and they feared him as they feared Moses, all the days of his life" (Joshua 4:14). This verse teaches two wonderful lessons: (1) Joshua was approved of God to be a leader of his people. (2) The people recognized the leadership ability of Joshua. Two important questions need to be asked all leaders today: (1) Are you approved of God, and (2) do people recognize you as a leader?

Chapter six of the book of Joshua contains one of the greatest lessons against the teaching of "faith only" that can be studied. Many great gospel preachers through the years have used this great chapter in debates to refute the false teaching of faith only, or that a person is saved at the point of faith without any further obedience. When did the walls fall? When did they receive the city of Jericho? The answer is when the children of Israel did *everything*, not just a part, of what God had commanded them to do. The walls did not fall when Israel marched around the city or when the trumpets were blown, but the walls fall when Israel obeyed all the commands of God in marching around the city, blowing the trumpets



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

and shouting. This chapter shows beyond any shadow of doubt that the faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Joshua 22:5). Can we not use the principles of this verse today and be blessed by doing so? Listed below are the characteristics of the individual blessed by God: (1) take diligent heed, (2) do the commandments, (3) keep the law of God, (4) love God, (5) walk in the way of God, (6) cleave to God, and (7) serve God with all your heart and soul. This admonition, when practiced, would certainly make stronger individuals.

Where do preachers get their information to preach? What sources do preachers use in their preaching? What are preachers to preach? Chapters twenty-three and twenty-four is a great sermon. If every preacher would go to the word of God and preach the truth of God's word our sermons would be much better. If a preacher wants a biblical sermon, he must preach God's word. Please read the following verses of these two chapters and see the great truths in this sermon: Joshua 23:6,8, 11-13,16; 24:14-16, 19-20, 23-24. The sermon in these two chapters motivates one to want to be a better preacher and to be the kind of individual that pleases God.

"And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth . . ." (Joshua 23:14). Joshua was a great biblical character but he could not escape physical death. Unless Christ comes again in our life time, we all must die too. Are we prepared for physical death? Are we doing anything about getting ready to die? Wouldn't it be great if at the time each of us dies we could say as Paul said, "For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:6-7). We are all preaching our sermons

The Rejected Christ

Continued from page 2

Some jeered or cast a stone.
How fickle is the heart of men--
How frail is human faith
And he who finds no higher plan
Walks but the way of Death."

There are many people today who are expecting Jesus to have an earthly kingdom. Various religious groups teach the doctrine of premillennialism, that is, the thousand year reign of Christ on earth in the city of Jerusalem. Yes, many denominational preachers teach that the Lord will have a literal, material reign on this earth at the time of his second coming. In fact, this teaching forms a basis or central point of many religions of our day. But, friend of mine, there is not an ounce of truth in this doctrine. The Bible teaches that Christ is now reigning; he is at the Father's right hand in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:20). Christ will not reign upon this earth when he comes, because at that time the earth will burn up. In II Peter, chapter 3, verse 10 we read: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Where then are the teachers of the earthly-kingdom theory to put Christ's kingdom? — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

Continued on page 4

Some Evil Tendencies in The Church

Continued from page 2

observed today? We shall note:

(1) There is the tendency to fight, fuss and quarrel among ourselves. Brethren tend to line up after the leadership of certain prominent brethren, rather than follow Jesus Christ. Some have their priorities mixed up: Instead of walking after Christ, they walk after men. Those who follow Christ are of the same mind, do not sanction division, and are perfectly united together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10).

In truth, we must contend for the faith, but we must learn to differ without hating because of opinions (Jude 3, I Peter 4:11; I Timothy 1:4). We can learn to be patient, tolerant, and longsuffering toward the weak, but we can never compromise God's eternal truth (Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:13-15). To divide over trivial matters which do not affect the fundamentals of the faith is to sin against a Holy God! (John 17:20-23).

(2) Another evil tendency is one toward formalism. Of course, we must "from the heart obey that form of doctrine," but we must avoid a mere "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (Cf. Romans 6:17-18; II Timothy 3:5). When worship becomes a formality, a ritual, a ceremonial activity, we have missed the mark by a country mile!! If we have no real interest, if the service is too long, if we think only of getting through, and give simply because of habit, something is radically wrong!

(3) Another problem with many of our preachers is to present washed-out, warmed-over, apologetic sermons that would go well in Baptist or Methodist, or Pentecostal churches. In many instances, there is nothing distinctive in the lessons being delivered. When the sermon is over we are left wondering what the preacher was talking about. In many pulpits sermons are so bland one would not know that the preacher was supposed to be a gospel preacher!

We do not have to guess as to what Herbert W. Armstrong, Billy Graham or Jerry Falwell mean when we hear them. Why cannot our preachers be as pointed, clear, forthright, and aboveboard in our preaching as they are??

Gospel preaching makes a difference. Truth and error are contrasted (I John 4:6). Isaiah condemns those who would mix good and evil, light and darkness, bitter and sweet (Isaiah 5:20). Ezekiel rebuked the false prophets because they did not show the difference between the holy and the profane, and the clean and the unclean (Ezekiel 22:26, Cf. 44:23). Paul urged Timothy to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine . . ." (II Timothy 4:1-8).

(4) Efforts are being made by some of our "intellectual preachers" to soften the true gospel message and thus make it conform to the sensual taste of this wicked age. Somehow, the social drinker, the adulterer, the homosexual, the false teacher, and the worldly minded must be made to feel at home. Somehow, the true gospel message is too narrow for them! The gospel as it is is perfectly adapted, adjusted, and reconciled to the needs of sinful men (Revelation 22:18-19; Jude 3; II John 9-11; Galatians 1:6-10). Any modification, alteration or emendation is, by the Lord, strictly forbidden!

(5) It seems that many elders and preachers are willing and ready to surrender the Biblical standard of morality, purity, modesty and virtue. Many churches have members guilty of the aforementioned sins but nothing has been done about it; and to make the matter worse, nothing is likely to be done about it!! Preachers and elders, oftentimes, say nothing about the true situation, allowing such to pass without making waves. But God will judge; we all must give an account in the day of Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10-11). Few are disfellowshipped, regardless of

their sins. The man who had taken his father's wife was ordered turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit might be saved (I Corinthians 5:1-13; Cf. Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20; II Thessalonians 3:6-15).

(6) Among some churches of Christ there seems to be developing a clergy class and a laity class. We may not wish to open our eyes and see what is happening, but the problem is there just the same. There is growing debate about who should control the local church: the elders? the preacher? or the majority? According to some reports some women argue that they have just as much right to run the church as the men. Shades of the women's liberation movement!

In some areas the preacher is "the Pastor" (although he doesn't want to be called "The Pastor"), while the elders are but figureheads. No, no, this is not what the Bible teaches, but the liberals among us do not really care.

Many leaders of the Lord's church have gone crazy over academics. These are far more interested in the preacher's scholastic achievements than they are his ability to preach plain, simple gospel truth. According to such foolishness the twelve apostles, if they could return, would be unqualified to preach in many of today's churches. It seems that many preachers yearn to be called Dr. A, or Dr. B, or Dr. C. But we never read in Sacred Scripture of Dr. Paul or Dr. Peter, *et al.* Jesus condemned any such practice. He said, "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. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:8-11). If it is wrong to call a man "Father" from a Biblical and religious point of view, it also would be wrong to call a man "Doctor" from a Biblical and religious point of view. The principle involved is the same! If not, why not??

Designating one Christian as a *Doctor*, another as *Brother*, and a third as *mister* spells rank favoritism. In churches of Christ there can be no rank, i.e., a grade of official standing, where the Spirit of Christ reigns (James 2:1-4; Luke 14:7-11).

(7) Finally, another step away from the ancient truth is the practice (in many quarters) of attaching the word "minister" to most church activities: Some have a "tract ministry," a "tape ministry," a "bus ministry," an "Air port ministry," and a "minister of personal evangelism." Some churches are looking for "a pulpit minister," which seems to imply other classes of ministers. Some want "youth ministers," some "education ministers." Before long we will have a "minister of nursing homes," a "minister of hospital visitation," a "minister of janitorial services," a "minister of lawn care," and a "minister of Homosexual Services." Isn't such a practice laughable? This practice comes straight out of denominationalism! If the trend continues, we will soon be borrowing the whole denominational arrangement, and thus forget about the Lord's will and way altogether. Brethren, let us take warning. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Justification

It is not unusual to hear: "Father forgive us of the sins which we have committed since we were last justified in your sight." While we readily admit the necessity of confessing our sins (Jas. 5:16; I Jno. 1:9), at the same time we emphatically deny the implication of part time justification for the faithful. Those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb through their obedience to the gospel (I Pet. 1:22; I Cor.

15:1-2), and continue to seek and abide in God's law (Jas. 1:25) are CONTINUOUSLY justified by the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9). We cannot over-emphasize the principle of continuous justification (cleansing by the blood of Christ), because God desires that we have a faith of boldness, certainty, and confidence, rather than fear and doubt. The true child of God whose heart and attitude is right toward God is NOW justified and CONTINUES to be so through the propitiation of Christ (I Jno. 2:2; 4:10). This is God's promise.

Now, the question may be rightfully asked: "but can't we fall from grace?" The Bible is abundantly clear. Yes, we can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). Yes, we can forsake the right way (II Pet. 2:15). Yes, we can sin WILLFULLY against God and forfeit our access to his grace (Heb. 10:26). Willful sin is plain and simple rebellion. It means that one knows God's will in a particular matter but chooses by his own will to



ROY FULLER

disobey God. God hates rebellion (I Sam. 15:23).

Now let us consider the proper application. If you are in rebellion against God, knowing his will but rejecting it, you should not be leading prayer for the congregation until you truly repent and submit yourself completely to him. Neither will it do any good to ask forgiveness publicly or privately until you do so. If you have obeyed the gospel and are presently doing your best according to your knowledge of God's will, you are CONTINUOUSLY justified, you have ACCESS to God's grace (Rom. 5:2), your prayers are received and heard by God (Jno. 9:31), and you are CONTINUALLY qualified to speak to the Father, not by your own merits, but through Jesus Christ. Thank God for these marvelous blessings. — Rt. 4 Box 479 Elba, AL 36323.

Gems Of Joshua

Continued from page 3

by the way we live from day to day. "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old" (Joshua 24:29). Yes, we are going to die, and when we do, will we be missed by having exhibited a Christian life while here on earth? — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, MS 38858.

No prejudice person has ever been able to prove his case in the court of reason.

A prejudiced person is someone who's too stubborn to admit you're right.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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"Knowledge Of Religion Not Enough In Itself For A Man"

W. A. HOLLEY

The above statement is the caption of an article by James B. Crichton, printed in the Daily Mountain Eagle, Jasper, Alabama, October 22, 1982. We shall review this article in the light of the Scriptures. We shall be fair in our examination of the matters in hand. We shall not misrepresent Dr. Crichton even in the slightest.

In the article cited, Dr. Crichton refers to John 3:3,6,8, but he never refers to John 3:5. We ask, Why? Is he afraid of "water"? John 3:5, reads, "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." Did not Jesus put it in the divine text? Why leave it out? We raise the question: When is one "born of water and of the Spirit"? The answer is simple! One is "born of water and of the Spirit" when one hears and obeys that word given by the Spirit of God. This is exactly what Jesus taught: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

We shall permit the Apostle Peter to answer: "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter answered and said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). When was Paul born again? The answer is simple. When he, in the name of Jesus Christ, was baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). Since salvation and remission are equal to the "new birth," it follows, as night follows the day, that the "new birth" equals whatever is necessary to meet the New Testament conditions of salvation. Dr. Crichton would support this truth were it not for the fact that he believes in a false doctrine called Hereditary Total Depravity. What is this doctrine? We shall quote from the Westminster Confession:

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others are foreordained to everlasting death . . . and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished . . ."

Those of mankind that are predestinated unto everlasting life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose . . . hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory . . . without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them . . . as conditions or causes moving him thereto . . . As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto . . . But the rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over all creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

Preacher, do you believe the foregoing quotation? No, No, I do not! Well, do you believe what the Bible says about predestination and foreordination? Yes, indeed! In fact, the quotation above is a horrible perversion of the truth of God!! Actually those who are predestinated, chosen, elected to eternal life are those who have heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:8-9; Cf. Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5-13).

Someone may object, saying, "It is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from our sins, not water baptism." But, dear reader, Christ's cleansing blood is in his body, in his name, in his death, in Jesus Christ himself (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 4:12; John 19:33-34; Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 12:3,13). Thus, "baptism is not an outward sign of an inward grace," but, rather, it is God's means of bringing the obedient believer into contact with the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:4-5; Acts 22:16; John 3:5; I Peter 3:21).


Now, just listen to Dr. Crichton: "Nicodemus, you do not need a teacher; you need a Saviour. Before you study my teachings, you must be born again. A man cannot follow Christ as the perfect example, until he has first received Christ as a perfect Saviour . . ."

Did not Jesus command that his word be preached to every creature in the whole world? (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). What about John 6:44-45?? Read it and see!! If one's eternal destiny is settled before the foundation of the world, why was Jesus talking to Nicodemus?? According to Mr. Crichton's doctrine, Nicodemus' condition had already been determined from all eternity, whether saved or lost!! What could poor Nicodemus do about it??

The fact is, Mr. Crichton believes in hereditary total depravity. Such a man, according to this doctrine, cannot think a good thought nor do a good deed. It is no wonder that Mr. Crichton contends that "The new birth is a supernatural act of God by which he imparts a new spiritual life to the believing sinner." Notice the expression, "the believing sinner." Where did the "believing" come from since Mr. Crichton argues that Nicodemus "did not need a teacher"? In Romans Paul contends that faith comes by hearing the word of God. Oh, well, that's the difference between Paul and Dr. Crichton!! If "the new birth is a supernatural act of God by which he imparts spiritual life to the believing sinner," we would like for the good doctor to explain whether Nicodemus was an elect or a non-elect person. If Nicodemus was an elect person, had he not already had "a new spiritual life" imparted to him?? Would it have been possible for God to impart "a new spiritual life" to a non-elect person? Now, it is time for the Doctor to answer!! Dear reader, your Bible teaches that God judges people according to their works (Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6; I Peter 1:17; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:13). If the sinner cannot do anything to be saved, and the Christian cannot do anything to be lost, how can God judge people according to their works??

God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). If God "imparts the new birth" to one sinner, would he not be under obligation to "impart the new birth" to all sinners?? Such a doctrine makes God responsible for the salvation or damnation of the whole human race. Is man a free moral agent? Is not man a creature

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Uniform

In our efforts to teach against the wearing of immodest apparel we meet a great deal of opposition from members of the church. We are told that the cheerleader who stands on the sidelines before thousands of people in her short little skirt is not immodest. That is just the normal cheerleader uniform. That is what she is expected to wear, and nobody should frown upon it. The majorette who dances and prances in front of the band in her tights and before the eyes of thousands of people is not immodest, we are told. That is just the normal majorette uniform, and she is expected to wear it. Nobody thinks anything about it.



BOBBY DUNCAN

the denominations. A second guess would be that about the only ones who have strong convictions about modest apparel are some gospel preachers and some members of the church. So it is especially newsworthy when one of our own "jumps the traces." At any rate, I suppose we should feel complimented that people in general who know us also know that at least some of us have convictions with reference to nudity, and we do not mind letting the world know where we stand.

Will you please join me in prayer for all those in the church of Christ who have no convictions with reference to modest apparel?

Truth And John 8:32

The Christian is exhorted to defend the truth against all error. This is made abundantly clear by Jude in the third verse of his short epistle. The necessity of this admonition is perceived when one is aware of the dangerous assertions that are made relative to the teachings of the Bible. Interesting enough, only *one* scripture or one passage of scripture is sufficient to answer numerous errors!! One such case is the statement of our Lord in John 8:32 — "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." There are at least three deadly assertions that are refuted by this one simple statement.



JERRI MANASCO

First, the assertion (unsupported remark) is made that **THERE IS NO TRUTH**. What an assertion that is! Many labor long to argue (without sound arguments!) that truth is merely the relative viewpoint of the individual and that you cannot criticize another's views as being in error. This certainly does not work in the natural world where the **TRUTH** is that if you or anyone else leaps from a 200-foot high tower the pull of gravity will offer you an instant invitation into eternity upon impact with the ground!! Is that relative or absolute? Yet the existence of God, sexual purity, religious truth, Christian unity, the plan of salvation, and similar topics are dealt with as though one's personal viewpoint is the acceptable standard. How deadly!! How eternally wasteful!

Jesus affirms in John 8:32 the *reality of truth*. In fact, what he says there is consistent with everything else he has said about the same subject. Note: "Thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). "He that doeth **TRUTH** cometh to the light" (Jn. 3:21). Jesus endorsed John the Baptist's work when he said, "he (John) **bare** witness to the truth" (Jn. 5:33). Jesus even went so far as to say, "I am . . . the truth . . ." (Jn. 14:6).

"Striving After Wind"

The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes answers the oft asked question: "Is life worth living?" When viewed "**UNDER THE SUN**" (Ecclesiastes 1:9-14; 2:11; 17-22, etc.) that is, in view of the "here and now" **ONLY** the answer according to the following verse is **NO**.



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

"Therefore I hated life; because the work that I wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of the spirit" (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

The American Standard Version translates the words "vexation of the spirit," as often found in the King James Version, "a striving after wind."

It is difficult to imagine anything more useless than "striving after wind." We find, however, that many people view life as being just a striving after wind. They commit suicide. The number two cause of death among 18 year olds in this country is suicide.

Songs are written that reveal their attitude: "Running Against The Wind" is the title to a popular Bob Segar tune. Another song, by the rock band "Kansas," states: "ALL we are is dust in the wind."

Anything and everything are tried in an attempt to find some purpose in living; even Solomon attempted to find "what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life" in various vain pursuits:

"I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine . . . I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits; I made me pools of water, to water therewith

Now, would you say this young lady who was photographed in the nude was guilty of wearing immodest apparel? You could hardly say that, for how could it be immodest apparel if she wore no apparel? But the Bible speaks of women's adorning themselves in "modest apparel" (I Timothy 2:9). If there is such a thing as modest apparel, there must also be such a thing as immodest apparel. In other words, one might have on some apparel and still be immodest. One might be immodest without being completely nude like the young lady on the centerfold. I Timothy 2:10 refers to that "which becometh women professing godliness." These words should serve as a key to understanding what modest apparel is.

It would be quite a stretch of the imagination to imagine that one who is completely nude is adorned as is becoming women professing godliness. But the same could be said also about those who wear the standard cheerleader and majorette uniforms. These latter uniforms are designed to appeal to the same base desires to which an appeal is made by the *Playboy* magazine centerfold. Every mature person should know this is true, even though many will not admit it.

One other observation is in order. In all of the years of *Playboy's* publication, is this the first young lady who has ever made its pages who was a member of a church? Have no Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Pentecostals ever appeared? I cannot believe they have not. But the news media seem not to have picked up on any of them. Why? I can only guess. My first guess would be that some news reporter enjoys embarrassing the church of Christ, but would find no joy in embarrassing one of

“Knowledge Of Religion Not Enough In Itself For A Man”

Continued From Page 1

of choice? (Deuteronomy 30:15,19; Joshua 24:15). Man is required to believe, repent, confess Jesus, and be baptized (Acts 2:36-38; 17:30-31; Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

The article under review says, “We can put together homes and furnish them . . . but we cannot put together or manufacture the human lives in those homes.” Well, now, did not the father and mother have anything to do with the birth of their children? Were these children born miraculously? Surely, the doctor is beside himself!! He makes things worse!! He contends that “church members can be produced;

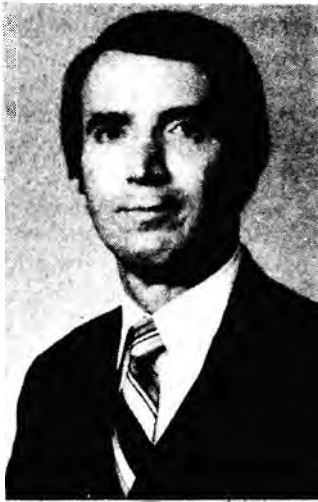
but Christians must be begotten.” Christians have already been born again; they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; they do not need to be “born again.” Those who have been “born of water and of the Spirit” compose the membership of the church (Acts 2:36-38,47). Thus, the doctor has missed the point by a country mile! The truth is, God and the individual work together in accomplishing the new birth (Acts 15:4,12; 14:27; 21:19).

Finally, the author says, “Nicodemus was a decent and sincere man . . . a man of impeccable moral behaviour . . . Nicodemus was spiritually dead and

eternally doomed.” How does the doctor know these things? Did Jesus know Nicodemus? Would Jesus seek to save a man who was doomed from all eternity? Why talk to Nicodemus about the new birth if the new birth is the supernatural act of God by which he imparts a new spiritual life to the believing sinner? If the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation is true, there was nothing that Nicodemus nor any other sinner could do to be saved. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Parent-Child Relationships

Socrates, 400 years before Christ, wrote: “Our youth love luxury. They have bad manners and contempt for authority. They show disrespect for their elders. They love to chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants not the servants of their household. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room. They contradict their parents. Chatter before company. Gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.” So when we talk about problems between parents and their children, especially teenage children, we’re not talking about anything new. Problems of this nature have been around for a long time, and they are still with us. What then, can we as Christians do to keep these problems from destroying our families. I would like to offer some suggestions.



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

First, parents and their children need to love each other. It seems almost absurd to tell families to love each other. Yet I believe it to be necessary. Peter wrote, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8). Paul wrote that we are to forbear “one another in love.” All would say that they love each other. Yet, sometimes we fail to express the love that we feel.

Nothing will make parents happier than for their children to love them. This love is to be expressed through honor and obedience. Paul wrote, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise” (Eph. 6:1,2).

On the other side of the coin, teenagers need to be assured that their parents love them. Parents try to express this love and it is very often misunderstood. Parental love is often expressed in funny ways. It is sometimes expressed through strong restrictions. At other times it comes out with too much advice. Love makes parents possessive. That one who bore you in her body and fed you your first meal and took care of your every need is not going to let you hurt yourself. She loves you too much for that. You may think your parents are putting you in a straight jacket, but the truth is they love you too much to let you destroy yourself.

Second, parents and their children need to communicate. One study has shown that on a nationwide average the American husband over 35 years of age spends on the average only seven minutes per

day communicating with his children. It’s no wonder we have a communication problem. We don’t have any communication.

We also need to understand that real communication involves both talking and listening. James admonishes “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). We must talk to our teenagers, but we must also be willing to listen as they talk to us. Subjects like sex, morality, drugs, and religion are overriding concerns of teenagers which deserve communication on a one to one level. Without this kind of communication we will continue to have severe problems.

Real communication also involves listening behind the words for the real meanings. A word is not defined just by the dictionary alone. It’s defined by the feelings and emotions behind it. To answer the issues is not enough. What teenagers want is communication, not confrontation. Listen behind those words to the feelings involved and you’ll hear what is really being said. Listening is hard, but it’s not nearly so hard as picking up the pieces of a broken family.

Third, parents and children need to try to understand each other. The old Indian was right when he asserted that we have no right to criticize another man until we’ve walked a mile in his moccasins. Parents need to try to understand what it is like to be a teenager in our rapidly changing world. On the other hand, teenagers need to try to understand what it is like to be a parent in these inflationary times. Neither

is easy.

Fourth, parents can have better relations with their teenage children by living consistent lives. Teenagers are greatly affected by what they regard as the hypocrisy of our age. They see wide inconsistencies between what their parents demand of them and what the parents themselves practice.

Art Linkletter was asked in an interview if it was hypocritical for a father to tell his son not to smoke pot, while the father himself sits with a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Mr. Linkletter replied, “It certainly is.” He was right. It certainly is. We cannot blame our young for insisting that it’s hypocritical for parents to act one way and talk another. We need to practice what we preach.

Finally, parents and teenagers can help to manage their problems by praying for wisdom. James says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). God has promised to help, if we will ask. Let us be sure that we ask. When parents and teenagers can sit down and pray to God together in a family setting, their problems tend to be much smaller.

Regardless of the problems that we are dealing with, the Bible gives the only answers that are valid. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5-6). — 1360 Brookneal Cir. Mobile, AL 36609.

“Striving After Wind”

Continued From Page 2

the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts” (Ecclesiastes 2:3-8).

Such was the extent of his search for true purpose in life that he could say, “And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them” (Ecclesiastes 2:10).

Even though Solomon could say “I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem,” he also was compelled to confess that he “hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:9;18).

A great deal of the depression experienced by members of the body of Christ can be traced to the book of Ecclesiastes. Either we do not fully comprehend what our purpose in life is, or we are not

satisfactorily living up to what we do know about our purpose in life.

Unlike the atheist, who must reach his conclusions about the purpose of his existence within the small confines of the physical here and now, the child of God can determine his earthly purpose through the eternal word of the eternal God.

Is life just a “striving after wind?” According to those who view things only “under the sun” the answer is, “Yes.” To those who believe in God and the eternal soul of man the answer is entirely different: “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).

Let us therefore, continue to live the Christian life. We know that one day Jesus will say to his faithful disciples, “Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). We DO have a purpose! — P.O. Box 242 Morris, AL 35116.

Truth And John 8:32

Continued from Page 2

If there is no truth, then we must disregard the importance of Jesus himself. To Pilate, our Lord said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (Jn. 18:37). Elsewhere in the New Testament the inspired writers affirmed the reality of truth. Peter says that it purifies the soul when obeyed (I Pet. 1:22). Paul tells us that the church is the pillar and ground of it. (I Tim. 3:15). If truth is not real, then the church is the pillar and ground of nothing!! In first century times faithful men refused to allow the truth to fall to the ground. These men defended it heartily (Gal. 2:1-5). Knowledge of truth is essential to our salvation (I Tim. 2:4-6). Is it not absurd to claim that truth is relative?

The second deadly assertion refuted by the words of Jesus in John 8:32 is that **WE CANNOT KNOW TRUTH**. If we cannot know the truth, then Jesus is remarkably wrong and all Christianity is a hoax. Yet witness the great power and beauty of the religion of Jesus Christ. Nothing purifies lives and gives the assurances and hopes of the Bible. Lies can't do that. Lying assurances do not call upon their advocates to clean up their lives. Society is not bettered by such things. But if such purifying is possible by the truth, then the truth must be known. And it can be and is known!!

If truth cannot be known, then John is most arrogant to encourage us to "try the spirits, whether they are of God" (I Jn. 4:1) and Jude missed the mark when he tells us to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). If truth cannot be known, then it is a foolish waste of time, effort, and money to be involved in any church program in any way, shape, form, or fashion! After all, how does he know that the church ought to be here, anyway? How can he know what he is supposed to be doing in the church? "Oh," we are told, "there are social and moral injustices and problems that have to be dealt with." But how can anyone know that there are "social injustices" if truth is relative and cannot be known?? How could he possibly know what constitutes social injustice? How is he to have any concept of what social injustice is, if truth cannot be known in the absolute? The actual point in fact is this: **MANY PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO ADMIT THAT THE BIBLE IS THE TRUTH AND THAT GOD'S WAY IS THE ONLY WAY.**

The third deadly assertion refuted by Jesus is that often repeated idea, "it doesn't matter what teaching you subscribe to." While not consciously intending to do it, good religious people deny everything the Bible stands for when they make that wild assertion. Many will take a front seat in defending that the Bible is the word of God, but in the next breath, in order to defend their denominational affiliation and justify their errors, they will also be the first to deny the propriety of calling into question another's beliefs. However, Jesus says it is the **TRUTH** that makes you free.

Jesus did not say, "Ye shall be free as long as you accept what is generally taught by some fundamentalist group." Actually, if it does not matter what one accepts religiously, then to be consistent, we would have to admit infidels, Jews, and Buddhists into our fellowship as they are. "Yes, but the Bible says we must believe in Jesus . . ." True, but if it is not proper to cast any sort of doubt against others' beliefs, then how can you justify excluding ANYONE from your fellowship?? How wonderful is New Testament Christianity in this regard! We accept what is *taught in the Bible* and *only* what is taught in the Bible. In doing this there is perfect consistency in both teaching and practice. That the word of Christ is the truth and that we **MUST GIVE HEED TO THAT ALONE** is taught by Jesus when he warns us of the consequences of rejecting it: "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). All who do not

believe the truth shall be condemned (II Thes. 2:10-12; Rom. 2:7). One who does not love and obey truth loves and obeys unrighteousness, for unrighteousness and truth are opposites.

It is imperative that we heed the words of Jesus: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). — Rt. 2 Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

Food For Thought

I read something the other day which hit so close to home, it hurt. Henry Weiman, in describing a college roommate who wanted to improve his intellect, wrote, "He procured a large comfortable chair that was thought to be good for study. He got study slippers and a lounging jacket. A book rest was fastened to the arm of the chair to hold the book at the right angle before his eyes. A special lamp was installed and an eyeshade, pencils, paper, and a revolving bookcase were provided. He would come into the room after the evening meal, take off his shoes and slip into the slippers, adjust the study lamp, put his book on the book rest, recline in the comfortable chair with his eyeshade over his eyes and, when everything was perfectly adjusted, he would go to sleep."

Atmosphere guarantees neither culture nor character. A man changes from the inside out, not from the outside in. The greatest of the ages have long since been revered, not for their better equipment, but for what came from within them. Beethoven was not Beethoven because he owned a better piano. Shakespeare was not Shakespeare because he wrote with a better quill. Greatness comes



DALTON KEY

from within; for the Christian, from Christ within.

Fancy buildings don't always assure the presence of faithful believers. We may invest millions in steeples, in signs, in song books, in padded pews, temperature controlled auditoriums, and elaborate sound systems; yet those disciples of the first century, huddling together in a stench filled catacomb, may have outdone us in their depth of worship. We have the inside track on "atmosphere." In fact, we've made ourselves so comfortable we have to fight to stay awake. And yet still, when we feel a period of congregational stagnation approaching, we cry out for more, bigger and better buildings. The problems are usually internal, not external. And you can't improve a heart by making improvements on the building.

Christ's condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees likened them to "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and full of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). They were like the Laodicean church, which said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." From the outside, things looked fine. Yet, from the inside, the church at Laodicea was described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). The Laodicean church, the scribes, the Pharisees — and us? I hope not.

Let's put the spirit before the body, the inner man before the outer man. Let's leave off landscaping for a time, and give ourselves over to heart surgery. By the grace of God, and with the Lord's help, we can do it. — Box 563, Liberal, KS.

"Does Television Affect Us?"

Many have been the factors that have changed our world from the one some of us knew thirty years ago. One of the greatest factors must be television. Not only has it changed our world but it is still a factor in affecting the actions and behavior of many. The following facts illustrate some of this influence.

--If you are an average viewer, you will see 50,000 commercials a year.

--A child, who is an average viewer, will have seen 10,000 murders by the time he is fifteen years old. He will have spent more time watching TV than in School.

--The National Federation of Decency recently reported that they have monitored television for the past seven years. In that time they have not seen a single Christian, in a modern setting, presented in a positive light.



ANCIL JENKINS

--A recent Surgeon General's report stated that viewing television violence made children more willing to hurt people and more aggressive in their play and in their methods of resolving conflict situations. "Teachers observe that students bring the images of TV aggressiveness to school and that video values and tough language get recycled at the playground. 'Oh, yeah? So? Who Cares? Dummy! Dingbat!'"

There is a local organization that is trying to encourage people to eliminate TV from their lives. It is possible, yet a most radical solution. It is a "hermit" approach to a complex problem. You can run away from the world, yet it doesn't change the world.

There is much on television that adds to the quality of our lives. We should not eliminate this by eliminating everything. A Christian should be able to judge right and wrong. He should be able to discern between good and evil. It is possible to be in the world, without being part of the world. It is equally possible to take from the world the good and reject the evil.

We cannot wring our hands and do nothing. We must recognize the potential for danger, even disaster in the present situation. We must take what good we find and reject what is bad. — 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

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NUMBER 16

The Syro-Phoenician Woman

As Jesus drew near the fateful climax of his ministry, he left the hostile environment of Jewry and took his band into Phoenicia. It was the only trip our Lord made beyond the borders of Palestine. He sought a period of quiet and rest before the final stage of his ministry. But even the pagan regions of Tyre and Sidon had heard of the fame of Jesus (Matt. 4:24). Both Matthew (15:21-28) and Mark (7:24-30) tell us of a woman who sought out the Lord and gained a blessing from him that day.



JOHN WADDEY

By name she is unknown, by race a Canaanite (Matt. 15:21). By religion she was a heathen; by social standards she was a nobody. Her disadvantages were many, racially, socially and spiritually. Being a Gentile, what claim could she hope to make on this Jewish rabbi? We see her respectful address: "O Lord, thou son of David" (Matt. 15:22). She manifested great faith in coming to Jesus for help. Her troubles drove her to the Lord; there was no one else to turn to. She reflected great humility, being willing to take rejection, to be classed as a "dog", to beg in order to receive the needed blessing. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit . . ." (Matt. 5:3). We admire her selfless mother's love for her sick child. We admire her persistence in not accepting discouragement. The disciples sought to send her away. Three times the Lord failed to grant her wish. Her faith was superior to that of most of the chosen people of Israel. All of this helps us understand the basis on which the Lord answered her request, not by merit, but by grace. She had nothing to offer in exchange but her eternal love and thankfulness.

.... "He answered her not a word" (Matt. 15:23). It was not that he did not know her need or care for her problems. He was testing her faith like God did Abraham's (Gen. 22:1). While he said no, his face said yes to the entreating woman.

"I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house

of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). Christ's primary mission was to Israel's lost sheep. Most likely she had heard proud Jews say this in a taunting way. Could she believe he was to be Savior of all?

He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" (Matt. 15:26). This was a common proverb among the Jews. Jews sarcastically called Gentiles dogs, but Jesus softened the word by using the word which means a pet dog or puppy, not the word for the wild, scavenger dogs of the streets.

"O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28). Her faith and persistence had triumphed gloriously. Someone has observed that "this is the only case recorded where anyone won an argument with Jesus." In every age faith is the victor that overcomes the world (John 5:4).

From this woman we learn that none need ever despair of approaching God because of depth of distress, disadvantage of position or because of preliminary lack of success. Trouble can be a blessing if it drives us to the Lord.

We see that faith can spring up in even the most unfavorable circumstances. Often the least likely is actually the most likely prospect if we but give him opportunity.

She demonstrates the need for faith. "They that are of faith are blest with the faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). Also, we are reminded of the need for persistent prayer (Lk. 18:1).

We must never be discouraged by the lack of

understanding or sympathy of some of the Lord's disciples.

Like her, we can bring rich blessings to our children, family, and friends by our fervent prayers on their behalf. In her we see the beauty of a mother's love for her children, and weep for those who clamor for the right to kill their babes by abortion.

From Christ we learn that he had time for *one* person, even though others would have rejected her. We learn of his universal love for all nations and his willingness to bless all (Acts 10:34-35). He wants us to bring our burdens to him for aid and comfort (Matt. 11:28).

God's momentary silence to our prayer request does not necessarily mean a final rejection. Nothing can rob us of God's blessings but our own unbelief.

In this episode, Christ laid the foundation and planted the seed that one day would blossom into the world-wide outreach of Christianity (Matt. 28:19). He had taught the disciples to pray "thy kingdom come." In this he showed them what that meant. In fact, this likely was the principle point of the story, i.e., to teach the disciples that Gentiles would have their place in his kingdom.

Like this poor woman, we all have problems we cannot solve alone. We are driven to Jesus crying, "Lord, have mercy upon me . . ." and he will to those willing to do his will. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

The All Sufficiency Of The Bible

WAYNE COBB


We are living in a day in which there is an abundance of religious leaders who claim special leadings and revelations from God. Almost weekly some new cult arises and the characteristic common to all the cults, new and old, is their rejection of the all sufficiency of the Bible and their claim to new revelations from God. Several of these cults have their "sacred books" which are supposed to be equal with or superior to the Bible. Is God giving special revelations beyond that which is in the Bible?

Jesus promised the apostles that they would

receive *all* of the truth. The Spirit was to teach them *all* things (Jno. 16:13). If the Holy Spirit did not guide the apostles into all truth, then Christ made a mistake. If the Holy Spirit did guide them into all truth, what extra truth could there be for God to reveal to anyone today?

Paul teaches the all sufficiency of the Bible. II Timothy 3:16,17 states that the scriptures furnish us thoroughly and makes the man of God perfect. If we

Continued on page 3



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Limiting God

No. 1

The Bible teaches man is a free being of choice. The first pair of human beings, Adam and Eve, were given the choice of obedience or disobedience. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gen. 3:3). They made the wrong choice and sin was introduced into the world.

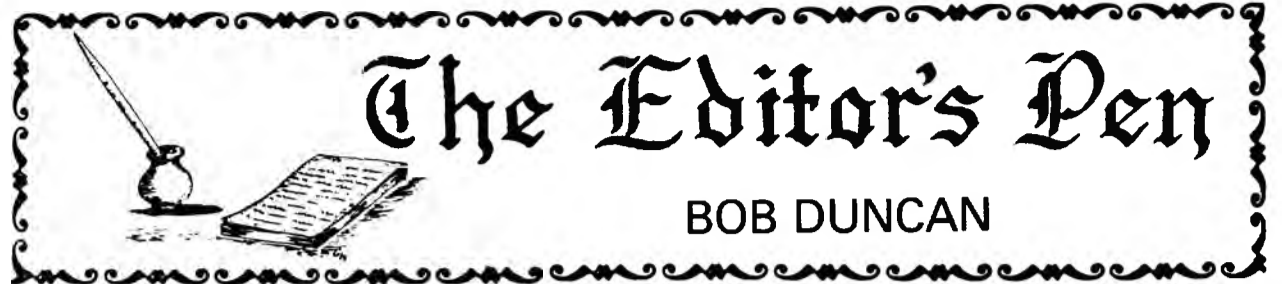


W. EDWIN KEARLEY

In Joshua's farewell address, he made the following statement: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Their choice was between Jehovah God and the idolatrous god's around them.

Choice is still with us today. God wants to save and bless fallen men, but he will not do so against man's will. The lost must cooperate with God in obedience.

The theory of saving man against his will is wrong. There are two doctrines which teach this false idea of salvation. One says man's eternal destiny was decided before the foundation of the world. Some who hold to this doctrine say there are one hundred forty-four thousand who will be saved and all others will be lost. They make the figurative number a literal number (Rev. 7, 14). Individual salvation was not chosen, but salvation was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). The invitation of Christ teaches man has a choice. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). The other doctrine teaches man must pray through to salvation. If one prays long and hard enough God will send the Holy Spirit upon the individual. The holy spirit exercises miraculous power and will change the person



Withdrawing From The Disorderly

(Editor's Note: A reader in one of our northern states requested we write an article dealing with the propriety of withdrawing fellowship from those who simply have quit attending. Have they already withdrawn themselves? Does Paul's admonition in II Thessalonians 3:6 involve those who have quit attending?)

I wrote the following article for *Words of Truth* several years ago. I believe it answers the questions our brother has asked. I hope it will be helpful to brethren in other places also.)

Several times recently we have been asked if the church can withdraw fellowship from one because that one has quit attending the services. It is suggested by some that the church cannot withdraw from one who has already withdrawn himself from the church. This kind of reasoning evidences three errors: (1) a failure to appreciate the gravity of the sin of non-attendance, (2) a lack of understanding of what it means to walk disorderly, and (3) an obvious misunderstanding of what withdrawing fellowship actually is. Let us look briefly at these three things.

The sin of non-attendance is not a small sin, and those who think it is need to think again. It is disobedience to a clear command of God — the doing of a thing which God plainly says not to do (Heb. 10:25). Not only so, but it is a sin directly against God himself. Of course, there is a sense in which every sin



BOBBY DUNCAN

is a sin against God, but some sins are more directly against God than others. For illustration, look at the ten commandments (Ex. 20). The first four commandments have to do with man's duty to God, while the last six have to do with man's duty to his fellow man. In Matthew 22:37 Jesus states that loving God is the first and greatest commandment. God has generally punished more severely those who sinned directly against God. Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10) and the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day (Num. 15) are examples of this. The man who quits attending has committed a sin directly against God, and the gravity of this sin should not be minimized.

In the second place, the expression, "walketh disorderly," in II Thess. 3:6 more nearly describes the sin of non-attendance than any other one sin. The Greek word which is translated "disorderly" is an adverbial form of the Greek verb *atakteo*, which is said by J. H. Thayer to be a word used "of soldiers marching out of order or quitting the ranks" (Emphasis mine, B.D.). This is the group that the inspired apostle commanded that the church withdraw from, i.e., those who have quit the ranks. To argue that the church cannot withdraw from one who has quit the ranks is to take issue with a plain statement of the inspired writer.

Finally, the withdrawal of fellowship is not the announcement that takes place in the assembly on Sunday morning. It is rather the subsequent refusal of every faithful Christian to have any social intercourse with the person concerning whom the announcement was made. This is the actual withdrawal of fellowship; and the effect of such is the same, whether the sin be one of gross immorality, the causing of division by false teaching, or the failure to attend services.

The Greatest Thrill

A little boy accompanied his father to a movie concerning the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. As they were leaving he said to his daddy: "You know, it was thrilling to be a Christian then, wasn't it?"

There is no question but that the first century church met many obstacles. Their's was an era of adventure, challenge and victory in the cause of Christ. But, that same message goes forth today and it should be just as thrilling to be a Christian today as it was in the year 65.

The word "blessed" in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount and in the book of Revelation means "happy." We are told to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). Thus a Christian's life should be filled with buoyant gladness. Do we find joy in the

worship assembly? David did (Psalms 122:1). Does the very fact that we are in Christ give us occasion to "go on our way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39)? All of our privileges as members of the body of Christ should cause us to praise God (Psa. 107:21).

But, let me mention the greatest thrill on earth. It isn't watching your favorite team win a crucial contest in the final seconds. It isn't plucking a trout from a mountain stream. The thrill and satisfaction we refer to even supersedes the joy of promotion on the job. We are speaking of the greatest thrill on earth — winning souls to Christ. The wise man, Solomon, tells us: "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

Can you imagine any greater pleasure than leading some lost one to the saving power of the Son of God? To see the shackles of sin and shame broken by the power of the gospel transcends, by far, any mundane thrill. Soul-winners are not only able servants of Jesus, they are also the best friends their neighbors will ever have. Are you working on behalf of someone's eternal destiny? If not, you are robbing yourself of the world's greatest thrill. Have you ever led anyone to Christ? Someone has well said: "You



JOHNNY RAMSEY

The All Sufficiency Of The Bible

Continued from page 1

are made perfect by the scriptures then there is no need for further revelation. It furnishes everything necessary to equip one for every good work. Peter asserts that God had granted all things that pertain to life and godliness (I Pet. 1:3).

Jude confirms that "the faith" has been delivered to the saints (Jude 3). It is a faith that "was once for all delivered unto the saints" (ASV). "Once delivered" is translated from a Greek word that Thayer's Lexicon defines as meaning "once, one time . . . never need repetition," and "once for all." They were to contend

for that faith which "was once for all delivered."

Paul clearly taught that any message other than the gospel the apostles preached was a perverted gospel and the curse of God rested upon any one who preached such a gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). There are no more gospels and no changes in that gospel. John wrote, "Whosoever . . . abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (II Jno. 9).

Where is the promise in the New Testament that there would be other gospels and other revelation? Where does it speak of a "third testament?" Where

does the Bible teach that it is insufficient to save mankind and, thus, other books are needed? If the gospel of Christ as recorded in the New Testament was God's power unto salvation in the first century (Rom. 1:16), it is still God's power unto salvation today. It is the gospel that is to be preached to all the world (Mt. 28:19-20). It is the incorruptible seed "which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). — P.O. Box 2161 Florence, AL 35630.

Limiting God

Continued from page 2

instantly.

The Bible, the word of God, is the instrument to convert the soul of man. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 10:17). Peter states we purify our souls in obeying the truth through the spirit. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:22-23). Jesus said, "And they shall be taught of

God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

God has already given man salvation through Christ. It is folly to beg God to do what he has already done. All we need to do is to study the word of God and let saving faith be produced and yield in obedience to the conditions of salvation.

Many want God to help them just so far, then will place a boundary of limit. Israel is a good example. Concerning them the Psalmist wrote, "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the holy

one of Israel" (Ps. 78:41). The Psalmist reminds Israel of many things God had done for them in delivering them from Egyptian bondage. How he cared for them in the wilderness and aided them in conquering Canaan, the promised land. In the wilderness "he [God] led them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands" (Ps. 78:72). Yet they did not trust him. They limited God in their lives. — P.O. Box 506 Lafayette, Ga. 30728.

The Greatest Thrill

must save another soul if you would save your own; the door of Heaven is closed to him who comes alone."

The Lord Jesus Christ shed eternal light upon the ancient question raised by valiant Job. In chapter fourteen of Job's treatise the haunting refrain of a troubled heart presents these powerful words: "If a man die, shall he live again?"

Centuries later the Man of Galilee comforts two close friends at Bethany — in the shadow of Lazarus' tomb — with majestic words that warm the heart and dry our wistful tears: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

For the devout follower of the Lamb, these clarion tones forever settle the issue and calm our fears. Indeed, we comfort one another with such joyous thoughts (I Thessalonians 4:18). One resplendent Redeemer opened up "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20) where "the wicked cease from troubling and where the weary be at rest" (Job 3:17).

Life is at best a delicate wisp of passing fancy. Truly the Psalmist captures the thin fibers that best describe our sojourn upon this earth as pilgrims and strangers. In classic reminders in Psalms 90 and 144 we learn that *our life is but a tale that is told* and our days upon the earth remind us of a breath or a passing shadow. How we spend "this short story" is the maximum consideration as we "remember how short our time is." James tells the dispersed saints of the first century that earthly existence is as brittle as a vapor that appeareth for a little while, then vanishes! In one of literature's most familiar settings Horace perceptively stated:

"Pale Death, with impartial step,
knocks at the poor man's cottage
and the palaces of kings."

It is certain that *Death plays no favorites*. Millions of dollars cannot secure one more day for an epicurean financier. At any rate, length of days will not be as valuable as depth of purpose when Judgment peals forth. Spirituality and not longevity will be the measuring rod! Sir Walter Raleigh referred to death as *eloquent, just and mighty* and

Philippians 1:21-23 informs us that death, to a Christian, is great gain!

"Lord I care not for riches
Neither silver nor gold
I would be sure of Heaven,
I would enter the fold

In the book of Thy kingdom
With its page white and fair
Tell me, Jesus, my Savior,
Is my name written there?"

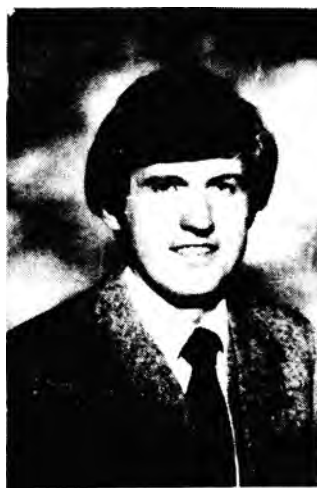
Let us seek to save the lost and participate in life's greatest thrill. — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

You Are Important

It is quite natural for human beings to feel insignificant. After all, with more than four billion people on the earth, how important can one person be? Thoughts like this have led many to suicide and others to ruin by use of drugs or alcohol. However, in contrast to human reasoning, the Bible shows the great importance of each individual.

Each person has to be important because each is going to be judged on an individual basis. Paul teaches in Romans 14:10-12 that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There the Bible says that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess. So then *every one* shall give an account of himself to God. Who is going to be left out? NO ONE. In II Cor. 5:10, Paul again writes that, "*every one* shall receive the things done in his body." If you are not important, why will your entire life be called into judgment?

By reading the four gospel accounts of the life of Christ, we can see the great importance he placed upon individuals. Most often he would preach to great multitudes, but in John 4 he took time to preach to just one person, the Samaritan woman at the well. In Luke



RICKY PHILLIPS

15, Jesus spoke three parables that show the importance of just one soul. In the first parable he told of a shepherd with one hundred sheep. When one of them became lost, he left the ninety-nine to go find the one lost sheep. In the second parable, a woman lost one silver coin. Even though she still had nine coins, she swept the house until she found the lost coin. At the recovery of the lost sheep and the lost coin there was great rejoicing. God and the angels in heaven likewise rejoice over one sinner who repents.

The third parable in Luke 15 is known as the parable of the Prodigal Son. In this story a man's younger son came to him and demanded his part of the inheritance. Having received it, he went to a far country and wasted it in riotous living. Finally this young boy came to his senses and returned to his father, asking to be hired as a servant. Instead, his father welcomed him home and prepared for him a feast. The father had one son still at home, but his younger son was also important to him. God also has other children, but you are still important to him.

It is comforting to know that God looks over and cares for each person. Jesus said that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's knowing it (Mt. 10:29). If God watches over the sparrows, he will care for us, whose value far exceeds the value of the sparrows (Mt. 10:31).

Each individual is also important to God for what he can accomplish. Noah was just one man, yet he found favor in the eyes of the Lord, and kept humanity alive

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You Are Important

Continued from page 3

by building the ark and saving his family. Moses, even though he was fearful at times, led Israel out of Egypt to the edge of Canaan. Samson judged Israel twenty years and killed many Philistines in his death. The New Testament tells us about Paul and his great works for the kingdom of God. And one man, Jesus Christ, accomplished more than any man who has

ever lived.

You are important to God because you have a soul. To show the importance of just one soul, Jesus said in Matthew 16:26, "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?" Your soul is far more important to God than all your

possessions.

So if you again start to feel unimportant or insignificant, remember the value that is attached to your soul by both God and Christ. Keep in mind also that this valuable soul you possess will one day be called into judgment. — P.O. Box 396 Oakman, AL 35579.

Jesus' Lost Texts Found

WINFREY HENNESSEE

From time to time we are informed that a major break through has been made concerning the "mystery" of the Bible. Usually some archeologist in some far away land accidentally discovers "the remainder" of God's word while digging for artifacts. Now we will not have to wait and wonder any longer.

The latest word comes to us in an ad which was placed in a well known national newspaper. It seems that the discovery was made in Egypt, and contains Jesus' original texts which were written by disciples Thomas and Philip. There were fifty others but the writers are unknown. The ad goes on to say that this news completely changes our present knowledge about Jesus and his teachings. Just send \$6.95 to receive this amazing information.

We who are Christians are set apart from the rest of the world. We cannot join hands with those who

believe not, and expect our teaching still to be effective. When it seems everyone is against us, we can draw strength from the hope which God has given us. It is that hope which enables us to keep on keeping on.

If we have complete faith in God, it would disillusion most of us should we find something which attests to the fact that God is a little less than perfect. When God placed the moon in the location where it is now, he knew exactly what he was doing. If it had been just fifty thousand miles away from Earth instead of its actual distance, then the pull of the tides would be so great that the Earth would be covered with water twice every day. Would a forgetful God think this far ahead?

King Ahab's men would have killed the last of God's prophets, but God told Elijah, "I have reserved

myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Rom. 11:4). How would it have looked if God had said, "Jezebel has caught me off guard this time; I must have some time to think what to do?" Of course God owes us nothing, but would we have faith in a God who makes mistakes like we do?

When the ad stated that this latest news completely changes our present knowledge about the Bible up until now, does this mean we must void all we have learned so far? Does this mean we have been wasting our time? Is our baptism still valid?

God has already given us his instructions to follow. Only those who are foolish look for contradictions — there are none. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

Five Things Wrong With Pentecostalism

There are several different Pentecostal groups today, but the most aggressive is the United Pentecostal Church, Incorporated. This article will point out what is wrong with the Pentecostal movement, with special emphasis on the United Pentecostal Church, Incorporated.

Pentecostal groups claim to be inspired, but each group teaches doctrine different from other groups. Each claim God gives their doctrine.

God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). How are we to determine which group is actually inspired? Mark 16:20 shows God confirmed the (inspired) word. The group that can perform "real" miracles will be the one we will heed. Since none of them can perform miracles, we heed none of them but classify them as false churches bent on deception.

Pentecostals claim the signs of Mark 16:17,18 are in their church today. They claim the tongues, healings, and exorcism, but reject drinking poison or handling snakes unless it is an accidental occurrence. They tell us the snake handling and drinking poison must not be done deliberately, for such would be tempting God. We find it hard to believe that God demanded the common practice of three of the five signs and made the other two accidental when the same language is used to describe all five signs. The word "accidental" is missing from the text. Mark 16:20 shows all five signs were common occurrences in the confirmation of preaching. It is true Paul was accidentally bitten (Acts 28:3-6), but whether



RAY HAWK

accidental or otherwise, it was a sign to be used right along with the other four. Mark 16:17,18 is the death stroke to Pentecostals, because it is one of God's tests to show who are the Jim Joneses of this world!

Pentecostals claim to have something others do not have. They claim Holy Ghost baptism gives them boldness, peace, joy, and power. They usually claim power and quote I Thess. 1:5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" When one is speaking with them, privately or publicly, they will give testimony after testimony to confirm their power, but they never confirm their testimony with power. They are powerless! According to Paul in I Corinthians 4:19,20, powerlessness was indicative of false teachers. Such is the case today. If they have a power shortage, then the boldness, peace, and joy they also claim is from the wrong source too. They are like the Jews who were zealous, but not according to knowledge (Romans 10:2,3).

Pentecostals will use one another's testimony. They believe Oral Roberts' testimony that he heals is just as valid as Mary Baker Eddy's claims of healings. Since signs, miracles, and wonders were given to confirm the teaching of God's apostles and prophets, if these different groups which claim such are so, we have God confirming contradictory doctrines! It is true God confirmed his word (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3,4), but he never confirmed false or contradictory teaching. False teachers have claims but no power (I Cor. 4:19,20). Pentecostalism has no power, only baseless claims.

United Pentecostals claim a special revelation concerning the Godhead, received in 1914. They claim that Holy Ghost baptism is needed today to witness to an unbelieving world. Yet, when asked to confirm their 1914 revelation or perform any confirming sign, they quote a portion of Matthew 12:39. How convenient to misapply scripture! In their

revivals they tell people to "expect a miracle." In discussions they claim anyone who "expects a miracle" is an "evil and adulterous generation." They claim power is needed to witness (use) to show an unbelieving world that God exists and his word is true. Yet, in the very places where this "witnessing" is needed, they have a power shortage! They say miracles, signs, and wonders are needed today to convince an unbelieving world, but they claim in the presence of unbelief God is powerless to use miracles, signs, and wonders! Amazing!

I have given five things wrong with Pentecostalism. This by no means exhausts the shortcomings of a movement filled with error and deception.

This article is written in hopes that those who work with Pentecostals will be able to use this material to help their friends. Those who may be Pentecostal that read this article, be assured that I have written this out of love for your soul. What was written by Paul about the Jews can be said by me about you. It is my prayer that you will use your zeal correctly.

There are some qualities Pentecostals manifest that we could imitate in churches of Christ. Zeal is one quality we need to stir up. Boldness is another. These qualities come, not by being immersed in the Holy Spirit, but by following the instruction of the Holy Spirit. That teaching is found in the New Testament (II Peter 1:21; II Tim. 3:16,17). It is my prayer that we will apply it to our lives and carry out the Great Commission! — 1461 East Chester Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

**We spend half our time crying for leaders,
and the other half nailing them to the cross
of prejudice.**



Words Of T h

(USPS t

mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth
the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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NUMBER 17

Will Dogs And Cats Go To Heaven?

"Dear Dr. GRAHAM:
I know this may seem
silly to you, but recently
my dog had to be put to
sleep and it has made me
grieve deeply. Do you
think I will see my pet in
heaven---M.S.T." The
foregoing is a direct
quotation from The Bir-
mingham News, March
10, 1983.



W. A. HOLLEY

Dr. Graham then
answers the foregoing
question: "Dear Mrs.
M.S.T.: I do not believe
Scripture gives us any
direct answer about this,
although many Bible scholars believe the evidence
suggests there will be animals in Heaven. The
difference will be that they will no longer fight and
kill, because in the heavenly kingdom all will be
peace. 'The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard
will lie down with the goat . . . They will neither harm
nor destroy on all my holy mountain' (Isaiah
11:6,9)...."

I do not wish to misrepresent Dr. Graham. It is for
that reason I have quoted him correctly. You can read
his answer because it is before your eyes. Read his
answer again and see what he says. Does he not
suggest that dogs and cats will be in heaven? He says,
"Many Bible scholars believe the evidence suggests
there will be animals in Heaven." And then, Dr.
Graham quotes Isaiah 11:6,9 as his proof that animals
will go to heaven. If this is not what he is saying, what
is he saying??

Dr. Graham misuses and abuses Isaiah 11:6,9. This
is figurative, not literal language!! It is true that "in
the heavenly kingdom all will be peace," but this
peace can be found only in Christ Jesus (John 16:33;
Isaiah 9:6; Romans 14:17).

The premillennial view of Isaiah 11:6-9 is that this
passage is literal and it describes the situation on
earth after Jesus comes and establishes his earthly
kingdom. This argument is false because Jesus Christ
has already established the only kingdom he will ever
establish on this earth. That kingdom was established

on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Mark
9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,47; 11:1,5; Matthew 16:18-19). In
apostolic times, those who heard and obeyed the
gospel of Christ were ushered into the kingdom then
(Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-4, where we are told that
"he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke
many people: and they shall beat their swords into
plowshares, and spears into pruninghooks: nation
shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall
they learn war any more," do not refer to a so-
called millennial kingdom, but to that kingdom which
Jesus established in the days of the apostles. These
passages and all other passages which foresaw the
establishment of God's kingdom on earth find their
fulfillment in Christ Jesus. Just listen to Paul as he
writes in Ephesus 2:13-17: "But now in Christ Jesus
ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the
blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made
both one, and hath broken down, the middle wall of
partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the
enmity, even the law of commandments contained in
ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new
man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile
both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain
the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to
you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."
Thus, the only true peace the world can ever know is
in and through Jesus Christ and his church or
kingdom!!

Herewith are some relevant questions: Did Jesus
die on the cruel cross for dogs and cats? Do cats and
dogs sin? If they sin will they go to hell? What
provision has God made for their salvation?

I Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one
mediator between God and men, the man Christ
Jesus." Where does the Bible say that Christ is the
mediator between God and animals? Hebrews 2:9
says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower
than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned
with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God
should taste death for every man." Where is the
Scripture that teaches that Jesus tasted death for
animals??

Does the Bible contain a plan of salvation for cats
and dogs? If so, where is it? Must the gospel be
preached to them? (Cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark

16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49). Is it possible for cats and
dogs to hear the gospel? And if they should hear it,
can they believe it?

Do animals have sins of which they should repent?
Do they need to confess the name of Christ? And,
then, is it necessary for them to be baptized for the
remission of sins? And, if they did, would they
become members of the church? We recognize, as a
matter of fact, that animals lack the capability to
respond to the demands of the gospel of Christ!!

Men and animals are not really in the same class
(Ecclesiastes 3:19-21; 12:7). Man by any measure-
ment possesses a preeminence over the animal
kingdom (Psalms 8:1-9; Job 7:17; Psalms 144:3;
Hebrews 2:6). Dogs and cats do not come into the
scope of God's redeeming grace. — P.O. Box 274,
Parrish, Al 35580.

The Lord's Supper

This memorial feast is
a very personal part of
the worship service that
we devote to God. Some
have commented that
this is the highlight of our
worship to God. We have
no grounds to escalate
one part of our worship
above the others but all
will agree that this holds
a special place in the
heart of each believer.


In I Corinthians 11:23-
25 Christ says, "This do
in remembrance of me."
This is the backward look
on the part of each
Christian. We see Jesus hanging in agony upon the
accursed cross. He died so we might live.

Christ paid the debt that we owed but could not
pay. He died for the preacher, the elders, the
deacons, but more importantly to myself, he died for



DON WILLIAMS

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Lord's Supper

Continued From Page 1

me! Because he died and arose I can arise from a life of sin to live for him and be like him! These thoughts cause us to have a renewed and re-dedicated life each Sunday as we seek to imitate the life of Christ.

Paul continues by saying that in observing the Lord's supper, "we do show the Lord's death till he come." It becomes a declaration of faith for the future. By commemorating Jesus' death, I announce to the world my utter dependence on and allegiance to Jesus. He died for me and one day I will live with him. This makes the feast a joyful and meaningful occasion.

Paul warns us saying we should not partake of the feast in an *unworthy manner*. He does not mean that those who are unworthy cannot observe the Lord's supper. Do we all not have lives tainted with sin? Are we not all in a sense unworthy to commune with the Lamb of God? The supper of our Lord is meant to make us stronger, not weaker. As we think upon what Jesus did for us, we can pray to God for help in living the Christian life. It can be a quiet time of re-dedication to God and to Christ because of their love for us. Paul said to observe it in a serious and solemn way, not flippantly or in a casual manner.

We examine ourselves, and as we see Christ's life with our own imperfect ways, we resolve better to follow the path set forth by Jesus. The Lord's supper is one way whereby we show our love to Jesus for what he did for us. — 800 Gunter Ave., Guntersville, AL 35976.

There are a lot of things we don't know, but there are also a lot of things we do know that we never use.

* * *

Some folks who are "as honest as the day is long" sure have to be watched after the sun goes down.

* * *

The mind stretched by a new idea never returns to its original dimensions.

* * *

The less you know about your own future and the other fellow's past, the better off you are.



"Abraham Rejoiced To See My Day"

There is no character in the Old or New Testament, with the exception of the Lord himself, whom I admire more than Abraham. His greatness seems to have inhered not so much in his great ability, but in his great faith. His name appears in one third of the sixty-six books of the Bible, and is used a total of more than one hundred times.

The Lord made a remarkable statement concerning Abraham in John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." I am not sure just what point in the life of Abraham the Lord has in mind when he made this statement. He may have been thinking about the promise God made to Abraham before he left Ur of the Chaldees, that "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). But it would be difficult to show that Abraham understood that the matter of redemption from sin was under consideration at this point.

Perhaps it was not until the offering of Isaac in Genesis 22 that Abraham came to understand that God's promise to him involved the matter of a sacrifice that would be offered for the sins of the world. Perhaps this is the incident the Lord had in mind when he said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." Eleven times in the first thirteen verses of Genesis 22 Isaac is called Abraham's son. Twice in these verses he is referred to as Abraham's *only* son, pointing up that there was no other through whom God's promise to Abraham could be fulfilled. And yet Abraham is to offer him as a burnt offering. Does this not remind us that it was the *only* begotten Son of God who had to be offered for our sins if ever we could be redeemed?

Furthermore, on this occasion Abraham learned to appreciate more than ever before the concept which we sometimes refer to as vicarious suffering, that is, one thing's suffering in the place of another. Can you imagine the joy of Abraham when it was announced to him that Isaac would not, after all, have to be offered? God provided "in the stead" of Isaac a ram for Abraham to offer. Was it in this that Abraham received a glimpse of Jesus' day, and rejoiced? Was it here he understood that one day his own seed would pour out the blood typified by every drop of animal blood shed in all the sacrifices from Adam onward?

It was on this occasion that the angel of the Lord said to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Genesis 22:18). Many years later, the apostle Paul wrote: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). What God told Abraham on this occasion is called "the gospel," i.e., the good news concerning the redemption of mankind through the offering of Jesus.

I do not know what Abraham meant when, in



BOBBY DUNCAN

answer to Isaac's question, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" he replied, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:7,8). It seems in his own mind he was "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:19). But as Abraham and Isaac were returning from the mountain top, no doubt Abraham more fully understood the prophecy he himself had uttered on their way up. And from Jesus' statement in John 8:36, Abraham also now had at least some understanding of the Lamb that God would provide to take away the sin of the world.

What a shame it is that, while Abraham saw centuries beforehand the day of Jesus and rejoiced, the Jews of Jesus' day did not rejoice at his coming. Instead they rejected him and crucified him. But what about the people of our time? Is it any less shameful that the vast majority are apathetic toward him?

Limiting God

(No. 2)

We began this series by reminding the reader of man's free choice. He can obey God or he can obey the devil. God desires to bless fallen man but he will not do so against his will.

Are there other ways we limit God today? Yes. **THE INDIVIDUAL CAN LIMIT GOD.** All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Many affirm there are spiritual blessings outside of Christ. They do this when they teach one can be saved outside the body of Christ, which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ, and the church is the body of Christ, all outside of Christ's church prevent or limit God in blessing them with spiritual blessings.

Those who pray for salvation and do not the things commanded in the word of God limit God. If a child of God prays doubting, he limits God. James said concerning prayer, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering [*doubting*, ASV]. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:6-8).

THE CHURCH CAN LIMIT GOD. (1) The church can fail to carry out the great commission. Jesus said, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). The world is the field. Every individual must do his part in carrying out this commission. There must be a joining together for



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Continued on page 3

“Wrong Is Never Right”

God wants man to live right (Acts 10:35) and, with the Bible, provides the standard for determining right and wrong (Titus 2:11,12; Heb. 5:14). However, some through “philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men . . . and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8) attempt to make that which is wrong something that can be right. Is such possible?



DAN WINKLER

Be it made known that wrong is never right:

Regardless Of Where One Is Or Whom One Is With

“It’s alright, no one is around,” some will say. If others must be present for wrong conduct to be wrong, the thief could break in by the shadows of the night, pilfer another’s goods, and please God — if he did not get caught. Too, a gossip’s vicious tongue could assassinate the reputation of another and please God as long as the rumor was not traced back. If one must be around others for wrong to be wrong, explain why Achan sinned when he took of the spoil of Jericho (Joshua 7:15,20).

“It’s alright, no one will know,” encourage others. If wrong is determined by the knowledge of others, why did Paul term the “secrets” of some as “shameful” (Eph. 5:12)? Furthermore, how just would Jesus be in the judgment (cf. John 5:12) in having man answer for his secrets (Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16)?

Remember, right and wrong are not determined by geography; that is, where one is. They are determined by theology; that is, what the Bible says (II Tim. 3:16,17). Right and wrong are not determined by who one happens to be with. They are determined by God who is with all (Prov. 15:13).

Regardless Of Why One Does It

“The end justifies the means,” retorts the pragmatist. “An act of wrong may become right if the result of the act is beneficial to man,” is their line of thought. Such would sanction the murder of a dictator so as to rid his heinous crimes against society. It would allow the prostitution of one’s body for the preservation of the country. One could justify any desired act of ungodliness under the humanistic umbrella of man’s ultimate good. How ridiculous! Consider the cross of Jesus. How pragmatic was Jesus’ death? It made available salvation for all (II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:9); Yet, the events leading to and culminating in the crucifixion were termed, “sin” (Acts 3:14-19). The end does not justify the means.

“It’s alright if it serves the love of those involved,” says situation ethics. With this philosophy, love is the norm replacing law and vetoing truth. For the love of his family, a man could extort thousands of dollars from his company. For the love of her companion, a young lady could sacrifice her virtue. Such is the claim of situationists. What about Lot? He, out of love for his guests, attempted to prevent the sin of sodomy by encouraging the sin of fornication (Gen. 19:8). Is that how man is to combat sin? Man is not to overcome evil with evil (Rom. 12:17,21). He is to follow after righteousness in fighting the good fight (I Tim. 6:11,12).

Regardless Of What Others Are Doing

“Every one else is doing it,” some cry. If the majority makes wrong something that is right, why was there a flood in the which “every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens” (Gen. 6:23)? Only eight souls were saved (I Pet. 3:20). If the majority shifts wrong to right, why were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? Not even ten righteous could be found in those twin cities (Gen.

18,19). The majority were evil. If the majority makes wrong something that is right, why is it the “narrow” gate that leadeth to life eternal hath only a few entering in thereby (Matt. 7:13,14)?

“It’s alright, no one else is doing it,” would be the foregoing’s antithesis. “To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17) in spite of others’ negligence. “All unrighteousness [not doing righteousness DW] is sin” (I John 5:17), be it that of oneself or that of others. It is not *who* is right but *what* is right that counts!

Regardless Of How One Feels

“Good is what one feels good after and bad is what one feels bad after,” was Ernest Hemingway’s philosophy. If such is true, an activity does not become wrong until one feels bad over engaging in the activity or over its results. In other words, sin is not sin until feelings of remorse set in. That being the case, Peter did not sin in denying Jesus until he heard the cock crow after which he went out and wept over his actions. Even more, the Jews did not sin in crucifying Jesus until they were pricked in their hearts for so doing, and that, forty days later. How

absurd! Based on this train of thought, one can become so calloused that he never feels remorse and, thus never sins. Does not the Bible present sin as the problem of all, bar none (Rom. 3:23; I John 1:8,10)?

“Let your conscience be your guide,” still others say. However, the conscience is not a guide, it is a safety valve. The Bible determines right and wrong (Heb. 5:14), and the conscience is that part of man that says, “Do right and do not do wrong” (cf. I John 2:18-22). Therefore, obedience answers the conscience’s check of one’s actions (I Pet. 3:21). Too, the conscience can become calloused (I Tim. 4:1,2), defiled (Titus 1:5), and evil (Heb. 10:22). With the purpose and possible abuse of the conscience in mind, one can easily see that it is not a standard by which right and wrong are determined.

There is a wrong way to do a right thing. Such occurs when exercising one’s liberty in Jesus causes a weak brother to stumble (I Cor. 8). But there is never a right way to do a wrong thing! “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” (Isa. 5:20)! — Rt. 2 Box 240 Woodbury, Tennessee 37190.

Limiting God

Continued From Page 2

some to support and some to go. (2) A failure in stewardship limits God in his mission for the church. Paul said, “Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (I Cor. 4:2). (3) When the church permits sin in the camp, there is no influence for good. Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Our light or influence is most important in God’s scheme of things. We are the tongue, hands, feet, etc. of God. Sin darkens our influence. We must keep ourselves pure (I Tim. 5:22). (4) Division in the church limits God in the mission he has for the church. All strife hinders whether it is personal conflicts between members of the church or false doctrine being taught by a false teacher. Paul made an appeal to two women at Philippi. He said, “I beseech Euodias and beseech

Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil. 4:2). Concerning false teaching Paul taught, “Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 1:10-11). (5) God is limited if each member of the church does not make planning for personal development. Peter says, “But grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . .” (II Pet. 3:18).

Remember, we are free moral agents. Our choices may not only affect our destiny, they may have influence on those around us. Often those we love the most are influenced by our actions.

MAY WE CHOOSE THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. — P. O. Box 506, LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

(to be continued).

The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

(No. 7)

Several of the fundamental facets pertaining to repentance have now been presented. One more point will be covered in this seventh and final segment of our study. It touches the rewards of repentance.

First of all, there is the reward to the one who preaches the truth on repentance. With other things equal, this marks him in the mold with great preachers of the past. Prophets of the Old Testament, apostles and inspired ministers of the New Testament, John, Jesus and a host of powerful proclaimers over the last twenty centuries have forged a message of repentance in their burning desire to preach God’s unadulterated truth. We cannot preach the gospel without preaching the necessity of repentance. The gospel is the Great Commission; the Great



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Commission is the gospel. Repentance belongs as one of the stipulations of salvation, as one of the conditions of conversion (Luke 24:47). Peter could not preach the gospel and leave out repentance. He made no effort to exclude it. He did not exclude it from his writings. His final chapter, II Peter 3, declares that “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9). Paul could neither preach orally nor write prolifically and permanently without including God’s place of repentance in redemption. He never attempted to as Acts 17:30; II Corinthians 7, and Romans 2 fully exhibit. No man can be a gospel preacher who omits repentance from his sermons. Repentance should be mentioned in every sermon. Each sermon should contain specific mention of God’s plan of redemption and that surely means repentance will be included in emphatic fashion.

In the second place there is the rich reward of hearing and heeding the call to repentance. It is not enough to hear God’s clarion call for the need of

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The Bible Doctrine Of Repentance

Continued from page 3

repentance. We must heed its intense import within our lives. Repentance is a challenge that faces us all our lives. In Acts 2:38 Peter joined repentance and baptism and made BOTH absolutely essential for the attainment of remission of sins. But in God's plan we are only baptized ONCE. Baptism is neither part nor parcel of God's second law of pardon for his erring children. Repentance belongs to the plan addressed to alien sinners (Acts 2:38; 3:19). It also belongs to God's second law of pardon. Peter makes this crystal clear in his plain, positive, pointed and powerful warning to the sinning Simon, the former sorcerer. We read in Acts 8:22, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Joining repentance and prayer in Jehovah's second law of pardon is a confession of sin(s) (James 5:16; I John 1:9).

A third rich reward of repentance is salvation. This we have already implied in the foregoing material but wish to underscore it with even greater emphasis. Coupled with hearing, faith, confession of Christ's deity and baptism, the truly penitent person has access to forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31), to the remission of sins (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38), and to the blotting out of his sins (Acts 3:19). Filled with faults and frailties as we ALL are, no one of us lives in sinless perfection from our baptism in water to our

burial in Mother Earth years later. Hence, we need constant provisions to cover our sins, transgressions, and iniquities subsequent to baptism. This is precisely why God graciously and generously gave us his second law of pardon. Repentance, when coupled with confession and prayer, makes possible our returning to our first love (Rev. 2:4,5). Jesus in his mighty missive to the Ephesians actually linked repentance and a return to their first love. In coming back, they were required to remember, to repent and to begin to do the first works (their first works as energetic and dedicated Christians) again. There is neither salvation to the alien nor to the erring child of God minus repentance. Of this we can be absolutely

sure!

Last of all, there is the heavenly reward. No accountable person will go to heaven as an impenitent individual. Heaven's door stands ajar for no one who remains rebellious, adamant and impenitent as touching his sins. How grateful we should be that God has made us capable of repentance and has granted us this precious privilege.

(A note of appreciation: For some of the ideas expressed in this material I am indebted to the late and lamented B. C. Goodpasture and his classic sermon on Repentance). — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

When your knees are knocking, it might help to kneel on them.

* * *

"Deep" preachers are not actually deep. They just muddy the water enough so that you can't see the bottom.

How can a preacher expect to fill heaven with people when his sermons won't even fill the church building where he preaches?

* * *

A small boy prayed, "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a good time as it is."

* * *

The preacher's business is to preach God's will. He is an executor, not a legislator.

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 18

To My Beloved Children:

I have many times purposed to write a general letter on matters that concern me, but have been hindered until now.

Much of the religious world has become so very liberal that the "straight and narrow" way has become meaningless to them. It has led to an attitude which says, "the whole duty of man is to do as he pleases, or whatever brings him pleasure" (cf. Eccl. 12:13). As a result of this attitude, we drift into a state of mind that says, "speak unto us smooth things" (Isa. 3:8-11), so we never realize the truth, "if any man [person] thinks he stands let him take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12).

Let me first refer you to the misconception of millions who say, "O, the church doesn't save anybody," or "the church is not the savior," or "there are good and bad in all the churches," etc. *A mixture of truth and error can be more deceptive than error alone.* It is true that the church is not our savior; Christ is the Savior and there is not a promise in all the Bible that he will save us separate and apart from "the body of Christ, the church" (cf. Col. 1:18).

The church established on Pentecost is the result of God's eternal purpose as expressed in Eph. 3:10-11: "To the intent that now . . . might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." This tells us that when God planned to send the Christ into the world he also purposed the church, God intending that the gospel be preached by it to all men everywhere.

It should be noted that the church of the New Testament has two sides, human and divine. The human side is apparently very imperfect, which fact needs no proof to a reasonable person. But there is also the side which is absolutely perfect. The church was conceived in the mind of God Almighty. It has a divine Head who has given us a perfect law, "the law



VIRGIL BRADFORD

of the spirit of life." Its work is spiritual as the kingdom which is not of the world, and its destiny is heaven itself. (Never mind the "hypocrites in the church" coverup; God knows how to deal with them.) Now please consider some of the traits and relationships of the church in the Scriptures.

As shown already, Christ and the church were purposed and promised at the same time (Eph. 3:10-11). The Lord Jesus Christ purchased, or acquired, the church with his own blood, his life, his entire being (Ac. 20:28). Did the Lord get cheated in this transaction? He didn't seem to think so!

More than half a dozen times the church is described as the **BODY OF CHRIST** (Eph. 12:27ff.). In this figure Christ is the head of the body. Just as my hands and fingers guide the pen according to directions from my head, just so Christ and the church are related. Now if one of my members, say a hand, is severed from my body, the same act that severs it from the body also severs it from my head. My hand is like the Christian who thinks he or she can hold to Christ while being disjointed from the body, the church. Head and body go together; we can't have one without the other.

Then, too, Jesus is the "builder" of his church (Matt. 16:18). He added to it those who were saved (Ac. 2:47). Did he build and add to some nonessential thing? Let's not accuse him of stupidity!

This aforepromised organism is a spiritual kingdom with Christ Jesus reigning over it as its supreme ruler. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." Further, this divine kingdom has divine laws, and promises an eternal inheritance to its constituents. "He made us . . . a Kingdom . . . priests unto his God and Father; to whom be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. 1:6). Everyone who is "born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5) is translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love (Col. 1:13-14). And every child of the King is also a priest of God who offers sacrifices to him through Jesus, our great high priest (Heb. 4:14-16).

The church of the New Testament is the "household" of God; God's family on earth; one Father, one family. In this figure of a household Jesus Christ is our "Brother" -- "Big Brother," if you please (Heb. 2:11-12).

The whole church may be thought of as the "bride"

of Christ. John called himself the friend of the bridegroom (Jn. 3:29), and Paul speaks of the church espoused unto one husband that it might be presented to him a virgin, pure and chaste (II Cor. 11:2). There is no more intimate relationship than that of husband and wife, the relationship in which we bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4).

Now it must be observed that God knew that his people would never be sinless as long as they are in the flesh. But there are differences in sins. Some are presumptuous, wilful, or indifferent (cf. Heb. 10:25ff, for instance). But others are sins of weakness, ignorance, inadvertence. The latter type I have had in abundance, but the golden text of the Bible on this is in I John 1:7: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."


Let us thank God that his grace has been manifested to us through Jesus Christ who teaches us that we should "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts," and that we "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Tit. 2:11ff). Only by a sincere effort along these lines may we hopefully anticipate the "blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2).

As I think back over the 47 years that I have studied, preached and taught the Scriptures, I cannot find anything omitted that pertains to our salvation; can you?

Now I am keenly aware that I and my family are no more important than others, for God is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless, you are closer to me by nature, and since this world is not our eternal home, it would be great to know that we are all keeping faith with him, who is not only our Savior, but the Judge of all. So as usual, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth."

With much love, Daddy — 2206 Hillsboro Rd., Nashville, TN 37212.

Glancing over the audience as he spoke, the preacher thought he spotted an old friend. On second glance, he discovered it was only a "nodding" acquaintance.



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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Door

It seems to me that there was a song in the late fifties or early sixties about a green door. From that time to this I don't think there has been a door anywhere that has gained as much notoriety as one at the Walker County Medical Center in Jasper. The wood grain on this particular door, it has recently been discovered, resembles a face. Some are sure that the image appeared there miraculously, and that it is the face of Jesus. People have come from miles around to see this image. Motels in the area have done a booming business, the news media have had their fun, and some religionists in the area have had a field day.



BOBBY DUNCAN

Reaction to all the fuss about the door has ranged from "pooh-pooh" to "hallelujah." "Do you believe it is some kind of sign?" is the question being asked. I must admit that I have not seen the door. While I am sure that the image on the door is not a sign of anything except that the grain of the wood from which the door was made formed an interesting pattern, all the excitement about the image on the door is a very definite sign of several things.

In the first place, it is a sign that a large number of people are not very familiar with the teaching of the Bible with reference to miracles. The Bible clearly teaches that miracles were performed in connection with the revelation and confirmation of God's will to man. When that revelation and confirmation had been effected, then miracles ceased. Miracles are not being performed today. The Bible stands today as God's perfectly completed and thoroughly confirmed revelation. It admits of no possible additional revelation. To claim that miracles are being performed today is tantamount to affirming that the Bible is not complete, or that the truthfulness of the Bible is questionable. Neither of these is true. God's will needs no further revelation, and it needs no further confirmation.

In the second place, all the excitement about the image on the door is a sign that many people are more gullible about matters of a religious nature than about any other matter. We should be more careful about things that affect our souls than anything else. The people of Berea were said to be more noble than those of 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 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 John 4:1). In view of these passages (and many others), it is strange that people will readily and without any examination, latch on to almost any idea in the realm of religion.

door is a sign that there are many good, religious people who are seeking for something beyond and above that which they are able to find in the practice

of their religion. This is no surprise. The religions founded by men are vain and empty (Matthew 15:9). They cannot satisfy the needs of man; neither can they take man to heaven (Matthew 7:21-24). But the faithful disciple of the Lord is not seeking for something outside of that which is supplied by his Bible. The scriptures will thoroughly furnish a man unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16,17). The scriptures contain all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). The scriptures are able to convert the soul, make wise the simple, rejoice the heart, enlighten the eyes; they endure forever, and are true and righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey. Those who heed them are warned of dangers, and those who keep them are greatly rewarded. (Read Psalm 19:7-11.) This being true, why would one become so excited about an image on a door. Can that door do any of these things?

The fact that so many people are seeking for something which their religions cannot furnish them should be recognized as a challenge to those of us who are Christians. Since they are searching, let us do all within our power to help them find the truth. It is true that many of them would never accept the simple truth of the gospel; they are much more interested in something they consider to be sensational. But is is also true that some are honest, and will believe the truth if we can teach them. God will not hold us responsible for their believing and obeying the truth, but he will hold us responsible for teaching it to them.

A Spectator Sport?

What is happening in our American society? Has assault or rape become a spectator sport?

Recently, the news media carried two reports of two women being raped in the presence of others. Those who witnessed these sad spectacles were said to have applauded the action of those who violated the women. And not one person raised a hand in offering to come to the aid of these unfortunate young women. Just a few years ago such would not have been the case.

In New Bedford six men are in jail because they gang-raped a 21 year old girl; in Boston a 17 year old girl was also gang-raped by seven men, "but nobody did anything to assist her in that apartment," the police said.

Why do such crimes happen? Why do people not



W. A. HOLLEY

Limiting God

(NO. 3)

God is limited only because he will not force his will upon us. God has a plan for our lives. When we submit to his will, he can use us to his glory. Paul said, "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" (Eph. 3:20).

WHY DO WE LIMIT GOD? (1) Some limit God out of ignorance. In reference to unconverted Gentiles Paul said,



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them . . ." (Eph. 4:18). Because of the lack of study, a multitude of people do not have God in their knowledge. (2) God is limited in the lives of many because of rebellion. Jeremiah records, "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the paths, where is the good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16). Isaiah comments on this attitude. He said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). (3) Lack of courage in some limits God. Among the chief rulers of the Jews were many who believed on Christ but because they feared the Pharisees, they would not confess him. They feared being cast out of the synagogue. In our time that same type of fear is prevalent. (4) Lack of love is a great cause of limiting God. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Love is developed by responding to God's love. John states, "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). The evidence of God's love is seen in the sacrifice of his only begotten Son (I John 4:10). (5) The denial of God's existence is another way God is limited. The Psalmist wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God . . ." (Ps. 14:1). Another declaration of the Psalmist is, "The heavens declare

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Limiting God

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the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Some years ago the Russian astronauts went into space and said they did not see God. The U.S. astronauts said they saw God everywhere. Someone said, "There are none so blind as those who will not see."

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF LIMITING GOD? (1) It provokes God's wrath. The Psalmist reveals God's attitude toward idolatry. "For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images" (Ps. 78:58). There

are not many graven images around us. But gods of lust, pleasure, greed, jealousy, etc. are prevalent. God is never pleased with disobedience. The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, had dressed for their new duties as priests. But they made a fatal mistake. They "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" (Lev. 10:1-2). (2) Destruction is invited when one limits God. "He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance" (Ps.

78:62). (3) One's purpose in life is lost when God is limited. In the first few verses of Ephesians, the fifth chapter, Paul makes a plea for righteous living. He then warns against certain sins. He concludes by saying, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:1-5). The eternal loss of souls results from limiting God (Matt. 25:46).

ARE YOU GUILTY OF LIMITING GOD? — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

A Spectator Sport?

Continued from page 2

consider such horrible acts disgraceful, disgusting, and revolting? It is not because sin is no longer sin! Sin is sin whether we wish to acknowledge it or not! (Romans 3:3-4).

We do not need any apology for sin, however popular, or how much applause there may be. Mothers and fathers, just suppose these victims had been your daughters!! Would you want people who stood by to offer no assistance?? Do you not think it is about time for God-fearing, law-abiding citizens to become involved??

What is the explanation for such atrocious conduct? (1) In the last few years it has been drilled into the minds of thousands upon thousands that there is no such thing as right or wrong, *per se*. It all depends upon how one looks upon the act. For example the same act may be wrong to one but right to another. But, according to God's word it is a sin to call evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20-25).

(2) Just a few years ago moral principles were being taught in our homes and in our schools, but no more! God's truth concerning creation has been outlawed, but, in its place, the theory of evolution has been brought in. If we teach our boys and girls that they evolved from lower forms of life, we ought to expect them to act like brute beasts!! But, men and women, boys and girls, are not animals — dogs, cats, and cows. Man was created in the image of God and, therefore, deserves to rank above lower animals in honor, privilege, dignity, and reputation (Psalms 8:1-9; Acts 17:29). Human beings should possess a higher estimate of themselves than to act like cats and dogs.

(3) Another cause for such conduct is the influence of so-called sex education. In far too many instances these courses have turned into "how-to" classes, and under such circumstances, boys and girls are sometimes led to experimentation. When so-called "sex education" came in, moral principles based upon the Bible were cast out. Boys and girls need to be taught about "sex education," but this education needs to be taught by Bible believing, God fearing parents. Teachers, influenced by the theory of evolution cannot properly teach the sacredness of holy sexual relationships. In the beginning "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them . . . Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and he shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 1:27; 2:24).

Jesus the Christ and Paul the apostle, both condemned adultery and fornication (Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-9; Hebrews 13:4). Verily, "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

(4) Furthermore, TV and a flood of pornographic literature have poisoned the minds of the old and young alike. In graphic detail sex is illustrated in posh, elegant and fashionable magazines and television movies. Even in songs, both rock and roll and in

country music, sex seems to be the main topic. We advise parents to pay attention to what their children see and to what songs they sing. Those who develop a voracious, insatiable appetite for sex find themselves trapped in a situation from which they can hardly escape!! One needs something in his head besides sex! (Proverbs 23:7; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2).

(5) In the ancient past there was a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:25). But such conduct was never right in God's eyes!! Those who abandoned the right ways of the Lord had to suffer the

consequences! (I John 3:4; Romans 6:23).

The liberal establishment continues to tell our young people that sex is good; sex is healthy; sex is fun. If your 15 year old daughter wishes to become "sexually active," all she needs to do is go down to Planned Parenthood and get fitted by the end of the afternoon, and her parents need not know. The liberal establishment never mentions the awful price that must be paid in personal heartaches, in diseases such as syphilis, herpes, and gonorrhea, which are becoming more and more difficult to control and to cure. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Do You Actually Have To Say It?

This writer never ceases to be amazed at the way some brethren get all excited over imagined problems. (This is not to imply that there are no real problems deserving of concern and excitement.) From reading brotherhood bulletins and periodicals some brethren appear to be looking for something to become alarmed over. It seems that these brethren read denominational papers and conclude that we are failing somewhere because we are not emphasizing the things they emphasize. Question: Why should the Lord's church compare itself with any other religious group? We are in a different league and play by different rules!

The most recent castigating of the brotherhood, according to an article in one of our prominent periodicals, was over our failure to emphasize grace in our preaching. Only a few years ago we were being castigated for over emphasizing the church. From time to time someone comes along and accuses us of preaching too much on the evils of instrumental music in worship. How can these writers know what is being emphasized or under emphasized unless they sit in every service of every congregation throughout the brotherhood every Sunday? This writer contends that one does not have to say the word "grace," for example, to preach grace. In fact, it is impossible to preach a sermon on any Bible subject



S. G. GRAY

without preaching grace, by implication if not by direct statement. For instance, when one preaches a sermon on the blood-bought church, is he not preaching grace?

This writer is working in a mission field in East Georgia and writes an article each week for the local newspaper, a weekly publication. The editor gives the space as public service. He would not print an article that outright condemned his Baptist belief. To turn in such an article would be wasted effort. However, practically every article, by implication, condemns what he believes if he makes the proper application. The truth is taught, but specific religious errors are not spelled out. Is this a compromise or is this being realistic? I contend that it is being realistic.

Jesus condemned some for saying "Lord, Lord" because that was all they were doing (Luke 6:46). Paul exposed some for professing to know God, but by their works they were denying him (Titus 1:16). This writer contends that one can teach grace without saying the word. He also contends that one can emphasize grace by talking about it while denying grace by his practice. Is this not the case with denominational preachers? How can one honestly believe in the grace of God and reject the church of God? How can one believe in "salvation by grace," and reject Jesus' command to be baptized for the remission of sins? (Acts 2:38).

Therefore, cool it, you alarmist, and know what you are speaking of before taking out on the brotherhood and accusing us of failing to emphasize grace or of over emphasizing the church or any of the other imagined errors you turn up. Leave it to denominational preachers to accuse us of not believing in grace. We should know better! — P.O. Box 856 Washington, GA 30673.

Is God Culpable For Man's Sin?

Atheists aver that Biblical theism involves an irreconcilable contradiction by its holding the premises that God is both omnibenevolent (i.e., perfectly good, holy, merciful, and just) and omnipotent (i.e., capable of doing anything) while simultaneously admitting that there is evil in the world. Naturally, for atheists, Biblical theism is a counter-factual hypothesis. They maintain that this is so, not only because theism, in their view, happens not to be proved, but because it is self-contradictory in asserting in conjunction the three premises mentioned above (in the manner of Epicurus' trilemma about God and evil).

This article will consider the atheist's contention that God is morally blame-worthy for the evil that is in the world. However, it must limit the definition of "evil" to "real, objective moral wrong" (i.e., "that which contradicts the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" which the Bible calls "sin"). Natural calamities, animal pain, and human misery, *per se*, will not be comprehended in the term "evil" in this article except insofar as these might involve "sin."

Judeo-Christian theism maintains that "sin" comes about as a result of man's ability to make free, authentic choices between good and evil. It furthermore holds that God created man with this ability. Atheists respond that God himself is responsible for making man capable of bringing evil into the world. God is thus morally blameworthy for this evil.

The thesis of this article is that God is not morally blameworthy in making man a free agent. Three subordinate questions must be answered in resolving the basic question of God's guilt or innocence in creating man: (1) Has God really made man free? (2) Ought God to have made man free? (3) Could God have made man free, but not capable of choosing evil? Any defensible theodicy must answer satisfactorily these questions in a way consistent with the theology of the Bible and the fact of evil.

God has made man morally free, according to Judeo-Christian theism. This may be known by a study of scripture. For example, Genesis 1:27 says that man is made in God's own image. Surely, this must include man's basic moral nature. Obviously, God's choices are not determined, but free; for, if determined, some prior personal or physical agent must have made God and determined his choices. And yet, by definition, "God" is prior to every other personal or physical agent and is, therefore, himself a free agent. Man is thus a free agent since he is made in God's image. Furthermore, scripture is replete with such exhortations to men as, "choose whom ye will serve" (i.e., God or idols; good or evil, cf. Joshua 24:15), thus implying that men can indeed choose. The Bible then does teach that God has made man free.

Ought God to have made man free? This broader, or "philosophical," sort of question is more difficult to answer than the first. However, an analogy may serve to illuminate the issue thus raised. Many parents know the deepest joy in having a child who lovingly obeys them. The same parents also know the heartache in having a child (even the same one) who disobeys. To remedy the latter ill, who would dream of developing some sort of "serum" which would insure that a child be determined, or "programmed," always to obey? Who would rather have the coerced respect of a determined "automaton" than the loving



PHILLIP GRAY

obedience of a child who could just as well choose disobedience? Does not God desire such loving respect and obedience? Surely he does. But, if so, then the possibility of disrespect and disobedience must also coexist with their alternatives to make the choices for good authentic, unrestrained, and free. Even the angels, according to the Bible, may choose evil, and hence are free (cf. II Peter 2:4). Thus, for man to be a creature capable of showing genuine love and respect unto his Creator, God had to have made him free.

The third question suggested by the first two and one that is often raised by opponents to my thesis is, "Could God have made man free, but not capable of choosing evil?" When the natural response is made that God could not have made man free to choose between good and evil and yet not free to choose evil since this is logically contradictory, some may respond that this negates the premise of God's omnipotence. In other words, if God were really all-powerful, then he could do anything; the making of a creature who is free and yet not free is something; therefore, God could have made such a creature. Here is where the system of Judeo-Christian theism is self-contradictory, they chide.

But, is there anything that an omnipotent Being cannot do? This is the crux of the issue. The answer depends on how one defines the term "anything." In one sense, Omnipotence can do "anything;" in another sense, Omnipotence cannot do "anything" when that thing is really "no-thing." God

cannot do nothing. A "free moral agent who cannot choose evil" is nothing (or, a logical impossibility). Therefore, God cannot create such a creature.

To illustrate, God cannot make a "round square," a "four-sided triangle," or a "married bachelor." God cannot both exist and not exist at the same time. But, isn't he omnipotent? Yes, but he can do only that which is subject to power. As further examples, God cannot make "the-then-as-about's" nor "bostltrotnot tlol plangmookthai." To speak of such "things" is to speak nonsense, merely to play with words. According to the contention being considered, God is expected to be able to make these "things" which are sheer solecisms, or unrelated series of words. These are meaningless. In fact, any logical contradiction (as "round square") is ultimately meaningless. It is nothing. God cannot do nothing; thus, cannot bring evil into the world by his free choice.

Therefore, it has been demonstrated that God is not culpable for evil in the world. This is because God was not wrong in desiring to have, and in creating, free moral agents to love and respect him anymore than men are wrong in desiring to have and begetting free moral agents (children) to love and respect them. But, for man to be free, there had to be the possibility that he could choose to bring evil into the world. Sadly, man has exercised his ability to choose evil. Thus, man is culpable for evil in the world, not God. — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

Christ And The Law Of Moses

In Matthew 26:28 we read that the New Testament was ushered in through the blood of Christ. In Romans seven we learn that men today are dead to the law that said, "Thou shalt not covet," that we may be spiritually joined to Jesus who arose from the dead. Paul plainly declares in Galatians 2:21 that Christ died in vain, if we are still under the Law. In three distinct passages in Hebrews we read that Christ is the mediator of the New Testament and that he could not have been until after his death. Therefore, at the cross our Savior took away the first covenant. We are now under the last will and testament of the Lord (Hebrews 8:6; 9:16; 10:10).

Comprehension of this scriptural thought will answer the often asked question about the thief on the cross. He lived and died *before* Jesus shed his blood of the New Covenant. We live *after* that notable event. We are under the New Testament; the thief was subject to the Old Testament. While Jesus was on earth he had the authority to forgive sins as he chose (Matthew 9:6). But when Christ died, his law for man was revealed in the New Testament. The terms for pardon, sealed in his blood, must not be changed. According to the words of the Savior, all accountable beings must now believe the gospel (Mark 16:16), repent of their sins (Luke 24:47) and be immersed in water (Acts 8:38; 22:16). This arrangement will last till the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20).

The book of Matthew emphasizes the kingdom of Christ. Mark's account of the life of our Lord stresses his majesty. Luke set forth the ideal manhood of Christ (Luke 2:52), and John underscored the deity of



JOHNNY RAMSEY

the Savior. From the first four New Testament books we come to know about Jesus, the greatest one to walk the sands of time. The major purpose of this section of the Bible is aptly summed up in John 20:31: "But these were written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Indeed, we must obediently follow the Redeemer for his words will judge us one day (John 12:48). On the last page in the Bible we read: "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."

Yes, heaven will be the eternal home for those who properly appropriate the life of Christ to their own lives. Jesus is certainly the central character in human history. It is by his new testament that we are reconciled to God! Read Ephesians 2:11-16 and Colossians 1:20. — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

A suggested prayer for all preachers: "O Lord, fill my heart with worthwhile stuff and nudge me when I've said enough." * * *

Some preachers manipulate the people; others teach them. * * *

A problem not worth praying about is not worth worrying about. * * *

In preparing their sermons, many preachers prepare no place to stop. * * *

In times of prosperity men ask too little of God. In times of adversity, they ask too much. * * *

The best way to compliment the sermon delivered by your minister is to bring a friend to hear the next one.



Words Of th

(USPS 691-760)

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

- Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1983

NUMBER 19

"Truth Lies At The Bottom Of The Well"

The words of our caption is attributed to Heraclitus, a Greek Philosopher, who lived about six hundred years before Jesus Christ. It can also be said: "Truth lies at the top of the mountain." The thought is: Truth is very difficult to come by. The poet has said: Truth forever on the scaffold Wrong forever on the throne?

We shall listen to Jesus: "Whosoever

cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the floods arose, the streams beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:47-49).

Oftentimes, we arrive at truth with much difficulty, and with great cost. Proverbs 23:23 says: "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." Truth is such a wonderful treasure till truth should be purchased at all cost, with never a thought of compromise with error. (Cf. Proverbs 4:1-13; Matthew 13:44).

In our search for truth, we must not pay too much attention to the so-called ecclesiastical mind, because, for more than 2,000 years it has cherished more legends than anybody else; has believed them longer than anybody else; and has attempted to maintain them by force when all argument in their favor has lost its efficacy. Roman Catholicism and all denominationalism have tried to bury the truth of God



W. A. HOLLEY

beneath their doctrines and dogma from their inception.

What is truth? In Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, 8th edition, the word *truth* is defined: "The state of being the case: fact; the body of real things, events, and facts; actuality: A transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality"

In the New Testament, Jesus defined truth (John 17:17), saying: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

In Psalms 119:142 and 151, we are told: "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth . . . Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth." Thus, truth is from God Almighty (John 1:17; 14:6; 16:7-13). One must believe the truth (John 8:32), love the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10-12), and obey the truth (I Peter 1:22; Galatians 5:7). It is then that one is freed from sin and sanctified through the power of the truth (John 8:32; 17:17). It is therefore necessary for one to proceed with caution, for truth can be, and often is, distorted and misrepresented (Romans 1:25).

How can it be said that "Truth lies at the bottom of the well?" We shall note:

Truth is often buried deep beneath religious prejudice and human tradition. Often, in order to discover truth, it is necessary to dig deep and remove large layers of prejudice and tradition that truth may see the light of day (II Timothy 2:15; I John 4:1; Matthew 24:4).

Truth is sometimes swamped by mountains of doctrines and commandments of men. Many people never question those who preach the commandments of men, but such a practice is fraught with terrible consequences (Jeremiah 28:15-17; Matthew 15:9; Revelation 22:18-19). Do not be deceived; dig deep, and find the truth in spite of the devil's efforts.

In the minds of countless millions, truth has been inundated by superstitions by the score. Voo-dooism is the practice of witchcraft by which spells, hexes, and trances are said to be cast upon others. Such is a form of ancestor worship, practiced chiefly by the citizens of Haiti, and is characterized by propitiatory rites and communication by trance with animistic


deities.

In Biblical times various forms of superstition were practiced, viz., astrology, charms, divination, enchantments, witchcraft, and wizardry. All such practices are strongly condemned in the Sacred Scriptures, because they destroy one's faith and confidence in the Holy Bible (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). But, alas, these same superstitions are still alive and growing in our modern world. The child of God must beware. Don't permit such foolishness to smother the word of God!

So often personal preferences are permitted to overwhelm the truth of God. Thousands pay no attention to what the Sacred Scriptures say, but they will trust wholeheartedly in what mother or father says, or in their own feelings, or their experiences, whether imaginary or not. Verily, if one trusts in his subjective feelings, he has cast out and discarded the Holy Bible, since he goes by illusory feelings and not according to Sacred Scripture! Many have chosen their own way rather than God's way! This has ever been man's most common problem (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:25).

In all too many instances money has been used to submerge the truth of Almighty God. Be it understood that money, per se, has no character of its own. Rather, it derives its character from its owner. If a good man uses his money for good causes, it is a great blessing; but, on the other hand, if a bad man uses his money for bad causes, it becomes a curse to both God and man.

False teachers know how to "make merchandise" of unsuspecting disciples of Jesus Christ. These false teachers use "feigned words" that can be bought with great sums of money. To illustrate, the Armstrongs have raised \$65 million, Oral Roberts raised \$60 million, Billy Graham has raised \$38 million, Jerry Falwell has raised \$33 million — to name just a few — for the avowed purpose of spreading abroad their respective false doctrines. They thus use dollars to taint the minds of millions with false doctrine. Verily, "Truth lies at the bottom of the well" in such instances. Brethren, take warning!! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.



Words Of Truth
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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Prayer And Miracles



BOBBY DUNCAN

A well known preacher has said: "The need for miracles to authenticate the message of God has passed. But in another sense miracles still happen as God's children, the Christians, call on him through prayer We could not believe in prayer if we did not believe in supernatural power. God's power comes into our world when it fits into his eternal purpose and changes things. That is what a miracle is."

3:16,17; II Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). Therefore, miracles have ceased.

But this is denied by some who contend that, if miracles have ceased, then God cannot answer prayer. This contention presupposes the false idea that God can function only in a miraculous way, and not at all through the laws of nature which he has set in operation. This position makes God inferior to man in this respect: man can utilize the laws of nature to bring about certain desired ends, but God cannot do so. One man can comply with a request made by another man, and do so in complete harmony with natural law. But this theory says that God cannot do so — that the only way God can comply with a request made by a man is to do so by performing a miracle.

This theory says that God made the world, and set in operation certain natural laws which govern and control the world, but the only way God can govern and control the world is by some way other than through these natural laws. This is like saying that a man puts a steering wheel in an automobile with which to steer, but must use some method to steer the automobile other than the steering wheel. It is like saying he installs brakes with which to stop the automobile, but if he wants to stop the automobile he must use some method other than the brakes. This theory not only is contrary to Bible teaching, but also is contrary to common sense.

"But Now..."

In his six volume commentary on *Romans*, D. Martyn Lloyd — Jones states: "These are the words the Apostle gospel . . . He first of all appoints his black . . . and hopeless picture. Then, having done that he says, 'But Now'."



ANCIL JENKINS

A careful study of Paul's writings shows this to be true (See Romans 3:21; 6:22; 7:6; Ephesians 2:13). Paul delights in looking back on the past and then pointing out the change in the Christian. He enumerates a number of sins in the past life of the Corinthians, among them immorality, stealing, drunkenness, and covetousness (I Corinthians 6:9-11). He climaxes by saying, "But such *were* some of you"

His writing to the Colossians again mentions similar things. These people had lived in anger, wrath, malice, slander, and immorality. Paul says they now had died to them and, therefore should not have them in their lives (Colossians 3:2-5).

Only a Christian can truly say he has lived in two different worlds. He lived in the world of slavery to sin and its dominion. He worked and labored for the evil one. His only hope and reward was death.

The Christian rebelled against this life and found a new one completely different. By a submission to Christ the Lord and a surrender of his will, the Christian found complete freedom.

How clearly the line is drawn. There is no middle ground. One has either left the world and found a new life or he has not.

Has this blessing been ours? Can you say, "I once was . . . but now"?

"Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Does an answer to prayer require a miracle? Has God ceased to perform miracles to confirm the word, while continuing to perform miracles to answer prayer? The idea that such is the case is cropping up among brethren with increasing regularity. But miracles have ceased. I Corinthians 13:8-10 points out clearly that they were to last until the completion of God's revelation to man, and then they would cease. Either miracles have ceased, or else the Bible is not yet complete. But the Bible is complete (II Tim.

Truth Or Consequences



ROY FULLER

In the discipline of mathematics two and two equals four. That is an absolute truth, and any other answer would be totally false. In every discipline there are established truths, and anything contrary to established truth is recognized as false. The basis of our educational system rests upon this fundamental premise. Almost all people accept this principle when it comes to learning and mental development in the secular disciplines. However, when it comes to spiritual discipline, these same rules are often rejected, and confusion is the end result. Myriad are the excuses which men offer in defense of their religious beliefs, many of which are in direct contradiction of God's established truth.

I fear that most are like one man with whom I was involved in a series of Bible studies. He was a good man, a religious man, but on every important point he would only answer, "I'll just go by what my pastor says." We had a good relationship, but it became apparent that he was unwilling to heed the admonition of Paul: "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Paul also

says: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables" (II Tim. 4:3,4). A fable is defined as myth or fiction. While it may be scripturally oriented, if it is not scripturally TRUE, it is false and destructive.

Jesus said: "Ye shall know the TRUTH, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32). He prayed: "Sanctify them through thy TRUTH, thy WORD is TRUTH" (Jno. 17:17). Peter said: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the TRUTH through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22). John said: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in TRUTH" (II Jno. 4). These and many other passages make it abundantly clear that we must make the choice to obey the TRUTH or suffer the CONSEQUENCES. Paul said: "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2:8-9). Many well meaning religious people will be turned away in the judgment for lack of following God's truth. Jesus 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). Obey the truth or suffer the consequences; the choice is ours. God wants every man to obey his TRUTH. — Rt. 4 Box 479 Elba, AL 36323.

Living With Death

Hardly any experience in life can equal the pain and sorrow of the death of a loved one. Properly accepted and dealt with, the experience of grief can make one stronger. Met and handled in a faulty way, it can leave one weakened and sick. Since grief never waits for an invitation, the best time to prepare for it is before it strikes.

Emotional Stages in Dealing with Death

We can better cope with death if we know what to expect from our own emotions. Psychologists have noted ten emotional stages, common in those dealing with death.

First comes a *state of shock* which may last from a few hours to a few days. Shock is a temporary escape from reality, a natural anesthesia that blunts the pain.

Then comes *emotional release* when it dawns on us how dreadful is the loss. We should allow ourselves to express these deep emotions. Suppressed grief is an unhealthy situation. Even big men can and should cry at such times. Jesus did (John 11:35).

Depression, loneliness and isolation are next. It is common to feel that no one understands, not even God. When such depression occurs, remember that such is not unique to you, that all are vulnerable to these feelings, and that it will soon pass away. David asked himself, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . Hope then in God, who is the help of my countenance . . ." (Psalms 42:11).

There may be some symptoms of physical distress. Loss of appetite, chest pains, faintness, etc. David describes a condition in Psalms 73:26: "My flesh and my heart faileth, But God is the strength of my heart . . ."

One may become panicky. We can think of nothing but our loss; we find ourselves unable to meet responsibilities; we may worry about our own mental stability. There is a temptation to run away from the world. Such were the emotions Jeremiah once faced (Jeremiah 9:1-2).

It is common to feel a sense of guilt about one's loss. We recall conflicts and disagreements. We reflect on unkept promises. We wonder if we did our best to meet their needs? At such times we need to pray as did David, "Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity . . ." (Psalms 51:1-2). Unresolved guilt and misunderstood emotions can haunt us for years, making life miserable.

As one moves away from depression to expression of grief there may well be hostility and resentment. We may lash out at doctors and nurses for allowing our loved one to die, or at other family members for their failures during the period of illness. It may be the funeral director, or even the minister whom we are angry with. Sometimes the mourner is angry with God for allowing such misfortune to come. It is a moral human emotion to be resentful when we lose something that is precious to us.

For a while one may be unable to return to his regular daily duties, we can't seem to concentrate on our work. We can't bear to enter the house alone. We just can't stand to dispose of their possessions. At this point a person needs the compassionate help and understanding of family and fellow Christians to bear these burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Gradually, hope will begin to emerge, though it may take weeks or months. God helps the heart to heal even as does the body. David wrote, "This I



JOHN WADDEY

know, that God is for me" (Psalms 56:9). With Paul, the broken hearted can say, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Finally we accept the reality of our loss. Things will never be exactly the same as before, but we can contemplate the fact of our loss without losing control; we can function in our normal roles. We even find ourselves able to comfort and assist others in their sorrow (II Corinthians 1:4). We have learned by our experience that Christ is with us always (Matthew 28:20).

Edgar Jackson, noted authority on dealing with death warns against certain acts that hinder rather than help one when death comes.

Don't condemn yourself. It will not make anything better. We cannot reverse the clock at this point, but condemning oneself will hinder the process of healing and getting back to normal.

Do not drug yourself. This is a common suggestion today. In some rare cases medication may be necessary, but generally speaking it will only postpone the facing of our grief.

Don't feel sorry for yourself. Self-pity is futile and it harms by distorting your true situation.

Do not run away. The part of you that is hurt will go with you wherever you flee. The best place for re-adjustment is where we must continue to live.

Don't withdraw from life. To separate oneself from friends and family robs us of the best source of help and strength for the future.

Try not to pay too much attention to what others say. Even friends with best intentions may say the wrong things and pierce your heart. Try to make allowances for their ill-chosen words.

Avoid crossing bridges until you come to them. One can easily be overwhelmed with uncertainty and apprehension about the unknown future. Don't try to make important decisions while you are off balance. When things are calmer, then determine your assets and liabilities. There will be a solution to every problem.

You must not underestimate yourself. You have strengths and resources you have never had to use. They will be discovered in time of crises. A Christian will be more than a conqueror through Christ (Romans 8:37-39).

Facing the Future

Move slowly when making important decisions that cannot be easily reversed. Don't sell a home too soon. In a few months you might regret it. Be slow to move in with relatives on a permanent basis. That demands another major change in one's life. Take sufficient time before entering a second marriage. Such decisions made with a lonely, broken heart are sometimes poorly suited for the long haul.

Keep on the front lines of life. Force yourself to associate with people. Engage in those activities that will challenge you to grow.

Don't let bitterness and resentment take residence in your heart (Ephesians 4:31). Such will poison the well of life.

Be kind to yourself. You are going to have to spend a lot of time with yourself in the days ahead. Don't spoil that. Don't let other folks make your choices for you. Good intentioned friends and relatives sometimes want to move us, marry us, or manipulate us in moments like these. Choose your own course of action. Life is short and too precious to waste. Make the most of every day.

Allow others to help you bear your burdens (Galatians 6:2). Look to the Lord for help (Psalms 55:22). Let Scripture be your solace. "This is my comfort in my afflictions; For thy word hath quickened me" (Psalms 119:50).

"God hath not promised

Sun without rain,

Joy without sorrow,

Peace without pain.

But God hath promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for the labor,
Light for the way,
Grace for the trials,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love."

Annie Johnson Flynt

(The author is indebted to Edgar Jackson for much of this lesson.) — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Baptism

For The Dead

The Mormons claim I Corinthians 15:29 as a proof text for the authority to baptize for the dead. It seems very strange that their own writings teach against this very doctrine. Joseph Smith wrote in the book of Alma 34:35: "For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even unto death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked." Certainly from this writing, one could not get the impression that Joseph Smith taught baptism for the dead. But at any rate, the Mormons claim to have over five-billion names on record for whom a Mormon has been baptized.

Let us now look at I Corinthians 15:29. It reads, "Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?" Notice, there were some among them teaching there is no resurrection from the dead: "Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (v. 12). Paul, in the context of I Corinthians 15:12-29, is refuting the idea that there is no resurrection from the dead.

The "they" of verse 29 are the ones of verse 12, who taught there was no resurrection from the dead. This is why Paul asks the question in verse 29, "Why are you baptized for the dead, if the dead are not raised?" After all, many of the Corinthians were baptized in view of the dead (cf. Acts 18:8).

Not only do the scriptures affirm we are baptized for our dead bodies, but also in view of the resurrection from the dead. We are baptized for two reasons: (1) Because Christians at one time possessed a body dead in sin. Paul teaches this in Romans 6:4-6: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in



GEORGE REED

The Danger With "Icing On The Cake"

(No. 1)

It is a great temptation for many polemicists, after having made a fairly cogent case, to wind up with a little something extra to go along with their work as so much "icing on the cake." For instance, many Christian apologists have concluded the presentation of their case by appealing to an argument (?) akin to the celebrated "wager" of Blaise Pascal (1623-62) who, it is said, bet his soul on the truthfulness of "Christianity" (i.e., a Jansenist Catholicism) against unbelief. Pascal is associated with the form of apologetic which implicitly assumes that all men are forced to choose between only two possible options in life or world views. Either Christianity (in Pascal's understanding, Roman Catholicism) is true, or atheistic naturalism is true. The second stage of the wager suggests that inevitably we must choose between one or the other of these two options. If we choose to believe in atheistic naturalism, if true, then we are of all men most miserable (or should be) while living, and will know nothing at all after death. But, if atheistic naturalism is false (with the assumption being that the only alternative is Christianity), then in this life there is no hope and in the world to come eternal punishment! On the other hand, if we choose to believe in Christianity, if true, then we are blessed abundantly in this life with a sense of purpose, protection and peace, and manifold more in the life to come. But, if Christianity is false (with the assumption being that the only alternative is atheistic naturalism), then in our sincere delusion we still win out with a sense of purpose, protection, and peace in this life, and will know nothing after death to disappoint us. Clearly, the advocates of this view maintain, Christianity is by far the better bet!

However, as comforting as this approach may appear to some, the dangerous — and wholly unfounded — assumption is that there are but two possible options between which to choose. By what rhyme or reason should anyone be theoretically confined to but two alternatives? Why don't these gamblers take into consideration the virtually infinite number of possibilities or alternatives which might be vying for the status of world view? To be sure, there are but two basic (or broadest possible) world views, i.e., naturalism or theism. Practically, it is irrelevant which form of naturalism one chooses (for all forms limit our lives to earthly existence only). But, it is especially relevant to everything you do in life which form of theism (or, supernaturalism) you choose.

For example, suppose the wagerer who opts for Christianity is really wrong after all. Would this mean the only place he could possibly go after death is into a peaceful oblivion, or nothingness? What if, after all, both the Christian and atheist are wrong, and Mohammedanism is the truth? If so, then the foolish Christian who bet his soul on his system without examining the evidence against it and that on behalf of Islam will suffer in hell with its "scorching wind and shadow of black smoke" where he must drink boiling water. He will be joined there by the foolish atheist.

Suppose that Judaism is still the one true religion of God; then, the foolish Christian, atheist, and Moslem will lose their souls (cf. I Cor. 15:12-19). Theoretically, we could go on forever naming possibilities (options or, alternative world views) and their antitheses which have been affirmed or denied by some men at some time. It is even within the realm



PHILLIP GRAY

of hypothetical possibility that no living human being has as yet discovered how man got here, why he is here, and where he goes after death, and that it still remains for some truth seeker to learn the right answer to these questions. So, it may be seen how that the wager is so very, very foolish, since it fails to take into serious consideration all possible options. Therefore, the Christian apologist should be careful

to present legitimate evidence for the veracity of his case. We have left for us "many infallible proofs" upon which to rest our faith. There is no need for adopting such an attenuated (and untenable) form of apologetic as Pascal's wager. (In our next installment, we shall notice how this kind of thinking is reflected in our defense of other important doctrines.)—P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441.

Euphemisms



BARRY FIKE

As Christians, most of us have no problem with not saying such things as, "Oh, my God," "Jesus Christ," or "Oh, Lord" in a manner not befitting the name. When such statements are said in a flippant or profane manner we realize that God becomes disgusted with such (Deut. 5:11). Such usage would be taking the name of the Lord in vain (Ex. 20:7). We realize that the name of God allows him to reveal himself to mankind (Ex. 3:13-15). We worship God by calling on his name (I Kings 18:24,26,36,37). We fear, praise, and glorify God's name (Deut. 28:58,59; II Sam. 22:50; Ps. 86:9). We do not profane his name nor blaspheme it (Lev. 24:16).

God has always called for his name to be used in a manner worthy of respect and worship. We wouldn't think of using his name in vain, would we? Or would we?

Have you heard of terms called euphemisms? They are the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant. It's the substitution of a word or phrase less offensive or objectionable. Euphemisms fall under the title of acceptable English and are used frequently by many members of the church and their children. After all, if Big Bird and Charlie Brown can say "Gosh" and "Golly" what's wrong with it?

Get your dictionary down and go through the following list and see if this isn't what your dictionary says is the definition.

Gee is a contraction of the word *Jesus*. It is a slang term used as an interjection to express surprise or enthusiasm. It is in effect to say Jesus! *Whiz* is a slang term meaning excellent, something applied to a clever person or thing of excellence; wizard. Put the two together and you have the idea that Jesus is a clever person or a wizard. The problem is that you have used the Son of God's name in vain as an exclamatory statement. It did not praise nor worship him. See if that is not the problem with the following.

Gosh is an interjection for the word *God*. It is a slang expression indicating surprise. It is a softened form of *God*, used as a mild oath.

Golly is an exclamation of surprise, a euphemism for *God*.

Good gracious, good grief, my goodness, goodness sake, goodness knows, thank goodness, etc. are all exclamatory statements; all mild oaths. Where the word *good* or *gracious* is used for the word *God* an oath has been declared. They are all in reference to the goodness of God, but they are used as slang for

emphasis to another statement.

Heavens, good heavens, for heaven's sake, etc. are all statements of exclamatory character, in which the heavens are called to witness the truth of the statement made.

All such expressions when used as slang, and in such a flippant fashion, violate our Lord's injunction of Matt. 5:34-37: "But let your communication be, yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of EVIL." That certainly should tell us something!

This is not to say that we cannot use the name of God in our conversation when such usage is reverent, respectful, and sober. Such usage is indeed Biblical. We read of many in the Bible saying, "God forbid," "if God wills," and "the Lord grant mercy." Such usage is correct because the name of God is used in the proper manner.

Let us shy away from such meaningless phrases which slander our Lord and Savior's name and cling to that "which becomes sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1). — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

Baptism For The Dead

Continued from page 3

bondage to sin" (cf. Eph. 2:1-3). (2) The sinner is baptized in view of the dead, that is, the resurrection from the dead. Lenski shows this very point:

He [Paul] calls them *oi baptizomenoi uper ton nekron*, which we render, "They are baptized with a view to the dead." The tense of the participle lays no stress on the element of the time, which is true also with regard to the following verb *baptizontai*. It is, therefore, not in the contrast to the aorist and the past. The present timeless participle describes those who receive baptism at any time, whether in the past, meaning they that are now being baptized in distinction from others who were baptized before this time or to be baptized in the distant future (*The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 689).

The expression "*hyper ton nekron*" in the Greek is translated "for the dead." This is the genitive case, but in English this is called the possessive case. Thus, they were being baptized for something they themselves possess. Man possesses a body of sin (Rom. 6:1-6; Eph. 2:13). And in order to get rid of the sin, he must be baptized to be in the likeness of Christ's resurrection (Rom. 6:5).

Paul is saying, in I Corinthians 15:29, "Why be baptized for your dead bodies, if they (your dead bodies) are not raised? Also, if your dead bodies are not going to be raised from the dead, why then were you baptized in view of the resurrection?" Our text (I Cor. 15:29) teaches: (1) We are baptized for the old man, the dead man (Rom. 6:6), and (2) in view of the resurrection from the dead. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.



Words Of



(USPS 6)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, MAY 20, 1983

NUMBER 20

The Timothy Gerald Romine Memorial Scholarship

When, oh when will man learn that drinking and driving don't mix? On April 17, 1983, alcohol snuffed out the life of one of the finest Christian young men I have ever known. Alcohol is truly one of Satan's great evils.

Timothy Gerald Romine, the son of Gerald and Louise Romine of Roanoke, Ala. was killed by a drunk driver. This man was so intoxicated that he made a U-turn on I-65 near Cullman, Ala. and started back toward Birmingham and the oncoming traffic. A head-on collision with Tim's car was the tragic result of this action.

Death came to this exceptional Christian young man as heartache and pain came to one of the sweetest families I've ever been privileged to know. The pain, sorrow, and disappointment cannot be measured.

Alcohol is the devil's brew and it wreaks heartache, misery, tears and sorrow wherever and whenever it is used. It has nothing of value to offer man, but its fruits are always devastating. ALCOHOL, DEATH and HEARTBREAK go hand in hand.

The Bible is filled with warnings against the use of alcohol. However, like many other things, man will not obey God's instructions. Man's rebellion to God will produce havoc, disorder and tragedy. Prov. 23:31-32 says, "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." The Bible says "look not." These words do not suggest moderation, but total abstinence from intoxicating drink.

Brother George W. DeHoff had this to say about these verses: "Here the wise man paints with



DEMAR ELAM

unforgettable strokes a picture of a drunkard — immoral, insensible, and irresponsible. If the use of lighter wines of low alcoholic content in the day of a primitive culture produced such miseries (Prov. 23:21-35), who can estimate the tragic consequences of distilled alcoholic beverages (dating from only about the 11th century A.D.) of high alcoholic content in a society throbbing with the pressures of our culture and moving with the speed of the jet age. If drunkenness was so damaging in the time of unmechanized travel, what could be said about alcohol and its part in the highway slaughter of our modern high speed transportation system."

Paul wrote in Eph. 5:18: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Drunkenness is spoken of as a work of the flesh in Gal. 5:21 and those who practice such *shall not* inherit the kingdom of God.

I'm hurt inside and angry that the sinful use of alcohol has brought death and heartache to a lovely family like the Romines. They are not alone, as this same tragic event happens repeatedly in our society.

Dare any man who wears the name Christian advocate in a Bible class or anywhere that there is nothing wrong with a little social drinking? Neither the Romines nor the thousands of others sharing the like sorrows will ever be convinced of that fact.

Brethren, let Christians everywhere rise up and speak more strongly against the use of alcoholic beverages. We must speak loud enough and long enough to be heard regarding this evil!

A scholarship fund has been set up at Freed-Hardeman College, where Tim was a student, as a memorial to this fine young man. Tim was planning to become a gospel preacher like his father Gerald Romine, who has preached the gospel faithfully for many years.

This scholarship will be awarded to a young man desiring to preach the gospel and needing financial assistance to attend school. If you would like to contribute to this scholarship fund with a memorial gift, please send it to Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, TN, or to the Roanoke Church of Christ,

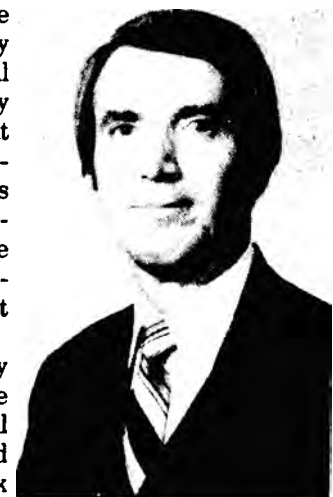
P.O. Box 688, Roanoke, AL 36274. Please write on the check that it is for the Tim Romine scholarship fund. We trust and pray that the preachers that this scholarship will help to produce, will in turn preach the gospel with such power that lives will be changed and many such tragedies eliminated in the lives of others. — P.O. Box 623 Forest Park, GA 30051.

Falling From Grace

Can a child of God, one who has been saved by the blood of Christ, fall away and be eternally lost? The answer to that question is an unequivocal yes. This fact is clearly taught throughout the Bible. There are more than 2,500 warnings in the Bible against man's falling away.


God has solemnly warned that if his people forsake him, then he will forsake them. David told Solomon, "If thou seek him, he will be found; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (I Chron. 28:9). God, through Azariah, said to Asa, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chron. 15:2). If you forsake God, "he will forsake you." Never forget that!

God, through the prophet Ezekiel, declared the soul that sins shall die, or be eternally lost. This includes the righteous who turn their backs upon God



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Error Which Does & Does Not Condemn



BOBBY DUNCAN

Those who advocate extending fellowship to denominationalism sometimes make the argument which, on the surface, seems valid, but which falls down under scrutiny. The argument goes something like this: we extend fellowship to many with whom we differ over such things as the hat question, the unpardonable sin, etc. Then we should have no trouble extending fellowship to those with whom we differ on matters

such as instrumental music, the frequency of the Lord's supper, the design of baptism, etc. And then the question is asked: "Why will you fellowship error on one point, but refuse to fellowship error on another?" Though this kind of reasoning has led many astray, only a little reflection will reveal its fallacy.

In the first place, if this reasoning is followed to its logical conclusion, fellowship could not be withheld from anyone, regardless of the doctrine he teaches. For how could we extend fellowship to those in error on one point, but refuse to extend fellowship to those in error on another? If it is right to extend fellowship to those in error on the hat question, then it would be wrong to exclude those in error on the music question. And since this is the case, it would be inconsistent to exclude from fellowship one simply because he is in error on the subject of baptism or the Lord's supper. And then what right would we have to decide that those who are in error on the subject of the virgin birth or the resurrection of Christ should not be included in our fellowship? As a matter of fact, the denial of the very existence of God would not be grounds for withholding fellowship, if this reasoning were followed to its logical conclusion!

Why is it right to extend fellowship to those who are in error on one thing, but wrong to extend fellowship to those in error on another? There are two kinds of error: (1) error which does not deter one from a course of action in harmony with the will of God, and (2) error which leads to a course of action out of harmony with the will of God.

There are any number of errors which one may believe which do not directly affect his manner of life or his religious practice in an adverse way. Some in Paul's day obviously held erroneous views regarding the eating of certain meats (Rom. 14; I Cor. 8). But these views did not cause them to follow a course of action out of harmony with the will of God, and those who knew the truth were exhorted to receive them (Rom. 14:1). Some during the first century believed circumcision to be a requirement of God (Acts 15:1). Their believing this error would have brought about no violation of the will of God, had it not been for the fact that they sought to force their views upon their brethren. This action constituted perverting the gospel and brought upon them the anathema of God (Gal. 1:6-9). One's belief of error will not damn his

soul unless his erroneous views lead him into a course of action out of harmony with the will of God. If he is living in harmony with the will of God he has fellowship with God and with other faithful saints (I Jno. 1:9).

But there are other errors which, if believed, will directly affect one's life and religious practice so as to turn him aside from the will of God. If one's belief of error causes him to go beyond the doctrine of Christ, he is out of fellowship with God (II Jno. 9). If one does not know enough truth to live in harmony with the will of God, he cannot be free from sin (Jno. 8:32). If one's belief of error caused him to worship according to the doctrines and commandments of men, his worship would be vain (Matt. 15:8,9). If the belief of error led one to be a member of a religious institution not authorized by God, he would be "rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). If his belief of error led him to preach a perverted gospel, the curse of God would rest upon him (Gal. 1:6-9). God has no fellowship with those who believe this kind of error. And he neither expects nor tolerates our extending Christian fellowship to those with whom he has no fellowship.

The familiar Old Testament story of the prophet of God who lost his life as the result of believing error will serve to illustrate the difference between error that condemns and error that does not. This man of God had been charged: "Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest" (I Ki. 13:9). But the old lying prophet told him: "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water" (v. 18). Believing this lie, the man of God violated God's instructions, and paid with his life. The error which he believed was of such nature that it caused him to follow a course out of harmony with the directions of God.

But suppose instead, the lying prophet had simply convinced him that God wanted him to hurry on home, being careful to carry his staff in his left hand all the way. This would be just as much a lie as the lie he believed, but the consequences would not be the same. For believing this lie, and acting accordingly, he would still not be following a course out of harmony with the instruction God had actually given him.

For one to be in error on some point that does not affect the faithful performance of his duty to God is one thing. But it is another for one to hold to error that would keep him from faithful obedience to God. The former we may and should include in our fellowship. The latter we may not.

A preacher's audience will lose confidence in the well if every visit to the pump exhausts the water.

* * *

Nowadays we have sermonettes by preacherettes for Christianettes.

* * *

If people generally cared as much for their souls as they do their looks, the preachers would soon be out of a job.

Falling From Grace

Continued from page 1

(Ezek. 18:20-24).

The great apostle Paul warned God's people of the danger of falling. He said, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). As the apostle considered his own personal responsibility, 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" (I Cor. 9:27). Though he was a faithful apostle of Christ, Paul realized that it was possible for him to be lost.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews warned Christian people against the danger of falling in these words: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13). This admonition makes absolutely no sense, unless it is possible for the child of God to sin and be lost eternally.

The apostle Peter made it absolutely clear that a child of God may fall away and be lost. He wrote, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Peter 2:20-21). The people under consideration in this passage are obviously Christians and it is clearly implied that it is possible for them to fall away.

There cannot be any doubt about the possibility of a child of God's being lost in view of the passages of scripture presented. Such should challenge our thinking and induce more faithful obedience to God's holy commandments. — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Al. 36609.

A preacher in Alabama was recently fired for two reasons. First, he had a poor delivery. Second, he never had very much to deliver.

Why I Am Glad To Be A Christian

The book of Philippians is a joyous section of the Bible. In the very heart of the New Testament this great epistle puts heart into serving Christ. No other letter provides such peace and contentment. The brethren at Philippi were truly the crowning achievement of Paul's labors in the Gospel. The glorious message of truth hit European soil first in this city named for Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great!



JOHNNY RAMSEY

In Acts 16 one can read the background and introduction to the four chapters of Philippians. Perhaps the pace of Paul's work, in the midst of persecution, forms the vibrant hues that make Philippians so rich a treatise on the Christian's happiness. I often wonder if we ever seriously contemplate why we ought to be deeply grateful — personally — for the cause of our blessed Lord? Here are four reasons that I am glad to be a Christian.

(1) *It makes Every Day A Challenge.* Any other existence, apart from serving Jesus, is dull and boring. The sameness of worldliness cannot compare with the tempo and variety of Christianity. We are constantly challenged to grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18). The maturity Christ demands of his followers is one of the supreme values of the gospel age (Romans 12:1-2). There is no place in the kingdom for stagnation or backsliding (Hebrews 10:38-39). The high ethics of Christianity should propel us into not only a closer walk with God but also into a more useful sojourn among our fellows. Seldom do we ever do our best without a challenge. Our Savior always provides us with the most noble reason for living and for going beyond previous accomplishments (Hebrews 6:1).

(2) *It Makes Living Worthwhile.* How sad, empty, and worthless life would be were it not for Christianity! What would we do with our lives? Our energies would be spent on lesser, mundane interests. Our days upon earth would be fruitless, vain and misspent. In Philippians 1:21 we learn that Christ is *life*. As John 10:10 affirms, he gives *abundant living* for his loyal devotees. The aims and aspirations and goals of those untouched by Jesus end at the grave but the gospel thrust transcends this old, wicked world and eventuates on a golden street in glory (Revelation 21:3-5). Each day in the Lord becomes a wondrous adventure — a divine romance (Psalms 85:10) as we allow Christ to be the *purpose, pattern, prize and power* of our very existence. I would certainly hate not to be a Christian in times like these.

(3) *It Makes Dying Bearable.* The long, lonely lives of humanity march incessantly to the grave. The teeming millions finally die and fill the cemeteries to overflowing. So many are placed within those silent chambers without hope or meaning of future. Death is feared by thousands, not only because it is an unknown experience, but also because so many do not know the One who controls our destiny! There is a world of difference in a funeral service for a faithful child of God and one conducted for a person of the world who lived and died outside of Christ (Galatians 3:27; II Corinthians 5:17). To a sincere soldier of the Lord, who dies in battle (I Timothy 6:12) for the Master — against Satan — death becomes an angel that transports the Christians near to the heart of God (Revelation 2:10). As the evening shadows fall over the dying form of one who loved and served the Redeemer the world might hear an old gospel song:

"Oh, who will come and go with me

I am bound for the promised land."

(4) *It Gives Hope A Meaning.* According to Romans 8:24 and 15:13 we are saved by hope as it provides both joy and peace in believing. This *anchor of the soul* (Hebrews 6) endures to the very end (I Peter 1:9-13). It undergirds our faith and blesses our hearts and soul. Some men hope to be millionaires but Christians have treasures that never fade and riches never subject to the whims of the stock market (Matthew 6:19-21). Holding to God's unchanging hand means that a door is always open in Heaven (Revelation 4:1) and a song of victory is always in our

hearts....

"And my soul with hope He filleth,
Though future plans are dim.
Thus I wait for His returning.
Such the joyful song of morning,
Such tranquil song of evening."

These are some of the basic reasons that I am glad to be a Christian but they actually only touch the hem of the garment. May God help us ever to be grateful for the marvelous blessings of the gospel! — Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088.

The Conversion Of Saul

Saul's first entrance into holy writ finds him holding the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death. Luke records, "And Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts 8:1). When we next read of him he is seeking to stamp Christianity from the earth (Acts 9:1).

Saul was an ultra-zealous persecutor. With letters received from the high priest, he journeyed to Damascus. He went to the synagogues "that if he found any of this way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:2).

On the road to Damascus, he saw a light above the brightness of the noonday sun (Acts 22:6; 26:13). He heard a voice speak in the Hebrew language (Acts 26:14). Those that were "with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man" (Acts 9:7). Saul, who is referred to as Paul from chapter 13 on in the New Testament, tells of seeing the Lord. He said, "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8). Nothing is said about Paul's being converted or saved on the road to Damascus.

He was blinded by the light and led into Damascus. There he was three days without sight, food or drink (Acts 9:9). During this period of time he was in a prayerful penitent mood (Acts 9:11).

Saul had a conversation with the voice he heard. The voice said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (vs. 4). Saul asked the voice to identify itself. "And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (vs. 5). Saul, trembling and astonished, responded with a question. He asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord's answer was, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (vs. 6).

Most preachers today would answer, "You believe and there is nothing else for you to do to be saved, but we would like for you to join our church." One very prominent creed states "... penitent sinners are justified or accounted righteous only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1968, pg. 46). Another quotation is "wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort" (ibid, pg. 39). The first quotation contradicts itself. It states one must repent. It then states that salvation is "only by faith." The "Discipline" states salvation is by faith only, but James says, "What doth it profit,



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:14-16). Lest someone say James was speaking to the child of God and not the alien, let us notice the following statement. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the demons believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:19-20). He further says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). It is folly to place faith and works in conflict. Saving faith is faith strong enough to manifest itself in works.

The Lord sent a man named Ananias to heal Saul's vision and tell him what to do to be saved. Though he was prayerful and penitent, he needed to know what to do to be saved. Ananias was afraid to go because of Saul's efforts to destroy the church. "But the Lord said unto him, 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: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (vs. 15-16).

When Saul had received his sight and Ananias had stated his mission, Ananias called upon Saul to make a momentous decision. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul tells about his conversion in Romans 6:3-5. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection." Paul said the new life came after the resurrection from the watery grave. If he was saved before baptism, he was saved yet in his sins. He was baptized to wash away his sins.

Paul immediately began to preach Christ in the synagogues where he intended to arrest and persecute the followers of Christ. Instead of persecuting, he became the persecuted. After the Jews took counsel to kill him, "the disciples took him by night and let him down by the wall in a basket" (vs 23-25).

Saul's conversion does not differ from other conversions in the book of Acts. Let the same message produce faith in your heart. Repent of your sins. Be baptized to wash away your sins. Arise to walk a new life. Let the Lord add you to his church. — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

Suggestions For Bible School Teachers

(1) *Make certain that you have read and studied your lesson.* No one can teach that which he/she does not know (II Timothy 2:15; I Timothy 4:13; II Peter 3:18).

(2) *Try different methods of gaining and holding the attention of your pupils.* Jesus, the Master teacher, used object lessons, parables, current events, various passages from the Old Testament, and the like. That teacher who is well-read, and who has an expanding mind, will ever have ample information which he/she can pass on to students of God's holy word. Look for interesting ways of presenting the truth of God!

(3) *Use language that can be understood by your class.* Sixteen-cylinder, jaw-beaker words are out of place. Common, ordinary, everyday words are the best under most circumstances. When you use words like covenant, baptism, repentance, faith, Old Testament, New Testament, church, the Lord's Supper, and other Bible terms, make certain that the students in your class know what they mean. It is folly to keep talking about things which pupils do not understand. Do not assume they understand; explain these and all other terms (II Peter 3:15-17).

(4) *Insist on class participation.* Somehow draw each student into class study. Make each pupil feel that he is a part of the class. Do not ignore any one, but make a special effort to draw that quiet and retiring little boy or girl into Bible school discussions.

(5) *Remind the class that it is in God's presence, and that it should act accordingly.* When Moses saw the burning bush, God said to him: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:1-6). When students assemble in the presence of God to study his divine word, they are indeed on "holy ground." All foolishness and misbehavior should be left outside the door. The class period is not a circus where the students are gathered together for fun and frolic.

(6) *Don't be afraid to review past lessons, but refrain from spending so much time in reviewing till you get so far behind it is impossible to catch up.* Reviews can be profitable or unprofitable. Teacher, keep your class moving; if the class lags behind, it will soon become conscious of this fact and lose interest. One preacher whom I heard preached on Genesis 1:1, each Sunday night, for a solid year, but, at the end of his series of lessons, he had spent so much time in reviewing what he had said before, he was still reviewing when the last sermon was presented.

(7) *Make the lesson relevant and pertinent to your students.* If you know your students this will be easy. It is in this manner that lessons are made alive, because they fill the needs of real boys and girls. If lessons are presented in such an abstract manner, they will hold little interest for the average person.

(8) *Listen to each member of your class, and you will soon learn if certain subjects need to be taught.* Their speech will reveal their understanding or betray their misunderstanding. When more information is needed you should be able to supply it. If correction is in order, you should use the Bible to set things straight (II Timothy 3:15-17).

(9) *Teacher, insofar as the success of your class is concerned, you are its most important member.* You set the tone and the direction of the class period. Here are some things you should do: Be present, in the



W. A. HOLLEY

class room, ahead of time. Be there ready to greet each child, ready to discuss and answer any Bible questions that may arise.

(10) *The first requirement for the Bible Class Teacher is to be a Christian, not nominally, but in deed and in truth.* No person has a right to teach a Bible class in the Lord's assembly who is not a Christian! Be much in prayer; manifest a genuine interest in the spiritual welfare of each pupil, as well as in his physical welfare. Some of the wonderful

assets needed are: kindness, helpfulness, gentleness. Try to be tactful, resourceful, but urging progress through enthusiasm and optimism. That teacher who has soured on the world has little chance of success. Leave your personal or family problems at home; do not take them into class. They will surely be recognized by your class, and thus a dark foreboding cloud will cast its pall over the class. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

I Saw A Man Kill Himself

It was a beautiful spring afternoon. I was just about to enter a local bank for my weekly transaction of business. Then I heard three rounds of rapid pistol shots. Automatically I turned toward the direction of the sounds and looked at a man across the street with a pistol in his hand. In a moment of time, he placed the gun to his temple and pulled the trigger. I heard the sickening sound of another pistol shot.

The man slumped to the ground. The bizarre events were over in a matter of seconds. I, along with others, had become an unwilling witness to a terrible tragedy. The man had tried unsuccessfully to murder a person in a parked car and then murdered himself. To say the least, it was a very unnerving experience.

I am not a novice regarding people dying. Death has been a part of my life since I was ten years old when my oldest brother was killed in World War II. As a preacher and friend, I have been associated with death in many ways. I have been in a hospital room when the spirit of a Christian lady took flight, relieving her of the intense pain caused by cancer. I have entered a hospital room just seconds after a small boy gave up the struggle with death and his precious spirit went to be with the Lord. I vividly recall the Sunday evening as I was about to get into my car to go to worship when my neighbor cried for help. Her husband was dying with a heart attack. I tried in vain to get assistance, but my friend died while his wife and I stood helplessly by, praying and



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

hoping that the rescue squad would arrive in time. And, I've lost track of the occasions when I have been with grieving families when death came to claim their loved ones, but, I had never seen a person take his own life. You just don't forget the horrible scene.

Life is so precious. Man was made in the likeness of his Creator. Cain was sorely punished for taking the life of his brother. God prescribed punishment for those wicked people who had no respect for human life (Genesis 9:5,6). "Thou shalt not kill (murder)" was a part of the law of God, known to mankind today (Exodus 20:13). Jesus even restricts our intimate thoughts regarding our feelings for others (Matthew 5:21,22). The civil government is sanctioned to mete out punishment to violators, certainly those who take the life of their fellowman (Romans 13).

Self-destruction (murder) gives the offender no opportunity of repentance, reform, and forgiveness. Only God knows the state of mind of the individual committing the awful deed. Mental disorders sometimes motivate the deed. Some, however, have no regard for human life, even their own. How sad for the spirit of man to be hurled out into eternity without God and without hope. Eternal destruction and despair await him.

As children of light in a world of darkness, we should endeavor to inform others of God's love, the value of man, the salvation in Christ, the assurances and hope for the Christian. That life is beautiful and meaningful. That there are no problems so great but that we cannot find help from God and good people.

Fatalism is the fruit of a world living apart from God who is loving and caring. Our present society is trying to solve problems apart from divine guidance. It can never be done, individually or collectively. Christ is still the hope of mankind. It is the privilege of the Christian to teach the message of redemption and hope to a world seemingly determined to destroy itself. — 115 Sheila Blvd. Prattville, Alabama 36067.

What Makes You Weep?

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion" (Psalm 137:1). So said the Psalmist long ago when from Babylonian captivity the children of Israel remembered fallen Jerusalem. There would be no songs of joy; their harps were already hung upon the willows. Jerusalem had fallen, spiritual decay had brought her to her knees, and those who feared Jehovah wept over it all.

Old Jerusalem is no more, but we have come unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. There is spiritual decay about us. Our nation reels, seemingly having no certain direction to it; it laughs



DAN JENKINS

at sin, mocks God and has lost its ability to blush. Yet where are the weepers? There are problems in His kingdom. Eternal truths are called traditions, concerned brethren are ridiculed, disfellowshipping is a forgotten commandment, preaching has become lecturing, and Christ's body is classed as "another denomination." Yet where are the weepers? There are problems in our own lives. There are fewer Bible readers and almost no Bible students, homes have become dormitories and nothing more, self-control has become a lost virtue and tongues run wild, faith is lost and worry and anxiety prevail. Yet where are the weepers?

People still weep. Disappointment over failure to attain an earthly goal will make some weep; the fact that others are honored rather than self will grieve some; when others have more than "I" will concern others — but all of these are selfish weeping, weeping over things that really do not matter. Where are those who are really concerned about things that do matter? What are you weeping about? — 125 Dory Road S North Palm Beach, FL 33408.



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 19

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NUMBER 21

The Sinner's Prayer

At the request of a prisoner in Thomaston, Maine, to come study with him, we have a very good prison ministry. The prisoner had been taking several correspondence courses, one of which was ours. In studying with him the subject of prayer arose. In so many words, he asked, "Since I am a sinner, how can I pray to God?" The Bible does teach us "that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). I think this scripture holds the key to his question. We also read in the Bible, in some cases, God does hear a sinner. Let us study a few to see the real truth of John 9:31.



CHARLES N. CRUMP

Lydia, in Acts 16, has direct bearing on what was written in John 9:31. She was a worshipper and prayed to God (v. 13-14). She and other women were meeting for worship on the Sabbath. Paul and company came teaching them God's truth. They heard, believed and obeyed (v. 13-15). The fact Paul was called into that country (v. 9-10) shows God's love and concern for those who were worshipping, praying, and seeking his truth. Just as God will help a person believe a lie (II Thessalonians 2:11) he will also help those seeking in finding the truth (Matthew 7:7). The alien sinner today, who has a true heart like Lydia, will do as she did upon being taught and understanding the truth. God will hear and help only those who hear him. The Bible says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination" (Proverbs 28:9).

Cornelius is another good example of a sinner that God heard: "A devout man, and one that feareth God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2). In verse four of that same chapter we understand God heard his prayer, even though he had not yet obeyed the gospel. Also in this chapter we see the true heart of a sinner who feared God and prayed to him always (v. 2). We see this sinner being taught the gospel of

Christ (v. 33-43). We see this sinner obeying this teaching (v. 48). This is the only kind of sinner God will hear.

The willful sinner is another story and is also under consideration in John 9:31 ("... God heareth not sinners"). God makes it clear to all he will not hear those who will not hear him (Proverbs 28:9). The Psalmist said, "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29). Other scriptures also are Job 27:8-9; Psalms 66:18; Jeremiah 7:16; Psalms 34:14-16; Isaiah 59:1-2. Jesus said, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

The alien sinner is limited in what he can pray for. If not, the sinner has as much right in prayer as the Christian; this, the Bible does not teach. The Christian is the only person in the world that enjoys the privilege of prayer in fullness. The New Testament reveals a Christian is one who has established a vital relationship with Christ and is walking in conformity to his will (I John 1:7). We are the only ones who, being born into God's family, have the right to call God "Our Father" (John 3:3,5; Matthew 6:9). The alien sinner must not pray for salvation (Acts 2:38; 11:14; 22:16; 7:21), not for love of God (John 3:16), not for grace (Titus 2:11-12), not for extended time to obey (II Corinthians 6:2). But for God to send someone to tell him the commands of God

(Acts 9:1-18), that he and his family might obey and be saved (Acts 10). Now, when the alien sinner comes to God in prayer, with the understanding and humble heart of submission as did Cornelius, God will hear and help him to righteousness (John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9).

John wrote, "and this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14).

Also John wrote, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22). There are two major thoughts in these two verses that must be considered by the sinner. The person praying must (1) "ask according to his will," and as we ask, (2) "keep his commandments."

Gods will to the sinner is that he obey his commandments as he asks according to his will. When Christ prayed the model prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10), he was teaching the principle of loyalty. The person praying must have the willingness to obey. This loyalty is shown in the diligence he applies in seeking God's truth (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:31-32; Matthew 7:7; 6:33). The seeking and finding takes longer for some than for others. Our patience is needed in teaching the sinner these Bible truths. — 6 Orchard Street, Augusta, Maine 04330.

Some Clouds Must First Hang Low

EARLENE ROSE

For the earth which drinketh in rain that cometh oft upon it and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. — Hebrews 6:7

When clouds float high in the heavens
And the sun beams all around,
Then the farmer in his wisdom
Begins to plow the ground.


He selects and plants the best seeds
In faith that they will grow,
But before these seeds can germinate,
Some clouds must first hang low.

For pure fresh rain must penetrate
The kernel of each seed
Before these seeds can burst and grow
To satisfy our need.

As rain helps vegetation,
Then God has dealt it so
That often tears and troubles
Will help His children grow.

Tears penetrate our sorrow
And germinate our hearts

Continued on page 2



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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Abusing That Which Is Scriptural

There can be no doubting the fact that some of the controversy surrounding the authority of elders has arisen because elderships on occasion have misused and abused their authority. If an eldership uses its authority for the personal satisfaction of those who make up the eldership, instead of for the general welfare of the church, it is abusing its authority. Such is a clear violation of Peter's instruction to the effect that elders are not to be "lords over God's heritage" (I Peter 5:3). (This passage does not demand that an eldership consider the wishes of a congregation in making its decisions; it does demand that an eldership consider the *welfare* of a congregation in making its decisions.)



BOBBY DUNCAN

But the fact that elders may have abused their authority is no justification for taking the position that an eldership actually has no scriptural authority for making decisions affecting the congregation. How would an eldership have the "rule over" the congregation (Hebrews 13:17), and not have any decision-making authority? And why would we be admonished to "obey them" (Hebrews 13:17) who have absolutely no authority to make decisions with respect to us?

Granted, often elderships do not have the proper concept of the scope of their authority. They sometimes feel that the congregation is to serve them, instead of serving the Lord under their oversight. Decisions are made for their own personal convenience and satisfaction, instead of for the good of the congregation. This is an abuse of authority.

Sometimes one elder will obtain the mistaken idea that he, as an individual, has some authority to make decisions with reference to the congregation. One elder has no more authority than any one member of a congregation. Authority does not reside in an *elder*, but in an *eldership*. (We know some reject the idea of an eldership; nevertheless, it is a concept that is altogether scriptural.) It is true that an eldership might authorize one elder to make certain decisions with reference to a congregation. But in such cases he has authority to make those decisions, not because he is an elder, but because he has been authorized by the eldership to make them. The same eldership could authorize one who is not an elder to do identically the same thing. It is inconsistent to insist that there must be a plurality of elders in a congregation in order to be scriptural, and then think that one elder has certain authority separate and apart for the eldership.

But the fact that some elderships have abused their authority, and that some individuals have mistakenly thought their being elders gave them the right as individuals to rule over the congregation, should not lead any to conclude that an eldership has no scriptural authority. Abuses of every kind need to be avoided. But care must be taken on the part of all not to oppose that which is scriptural just because it may

have been abused.

Let it be remembered: (1) that there is a proper and scriptural use of whatever is scriptural; (2) that that which is scriptural may be improperly and unscripturally employed, and (3) that there is no proper and scriptural way to employ that which, within itself, is unscriptural.

The Message Of The Prophets

The sterling work of the Old Testament prophets paved the way for the coming of Christ. Except for Jonah they were stalwart men of God who courageously fought corruption and upheld decency and godliness on every hand. Undaunted by weak brethren who would not stand and the devastating power of ruthless nations they "bubbled forth" the message God put in their mouths (Jer. 1:9). Unpopular but respected were these valiant soldiers of heaven's cause. What a debt we owe to them! Seldom has the world seen anyone with such commitment to a cause and such willingness even to die for truth. We need thousands of preachers today who will be like the prophets of yesteryear!



JOHNNY RAMSEY

Isaiah spoke of the blessings that come from waiting on the Lord in 40:31 of his message: "They will mount up with wings as eagles; they will run and not be weary; they will walk and not faint."

Sometimes we have to be willing to slow down and walk with God. We cannot always run and fly. Some days are sad and dark and dreary. But, regardless of the pace of the world God will be there to guide us and sustain our earthly existence (Psalms 73:24). Jeremiah 8:9 informs us that no one is really wise unless he is familiar with the message of heaven. A man may have seventeen doctoral degrees but if he knows not the Bible he is spiritually bereft of brilliance. We have all known educated dummies and also uneducated (formally) wise men. We should use all the education we have to the glory of God and never let it get in the way of eternal matters. Or we may be like the very ones Lamentations 4:5 describes. Such folk were reared in splendor but finished up in the garbage dump! Yes, pride goes before destruction. Arrogance pays a high premium. Ezekiel tells us exactly why Judah wound up in captivity for 70 years in Babylon. In 20:32 of that exciting book the fiery prophet rebukes the people of God for wanting "to be like the heathen." They got a front row seat in the arena of wickedness. Sinners always have the best

Some Clouds Must First Hang Low

Continued from page 1

Until the bursting point is reached,
And then the growing starts.

Have faith and trust the Father;
Look for the sunshine's glow
Shining brightly just beyond
The clouds that now hang low. — 1701 20th Avenue,
Northport, Ala. 35476

(Editor's note: Earlene Rose has recently published a book of her poems. Those who desire copies of the book may order them directly from the author at the above address. The price of the book is \$5.00 plus mailing expense of 75 cents for 1-4 books; \$1.00 for 5-9 books. Mailing expenses are prepaid on orders of ten or more books.)

The Song Of Solomon

The Song of Solomon is considered by many to be an unusual book of the Bible. It certainly is true that this often misunderstood section of scripture is different from the other books of the Bible.

The Song of Solomon is not quoted directly by the New Testament.

The name of God is not to be found within its 8 short chapters. (The American Standard Version in 8:6 says: "The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of Jehovah.") The King James Version does not, however, translate this passage as does the



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

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God And The Jews

Jerry Falwell recently stated that the only way for America to assure its continuation of God's blessing is to continue its support of the nation of Israel. In his comments on Romans 11:26, "And so all Israel shall be saved," a noted brother declared, "It means many, a large number or perhaps the majority of the Hebrews will at that time turn to the Lord and be saved" (*Survey of Romans*, Jimmy Allen, p. 99). Even though



FRANK CHESSER

conceding the possibility that his interpretation might be incorrect, he states further, "However, as Paul taught that one event (the apostasy) would occur before the second coming, he may also have taught that another event (the conversion of the Jews) will take place before the Lord comes again" (p. 100). From sectarian preachers to brethren, much controversy surrounds God's relationship with the Jewish nation.

It is imperative that we recognize that at no time has God ever accepted "national Israel." God has never had but one plan for divine acceptance. Although the specifics of that plan involving man's part have changed from age to age, the basic plan has remained the same: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Therefore, from among "national Israel" as well as all other nations, God accepted and continues to accept all those who respond to his grace by the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:26).

The cross is the focal point of all human history. Acts 2 has sometimes been depicted as the "hub of the Bible." However, without the cross, there would have been no Acts 2. The Christ of the cross is the beautiful blossom of the "seed of woman" of Genesis 3:15. Remove the cross from the Bible and all that remains is a mass of laws and rituals void of meaning and profit.

Like the beams of the cross, Hebrews 9:15 depicts the blood of Christ flowing backward to Adam and forward to the end of time. Thus, from Adam to Moses, God bestowed his saving grace upon all those who complied with his will in obedient faith in view of what Jesus "would do" on the cross. From Moses to Christ, God accepted by grace all those, both Jews and Gentiles, who responded to his will in the obedience of faith, in view of what Jesus "would accomplish" on the cross. And from the inauguration of New Testament Christianity to the end of time, God showers his saving grace upon all those who comply with the conditions of the gospel in obedient faith in view of what Jesus "has done" on the cross.

God expresses his grace by choosing those who are "rich in faith" (James 2:5). "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Thus, God chooses those who choose him by rendering obedient faith to his will. God chose Abraham as the father of the Jewish race because he was a man of faith and obedience (Heb. 11:8-10). God accepted Isaac his son and Jacob his grandson because they exhibited the same submissive faith that was characteristic of Abraham (Heb. 11:20-21). Conversely, God rejected Esau, even though he was Abraham's grandson, because he refused to be obedient (Heb. 12:16).

Numerically, the Jews became a great nation while in Egypt (Exo. 1:7). The men only are numbered as being six hundred thousand at the time of their departure (Exo. 12:37). However, regarding the majority and their entrance into Canaan the text declares, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). That same absence of faith made it impossible for God to manifest his grace by allowing their descendants to remain in the land. Consequently, a faithless northern kingdom,

separated from divine grace, eventually lost its identity in Assyrian captivity (II Kings 17). Preferring cold, wooden stocks to the warm, benevolent heart of Jehovah (Jeremiah 2:27), the southern kingdom separated itself from divine grace and was carried into Babylonian captivity (II Kings 25).

The fires of captivity burned the dross of sin from the hearts of a remnant. They returned to Jerusalem in faith and zeal, determined to rebuild the temple and restore the city to some degree of its former glory. However, opposition soon proved more potent than their faith and thus, the spirit of selfishness and spiritual negligence set in for sixteen years (Ezra 4; Haggai 1). It took the "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" preaching of Haggai and Zechariah to remove them from their lethargy and move them to complete their work on the temple (Ezra 6:14).

Tragically, just sixty years later, the descendants of those who returned from captivity had taken the final step before reverting back to idolatry by intermarrying with the heathen (Ezra 9). Upon Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem, he found faith and obedience woefully lacking among the people. He was stunned by the alliance between Eliashib the priest and Tobiah the archenemy of Israel, the neglect of the Levites, profanation of the Sabbath and intermarriage with the heathen (Neh. 13). Malachi brings down the curtain on Jewish life with a scathing denunciation of a people who had grown weary of God's way (1:13) and had even accused God of taking delight in evildoers (2:17).

The fruition of the "seed of woman" made little impact on national Israel as "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). The Jews of Jerusalem "sought the more to kill him" (John 5:18). While preaching to the multitudes in Capernaum, "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Any positive comments about Jesus were shared secretly "for fear of the Jews" (John 7:13). National Israel culminated their hatred of Jesus in his crucifixion, eagerly desiring responsibility for his blood (Matt. 27:25).

Subsequent to the inauguration of the gospel age, the Jews as a nation continued to reject Jesus by spurning his gospel. Those characterized by the obedience of faith constituted the exception and not the rule. Jewish opposition to Christianity often took a violent turn. Scarcely had Paul begun to preach than the "Jews took counsel to kill him" (Acts 9:23). They blasphemed Paul in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:45) and stoned him in Lystra (Acts 14:19). Judaizers dogged his every step, attempting to destroy his apostleship and thus the gospel that he preached. The book of Acts closes with Paul applying to the Jewish nation the prophecy of Isaiah, foretelling the rejection of the gospel by national Israel and therefore, God's rejection of the nation (Acts 28:25-28).

In what sense was ancient Israel the chosen people of God? God chose Israel in order that they might serve as the womb of the Messiah and a light to the Gentile world. God's relationship with man always involves two things, God's part and man's part, divine grace and obedient faith. God did his part by planting Christ within the womb of Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:3), thus making possible the Cross and Pentecost, whereby man might appropriate the blessings of grace to his soul by the obedience of faith. Relative to Israel's mission as a light to the heathen, Paul depicted their failure, declaring, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you as it is written" (Rom. 2:24). Had Israel been faithful to their mission, there would have been no need for Acts 10. Had Israel fulfilled their mission, then God's eternal purpose that the "Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel (Ephesians 3:6) would have been realized in Acts 2.

God promised to bless the world through Abraham's seed (Gen. 12:3). That seed was Christ (Gal. 3:16). Therefore, Paul could say that by means of this promise, God "preached before the gospel

unto Abraham" (Gal. 3:8). God preached the first gospel sermon in prophecy (Genesis 3:15) and the second in promise (Gen. 12:3). Everything in the Bible is tied to these two divine declarations.

The book of Romans is a divine commentary on the "how" of Genesis 12:3. Justification by grace and blood (Romans 3:24) is extended to those who respond to the gospel in obedient faith (Rom. 1:16-17). The Jewish nation felt no need of the gospel. Rhetorically, Paul asked them if they thought they could live as the Gentiles and escape the judgment of God (Rom. 2:3). That's exactly what they thought. Why? Simply because they were Jews, the descendants of Abraham (John 8:30-33). The Jews thought they had a monopoly on God. In response to this foolish nation, Paul declared, "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also" (Rom. 3:29), and then proceeded to affirm God's justification of both on the same basis (Rom. 3:30).

The Gentiles had been made righteous before God because they sought it in the divinely ordained manner. They had responded to God's grace by submitting to the gospel in obedient faith (Rom. 9:30). However, the Jews were still in sin because they had refused God's remedy in the gospel and were attempting to obtain their own righteousness by adhering to the law of Moses (Rom. 9:31-33).

Was there hope for the Jewish nation? Yes, "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26) "if they abide not in unbelief" (Rom. 11:23). Any individuals from among "all Israel" could be saved if they would divorce Judaism and embrace the gospel in obedient faith. The ground is level before the cross. Human distinctions fade before the cross like darkness before the rising sun. Any statement that tends to bestow even the slightest special favor upon the Jews is inconsistent with the very nature of the gospel. Whether Jew or Gentile, there is one plan for all: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). — Rt. 5, Thomson, Ga. 30824.

A Word Of Commendation

On Sunday, March 13, 1983, I was honored to have a part in the activities commemorating the 20th anniversary of the John David Parker family's working with the church in Wetumka, Alabama. I have personally known this fine church and this fine gospel preacher for over thirty years. It was indeed a memorable occasion denoting a lengthy, harmonious working relationship. There was a special service in addition to the periods of worship during which time the elders spoke regarding the history of the church and the work of brother and sister Parker. A gift was presented to the Parkers. A meal was enjoyed by all as we ate beneath clear blue spring skies. Later an hour of singing was conducted in the building. It is indeed good to know that congregations and preachers are seeing the need of working together for a longer period of time. — 115 Sheila Blvd., Prattville, AL 36067.



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

The Danger With Some "Icing On The Cake"

(No. 2)

Last issue, in the first installment on "The Danger with some 'Icing on the Cake,'" it was affirmed that it is logically and morally unsound simply to wager that Christianity is the better option over atheistic naturalism. It was pointed out that if Christianity were false — but it is not — then it does not logically follow that naturalism is the only other choice. Hence, this popular wager (*a la* Blaise Pascal, 1623-62) is an exercise in futility.



PHILLIP GRAY

But, sometimes this mode of thinking is reflected in our method of teaching. For instance, some have actually taught that, "If the Bible is after all just a human document, believers in its divine inspiration are just as safe as those who disbelieve this." That may sound good, but if the Book of Mormon is true, or if the Koran is really God's book, then, if you just bet on the Bible's being divine but are proved to be wrong, you are the unfortunate loser.

Again, we hear of "the way that must be right and can't be wrong." Often (but not always) this introduces the idea that you had better bet on the one church instead of many. Even if denominationalism is safe, then you are still sure to be all right in the one church of Christ. But, if denominationalism is a damnable heresy (and the Bible certainly teaches it is), then you had better be in the one church also, so the argument goes.

Does this view take into consideration the possibility (since the view seems to be dealing with the better of only two assumed possibilities) that the singular, primitive church of the New Testament has now been supplanted by a newer, more "relevant" and up-to-date expression of religion through means of God's continuing revelation of his will to his people apart from the inscripturated word? Some believe this to be so. If they are right, then our adherence to the New Testament pattern for the church is outmoded, outdated and out of harmony with God's will (i.e., if the primitive pattern for the church is now superseded by another divine plan). Of course, they are not right! This should be demonstrated, however, by appealing to scriptural proof, not vague, arbitrarily limited possibilities that just "might be the case."

In regard to the plan of salvation, some say that it is better to wager (even when you are not really sure what the scriptures teach about it) on being baptized for the remission of sins than to risk being wrong with a "faith only" doctrine. And yet, the faith only advocates have often maintained that their chief objection to baptism is that it is a work of self-righteousness and that one who appeals to it for salvation nullifies God's grace. Of course, the faith only advocates are absolutely wrong about that but, when in the gambling business with salvation, they insist legitimately enough that it isn't so safe to make baptism essential while it may yet be possible that God will damn a believer who is baptized to be saved (because of his being a worker of "self-righteousness"). This is a theoretical possibility when we are simply betting on options. In addition to that, we may legitimately question the propriety of urging anyone to be baptized on the basis of any reason whatsoever other than to obtain the remission of sins — for that express reason, and that alone. The candidate probably won't understand the fuller implications of what baptism involves when he is buried with the Lord (he doesn't have to) but, only that it is for the purpose of having sins remitted. This much he must

understand (Acts 2:37,38). Let us not confuse him, therefore, with ideas about his betting that this is the best way but, let him know assuredly that there is no other way! Why not just appeal to the scriptures alone when explaining the purpose of baptism and get out of the wagering business no matter how

safe a course it may *seem* or what it may appear to add to our explanation? Betting on possible options is no substitute for sound exegesis and rational demonstration. (More on this next issue, the Lord willing.) — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

The Message Of The Prophets

Continued from page 2

seat in the house when Satan puts on his finest show.

Daniel shares with us the rich faith of the three close friends of God's devoted statesmen. In 3:17 of that noble treatise we read thrilling words of conviction, in spite of the fiery furnace: "Our God is able to deliver us."

Yes, one like unto the Son of Man walked with them and they came out untouched. Christ is introduced in Revelation as One whose feet had walked in the furnace of affliction. We are blessed by such a comrade along the difficult route and in the challenging moments of the gospel way:

"In the hour of trial,
Jesus plead for me,
Lest by base denial
I depart from Thee;
When Thou seest me waver,
With a look recall,
Nor for fear nor favor
Suffer me to fall."

The so-called minor prophets, Hosea through Malachi, have timely messages for us also. Let us list a few of their major warnings and promises that add enrichment to our lives.

1. Spiritual Ignorance Will Ruin Us (Hosea 4:6).
2. Inward Purity Is A Must (Joel 2:13).
3. We Cannot Escape God's Judgment (Amos

4:12).

4. Pride Will Overwhelm Us (Obadiah 3).

5. Turning Our Back On God Is Foolish (Jonah 1:3).

6. Integrity Of Character Is A Blessing (Micah 6:8).

7. Living By Faith Is The Only Way (Habakkuk 2:4).

God mightily used the prophets for good. They were unusual men who sacrificed much and accomplished a noble work. Without them Christianity would never have arrived. Those humble men preached the message Jehovah told them to preach. Jeremiah speaks for all of them in 15:16 and 20:9 his eloquent treatise. "His words were found and I did eat them and they were rejoicing of my heart" "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones"

Those men had preached the oracles of God so long and so faithfully that nothing could persuade them to stop. Oh, how we need that spiritual heart-burn today. In season and out of season let us never leave the glorious work of proclaiming the glad message!

"I love to tell the story,
For Those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest;
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story

That I have loved so long." — Box 235 Rowelett, TX 75088.

The Song Of Solomon

Continued from page 2

American Standard Version, thus, the name of God is not found.

Some have wondered about the proper interpretation of the Song of Solomon. That LOVE is the subject of the book all agree; but, WHAT KIND OF LOVE? Some have thought the mutual love between Christ and the church to be under consideration. Others have said that married love is the kind of love Solomon wrote so eloquently about.

Can you remember the last time you heard anyone quote a passage from this book? Is it to be ignored? Should we take the time to investigate its teachings?

It seems to this writer that The Song of Solomon is best understood when applied to married love. In the sense that the marriage relationship depicts the love between Christ and the church we could so understand the teaching of the Song of Solomon. But not primarily so.

The context seems to demand a literal interpretation thus applying this book to husband and wife. It seems only fitting that at least one of the 66 books of the Bible deal with this most intimate of human relationships.

Observe the internal evidence that leads us to this literal interpretation:

References to the human body are quite numerous: (1:2) Mouth, (1:10) Cheeks, (1:10) Neck, (1:12) Breasts, (1:15) Eyes, (2:6) Hands, (2:6) Head, (4:1) Hair, (4:2) Teeth, (4:3) Lips, (4:3) Temples, (4:11) Tongue, (5:5) Fingers, (5:14) Belly, (5:15) Legs, (7:1)

Feet, (7:1) Thighs, (7:2) Navel, (7:4) Nose.

Notice also the terms of human affection: (1:2) "Thy love is better than wine," (1:7) "Thou whom my soul loveth," (2:16) "My beloved is mine, and I am his," (4:10) "How much better is thy love than wine," (5:9) "O thou fairest among women."

There are also certain verses that may be properly applied to the intimacy of married love.

(2:6) "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me."

(8:3) "His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me."

(1:13) "He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts."

With the above mentioned passages in mind it seems abundantly clear The Song of Solomon was written to portray the beauty of married love. We wish that more Bible teaching on this subject were presented to our young people. We can rest assured that the world through television, magazines, and the popular box office movies will present the teaching of the devil. Why should we shy away from teaching the truth of the word of God on married love?

According to I Kings 4:32 Solomon wrote "three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." The Song of Solomon must have been among his very best. It's the one God chose to be in his Holy Book the Bible. — P.O. Box 242 Morris, Al. 35116.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Stand In Awe Of Him

The inspired writer expressed a sense of awe when he wrote, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained . . . O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glories above the heavens" (Psalms 8:1-3). Again he observed, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . .



R. W. GRAY

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of him. For he spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:6-9). And again, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalms 19:1-3). The writer of Hebrews reflects upon the awesomeness of the God of Creation who must be served in "reverence" (Hebrews 12:28 KJV).

Paul viewed the heathen as without excuse for his shameful behavior, affirming that God's eternal power and divinity could be clearly perceived "by the things that are made" (Romans 1:20). There can be no doubt about it, man's history stands as a monument to the truth that shameless behavior is the result of a lack of reverence for Almighty God. Such are "gone out of the way, become unprofitable, doing no good, their throats are open sepulchres, their tongues speak deceit, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, they shed innocent blood; destruction and misery are in their way, because there is NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES" (Psalms 36:1-4; Romans 3:12-18). The moral, social, domestic, and religious norms of the Bible mean little to the man or woman who has no reverence for the God of the Bible.

While wisdom demands we stand in awe of him who made heaven and earth, many there are who demonstrate pompous views of the creature,

relegating to the background the obvious demands of a Creator. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Romans 1:22,25). All efforts to persuade men to bring every thought into captivity to the Christ are futile while they entertain an exaggerated opinion of the wisdom of men, and especially men of science (I Corinthians 1:18-26, I Timothy 6:20).

In an intercessory prayer for post exilic Israel, Nehemiah besought Jehovah as "The great and terrible God" (Nehemiah 1:5). To discourage stiffness, and to encourage a circumcision of the heart, Moses proclaimed to migrating Israel, "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, and mighty, and a terrible . . ." (Deuteronomy 10:16,17). In the midst of the awesome display of power and glory on Mt. Sinai, Moses, and all Israel, were exceedingly "fearful" (Hebrews 12:18-21). Enthralled with the transcending scene of God's throne Isaiah cried, "Woe is me, for I am undone . . ." (Isaiah 6:1-5).

Both upon the pages of inspiration and in the display of mighty power that created, sustains, and upholds the universe, God has sought to instill in man a sense of awe or Godly fear. Therefore he has promised to look with favor upon the man who is of poor and contrite spirit and trembleth at his word (Isaiah 66:2b). Disobedient souls have been

adequately forewarned that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Lack of reverence for Jehovah and his name is at the root of our problem of entering as we might into a spiritual atmosphere in periods of divine worship. Neither the ho-hum attitude often witnessed, nor the "good buddy," "Man upstairs" approach to prayer will be seen in those who acquire a proper reverence for the God who made us. The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the assembly around the Lord's Table, the contribution of our gifts, and the hearing of his Word, take on a radically different dimension for those who stand in awe of God.

The influence of humanism upon our world has had a telling effect upon man's evaluation of God. Man thinks he has captured, and has therefore diminished and cheapened, the very God in whom we live and move and have our being. But those who know the God who is there realize that he has brought to nothing the understanding of the "wise and prudent" (I Corinthians 1:19-20). Before a doubting world they proclaim, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

God would challenge us to be still and know that he is God, and to understand that as we stand in awe of him he becomes our refuge and strength, a present help in time of trouble (Psalms 46:1,10). — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

Preachers: Beware Of Envy

JIMMY EDWARDS


William Barclay describes envy as "the most warped and twisted of human emotions." Envy can be defined as a coveting of attainments which belong to another or of successes which have come to an individual. Envy may include an urgent, even malicious desire to see that person dispossessed of attainments or successes.

Most would admit that envy is a major contributing factor to strife and factions. In fact, almost every problem in the church

can be either directly or indirectly connected to envy. Specifically, envy is a very dangerous sin which at times permeates the hearts and lives of gospel preachers.

Gospel preachers on occasion envy gospel preachers. Some envy another's salary; some another's reputation; some another's education; some another's accomplishments; some another's success; some another's abilities; some another's

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Preachers: Beware Of Envy

Continued from page 1

being recognized while they are being overlooked; some another's personality.

Those who preach the gospel, perhaps more than anyone, need to recognize that envy is physically and spiritually dangerous. Where there is envy among ministers of the gospel there is no mutual confidence, no united plan and effort, no cooperation; there is no stability in any plan. If envy exists among fellow preachers love and harmony will be destroyed, all happiness disappears, and the ministries of all involved are hampered.

The New Testament contains numerous passages which should discourage the gospel preacher from being envious. Among them are two: "Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:26), and, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying" (Romans 13:13).

Rather than being "full of envy" (Romans 1:29) and "living in envy" (Titus 3:3), we should "lay aside all envies" (I Peter 2:1).

Envy is a common sin and almost every person has been affected by it at some time or another. This includes gospel preachers. How can the preacher overcome envy? Wendell Winkler offers these suggestions: (1) Love (I Corinthians 13:4), (2) Put on Christ (Romans 13:13, 14), (3) Grow in spirituality and maturity (I Corinthians 3:1-3), (4) Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), (5) Remember all are members of the body (I Corinthians 12:26), and (6) Ask for God's help (James 4:5, 6).

Let those who preach realize that they are all servants in the Lord's Kingdom. Each is a unique personality. Each has different talents, styles, and characteristics. Recognizing this will create proper attitudes, more love, better ministries and churches, and most of all each will be happy and thoroughly enjoy his work.—512 Gardendale Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110

Some preachers seem to use big words to conceal the smallness of their thoughts.

The soul without prayer is like lungs without air.



The Preacher's Salary

[The following article was written in 1974, and is reprinted here at the request of one of our regular readers.]

The subject of this article is one about which little is preached or written. One who preaches on the subject leaves himself open to the accusation that he is preaching for money. But in failing to teach on the subject we have done an injustice to the brotherhood. The church cannot survive without preaching. Yet many capable men are leaving full time preaching to earn their livings in secular work. This adds to the acuteness of the preacher shortage. Others are working under financial burdens that hinder their effectiveness. And there is a constant shift of preachers from one congregation to another. Doubtless this situation exists for a number of reasons, but it is certain that our failure to teach our brethren regarding the preacher's salary has made its contribution.

The brethren where this writer preaches have been far more generous in this respect than the writer deserves, and those who know the circumstances understand that it is not to these that the things said in this article are directed. But it is the conviction of this writer that brethren generally need teaching in regard to this matter, and that most of our brethren will do better when they are taught better.

It is taken for granted that those who read this article are already in agreement with the idea that it is scriptural for preachers to be supported from the treasury of the church (I Cor. 9:4-14; II Cor. 11:8; Gal. 6:6; etc.). Consequently this article does not deal with the scripturalness of the matter, but with certain matters of judgment involved in the application of Bible teaching. We would emphasize the fact, however, that even under the law of Moses God demanded that just wages be paid to strangers and brethren alike (Deut. 24:14; Jer. 22:13). And in the New Testament strong language is used in rebuking those who refused to pay their laborers (Jas. 5:4). Of how great a sin, then, is one guilty who would hinder the payment of just and reasonable wages to one who preaches the glorious gospel of Christ?

COMPARING SALARIES

There is certainly nothing wrong with comparing the salary of the preacher to that of other members of the congregation. In doing so it is important that his salary be compared to those with approximately the same amount of education, experience, natural ability, drive, and who work about the same number of hours, and have about the same amount of job-connected expense that the preacher has.

Also there are several things which must not be overlooked in making such comparisons. It should be remembered that retirement plans, and group life and health insurance, paid in part or in whole by employers generally, are not usually a part of the church's arrangement with the preacher. While these items often constitute a major part of a contract between management and labor, they are seldom given any consideration in hiring a preacher or setting



BOBBY DUNCAN

his salary.

It should be remembered that the preacher is required to use his automobile in connection with his work. And with the price of gasoline what it is today, this is a major expense.

While the preacher's income is not diminished by such things as weather conditions, strikes, lay-offs, supply and demand, etc., neither is it increased by overtime, production, time and a half for holidays, etc. If he is fortunate enough to preach in a few meetings he receives a little extra income, provided the meeting does not cost him more than he is paid for his services.

Besides wanting to set the proper example in the matter of liberality, most preachers have strong convictions about the matter of giving. And while many members of the church contribute from three to five per cent of their incomes, most preachers contribute at least fifteen per cent. In addition to this when there is made a special appeal for some good work, the preacher is usually among the first to respond.

It is usually preferred, of course, that the preacher's wife not be employed outside the home. Yet she can usually be depended upon to buy a gift for every new bride and every new baby in the congregation.

If all these things are kept in mind, certainly it would be in order to compare the preacher's salary with that of others in the congregation.

HOUSING

The fact that churches sometimes own a house for the preacher has caused some to set the preacher's salary too low. Naturally if a congregation owns the preacher's house it does not expect to pay him as much as if he furnished his own house. But the difference should not really be very much. Take for example a congregation which owns its own house, and which considers housing to amount to about \$4,200 per year. If a preacher's tenure with that congregation were five years he would have received \$21,000 worth of housing. Quite a sum! But when he moves to the next place he takes not one penny of it with him.

But suppose, instead of furnishing a house, they had simply paid him a full salary, and he had used the extra \$4,200 per year to invest in a house of his own. At the end of his five year tenure he would own quite an equity, which he could sell and be several thousand dollars richer. This would be the result of having been paid in money rather than housing. Churches which choose to own the preacher's house should take care not to penalize the preacher and his family, salary wise.

INFLATION

Some preachers are underpaid merely because brethren have been negligent in adjusting their salaries to keep step with inflation. For example, if a congregation hired its preacher for a reasonable salary three years ago, and is not paying him *substantially* more now than when it hired him, he is underpaid. And in addition to these "cost of living" raises, a preacher should be deserving of some consideration for additional years of experience and service, as characterizes employees of most organizations.

A failure to give this matter consideration is,

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The Preacher's Salary

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doubtless, one of the reasons why preachers move about so much. Often a preacher who is making plans to move is heard to say: "It is not just the money, but the feeling that the brethren just don't care whether we go or stay." It is not hard to understand why this feeling exists if the brethren have shown little or no concern for the fact that the preacher and his family are living on the same income they were receiving when gasoline was sixty cents a gallon.

HOW VALUABLE PREACHING?

By their failure to see that the preacher receives a respectable wage brethren are advertising the fact that they either do not consider the work of preaching to be very important, or that they do not consider their particular preacher a very valuable man. While we abhor the idea that preachers are anything more than human or that they must receive special treatment, we also abhor the disposition of some to demean the work of preaching. Preachers are ordinary people,

but their work is extraordinary — the most important in the world. If elders want to show how important they think the work of preaching is, and how highly they esteem the man they have hired to do this great work, they should begin by seeing that he is adequately paid. Otherwise they should not be too surprised to find that in the minds of some the work of preaching is barely respectable, and what the preacher preaches is not very important either.

PREACHING FOR MONEY

Perhaps there are some preachers who are "preaching for money." Most of the preachers we know, however, could be making more money if they were otherwise employed, and without half the headache. But they are preaching because they want, to preach. And in most cases they will continue to preach, even if it becomes necessary to "make tents" to support themselves and their families. They believe in the importance of their work, and they are

concerned about a lost world. But their determination to preach the gospel regardless of cost furnishes no legitimate excuse for brethren to support them in a poor fashion. Our gratitude for their determination should prompt us to see that they are supported adequately.

WASTING THE LORD'S MONEY

In many congregations there are those who seem to think it is their special assignment to be doubly sure that the preacher is not overpaid. After all, the money belongs to the Lord, and it would be a sin to waste it! While we are sure that no worthy preacher wants to be overpaid, we can think of worse crimes than overpaying a man who spends his life in preaching the glorious gospel of the Son of God. One that comes to mind at present is underpaying him.

Some Things Billy Graham Never Preaches

Billy Graham is one of America's most popular preachers. We do not wish to be unfair or unkind to Dr. Graham, but we must inform our readers of the truth of God.



W. A. HOLLEY

We are aware that some may think our remarks are sacrilegious, blasphemous, and a sin, but we assure you that all we will say will be the truth as set forth in the

Holy Bible. The Bible teaches us to "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; Cf. I Corinthians 14:29; I Thessalonians 5:21; Revelation 2:2).

We must recognize that some teach false doctrines, not being concerned with the faith as set forth in Scripture, and thus do not speak as the oracles of God (II Timothy 4:1-4; Jude 3; I Peter 4:11; II John 9-11). Dr. Graham may be a good moral man, very persuasive in speech, and highly educated, but he does not preach the whole truth of God. We shall note:

(1) *Dr. Graham never preaches that salvation results from an obedient faith.* Rather he teaches that the sinner is saved by faith the very moment he believes. He teaches that one is saved by faith only, without any other acts of obedience. But what saith the Scripture? According to Acts 6:7, Romans 1:5, and 16:26; Galatians 5:6, faith must express itself through obedience. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). James 2:19, says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:24,26).

It is often argued that one cannot be saved by works, but, according to Jesus, faith itself is a work (John 6:28-29). No, one cannot be saved by "the works of the law" nor by meritorious works, but we can be saved by an obedient faith (John 3:16, 36, ASV.; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 5:8-9).

(2) *Dr. Graham never teaches that baptism is essential to salvation.* We challenge any honest

person to read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:21, and come to the conclusion that baptism is a non-essential.

In one place in Hiscox's Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, we find, on page 8, "The salvation of sinners is wholly of grace. . ." Then, on page 9, of the same book, we find that justification "is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith." We respectfully ask, how can both statements be true?? If salvation is "wholly of grace," how can justification be "solely through faith"? In this same book, we are told that "baptism is not essential to salvation . . . but it is essential to obedience, since Christ commanded it" (Page 20-21). In the light of the foregoing quotation, what does Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4, mean??

(3) *Billy Graham never teaches that the church of Christ is essential to one's salvation.* On the contrary, he teaches that one should join the church of his choice, and that if one so chooses one can be saved even though one ignores the church altogether.

We do not advocate joining the church, but the Bible clearly teaches that the Lord adds those who should be saved to the church (Acts 2:47). Jesus built his church (Matthew 16:18-19). We ask, would Jesus build a non-essential church? Jesus purchased the church with his own precious blood (Acts 20:28). Would Jesus purchase a non-essential church? Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18,24). Is it reasonable to think that Jesus would be the head of a non-essential church? What point would there be in saving a non-essential church? (Ephesians 5:22-23).

(4) *Billy Graham never preaches that, in conviction and conversion, the Holy Spirit operates only through the word of God or the gospel of Christ.* Verily, Dr. Graham believes the word of God must have additional power in order to save sinners. He believes "that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth . . ." "Thus, he thinks every conversion is a miracle! In every case of Bible conversion in the New Testament the word of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit was preached; those who heard and believed it were baptized, thus being saved. The preacher was always present, the word of God was always preached, and those who believed were always baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). If God Almighty works independently of his word, since he is

no respecter of persons, why are there not as many Christians in Soviet Russia as there are in Alabama where the word of God has been preached??

The truth is, the Holy Spirit spake the Scriptures (Acts 1:16; II Samuel 23:2; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:16-17; I Peter 1:12; II Peter 1:20-21). It is by the word of God which the Holy Spirit spake that the souls of men are converted (Psalms 19:7), given light (Psalms 119:130), and born again (I Peter 1:22-25). It is the gospel of Christ which is God's power to save (Romans 1:16-17).

(5) *Billy Graham never preaches the possibility of apostasy.* He believes in "once in grace, always in grace." But Holy Scriptures have never taught such a theory (Galatians 5:4; I Corinthians 9:27; 10:12; II Peter 2:20-22; Luke 8:13). The apostle Paul teaches that one for whom Christ died can be destroyed. Hear him: "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15). Again, in I Corinthians 8:11, Paul asks, "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" The doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is rank Calvinism! All Scriptures used to support it are used out of context.

(6) *Billy Graham never teaches that the use of mechanical music in Christian worship is sinful.* In fact, Dr. Graham, in his services, uses bands, orchestras, pianos, organs, and the like. But, when we follow New Testament authority, we must be content with singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15; Romans 15:9; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13). The Old Testament offers no more authority for instrumental music in the New Testament church than it does for adding burning of animal sacrifices, burning incense, keeping the sabbath day, and plurality of marriage (Colossians 2:14-17). Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, but would such give us the authority to have two or more wives today? (I Kings 11:3).

(7) *Billy Graham never preaches that the kingdom of God has already been established.* Rather, according to his preaching, he is looking for a literal millennial kingdom to be established in the future. But such can never be; it (the kingdom) has been already established. How do we know? Well, the kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection. The kingdom of God was at hand during the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2). It was at hand during the personal ministry of Jesus (Matthew 4:17). Some then living were to see the kingdom come with power (Mark 9:1). The power

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Some Things Billy Graham Never Preaches

Continued from page 3

came after the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles (Acts 1:8). But the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-4,14,43).

Now from these passages cited above, we are driven irresistibly to the conclusion that with the coming of the Spirit there came also power, and, with

the power, the kingdom came into existence. Thus the Lord's kingdom existed in the days of the apostles. Those who heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ became citizens in the kingdom then (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4,41,47; 11:14-15; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). When Jesus comes the second time it will be the "end," not the

beginning (I Corinthians 15:22-26). When Jesus comes, the earth will be destroyed; there will be therefore no place left for this imaginary millennial kingdom (II Peter 3:10-14). Today is the time to enter Christ's kingdom. Do it today; wait no longer. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Al. 35580.

Conversions On The Day Of Penetecost

Jesus had given the great commission to preach the gospel to the whole creation. He had stipulated, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). He had ascended into heaven with the promise to his apostles of the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5,8; Lk. 24:49).

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles (Acts 1:26-2:1-4). He did not come upon the multitude. The Holy Spirit came with the "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." The multitude came "when this was noised abroad." **PRAYING FOR GOD TO SEND HIS SAVING POWER OR HOLY SPIRIT IS BASED ON A FALSE CONCEPT OF BIBLICAL TEACHING.**

The apostles spoke in fifteen languages on Pentecost. They spoke "the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). But there were doubters who sought to discredit the speakers who were guided by the Holy Spirit. They did so by charging them with drunkenness. Peter stood up with the eleven and said, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day" (Acts 2:13-15). It was only 9 o'clock in the morning.

We have some of the things said in his sermon recorded. Let us together notice what he said.

Peter said, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (vs 16). The prophecy to which he referred is Joel 2:28. Joel stated, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh . . . "As we have seen, the spirit came only to the apostles, who were Jews. The prophecy was fulfilled completely when the Gentiles of the house of Cornelius were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44; 11:15). In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit was always promised. The reception of the Holy Spirit was never commanded and never a condition of salvation.

Peter reminded his audience of the miracles he performed in their midst. He affirmed the miracles were proof of the approval of God (Acts 2:22). John observed, "And many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

The speaker affirmed the crucifixion of Christ by "wicked hands" was in the "foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). Paul informed the church at Ephesus, "According as he [Christ, WEK] 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). God foreordained or predestinated salvation in Christ. In his plan he used



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

wicked men. He did not make them wicked.

It was not possible to keep the Son of God in the grave. God loosed "the pains of death" and raised him up (Acts 2:24). Peter then quoted Psalms 16:8-11, which prophesied Jesus' flesh would not see corruption. Peter then asserted David was still in the tomb. He said, David "foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, [the unseen world, WEK] nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:25-32).

Christ was exalted to the right hand of God. He is now on his throne (Acts 2:30,34). He shall reign "till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet." "The last enemy that shall be abolished is death" (I Cor. 15:26).

Peter made personal application of his sermon. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

The audience response was to manifest the agony of guilt. "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). This reaction manifested their faith in Jesus as God's son.

The Danger With Some "Icing On The Cake"

(No. 3)

Have you ever heard the argument that we ought to leave the instrument out of worship because, if unauthorized, then we are safe, but, if authorized, then we are still safe in not using it. "Better safe than sorry," you know. The problem with this approach is easier to see, perhaps, than with some of the others (discussed in the previous two installments). If the instrument is authorized, then not only is it allowable in worship, but we are obligated to use it. Better find out what the Bible really teaches on this rather than just make a wager. Incidentally, if we are really wrong after all about the instrument's not being authorized, then for us to exclude the instrument-user from our fellowship and teach against them and their practice would be the height of presumption! I don't believe for a minute that we are, but we need to realize the stakes involved here. To bind where God has not bound or to loose where he has not loosed are equally sinful in the sight of God (cf. I Pet. 4:11; I Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 15:24).



PHILLIP GRAY

We should give book-chapter-and-verse authority for what we bind or loose, not wishes or wagers.

Please let me not be misunderstood. It is certain that the safest course is to believe in God and the Bible as his word, to be baptized for the remission of sins, to continue faithfully in the one church and live a good moral life expecting heaven at last. This is safe, however, not because we bet it may be the better of two options but, because it is the only way that our capacity for rational thought (given by God to all responsible human beings), coupled with a passionate love of truth (developed freely of our own choosing), can lead us as we view God's revelation of himself in the Bible (cf. Prov. 23:23; Roms. 1:19, 20; II Tim. 3:16, 17). If we do not come to these conclusions, it is because we haven't chosen to cultivate the love of truth (which entails honesty) and/or to use our capacity for rational thought (which entails diligent study) as we study God's revelation.

When we defend the truth, therefore, why not just present the evidence and make persuasive appeals to our prospect's love of truth without adding the kind of "icing on the cake" which to some may seem to be in the mouth sweet as honey, but which might prove to make the belly bitter?—P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441

He who practices what he preaches may have to put in some overtime.



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 19

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Repentance Before Faith?

(No. 1)

Those who teach one is saved at the point of faith — the very "split second he believes" — once openly debated the proposition: "The Scriptures teach that, in the order of occurrence, REPENTANCE precedes FAITH." You perceive that if, *after* a man BELIEVES, he must *repent*, then he was *not* saved the very moment he believed! Yet admittedly salvation is conditional upon one's repentance (Luke 13:3, 5). Knowing this, they sought to convince people that in the sequence of events repentance comes *before* faith.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Those who hold this doctrine argue that "repentance" is ALWAYS MENTIONED BEFORE "faith," in every passage where both are mentioned. We readily admit this to be true. There is no exception. However, the order of mention is not necessarily the order of *occurrence*. If one eats "ham and eggs," he does not necessarily eat the ham first, then the eggs. We put on our "shoes and socks" — but not in that order! I never heard a man say he put on his "vest and coat" — the order of mention is always "coat and vest." Furthermore, in two succeeding verses the order of mention of "faith" and "confession" is reversed! It is "Confess" and "believe" (in Romans 10:9), and "believe" and "confess" (in verse 10). To Cornelius the apostle Peter preached Christ, "whom they slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts 10:39). This assuredly is not the sequence of events! They did not slay Jesus first, then nail him to the cross! So, the fact that "repentance" is always MENTIONED before "faith," does not necessarily mean that it comes before faith.

Let us examine those four texts where both "faith" and "repentance" are mentioned. (1) "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of REPENTANCE from dead works, and of FAITH

toward God . . ." (Hebrews 6:1). REPENTANCE does indeed come before that *degree* of "faith" that saves — before faith has been perfected, and procures salvation (Acts 3:19). In fact, not only does REPENTANCE come before "saving faith," — but BAPTISM also comes before THAT degree of "faith" (Mark 16:16). "Faith" remains, or continues, after baptism, so that *Christians* have "faith," and are called "believers" (I Timothy 4:12). Faith should continue to "grow exceedingly" (II Thessalonians 1:3). Admittedly, REPENTANCE comes before this *growing* "faith" of Christians! And so does *baptism*. Perhaps this is the degree of "faith" spoken of in Hebrews 6:1.

(2) Another text used to support the idea that "faith" comes after "repentance," is: "And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE him" (Matthew 21:32). But this was spoken to the Jews, who already believed in God, the Father. By John the Baptist they were required to repent of their sins against GOD (in whom they already believed), and then were taught to BELIEVE in CHRIST. This was before Christ had fully proved and confirmed his mission. Hence, men who were trying to live up to the Old Covenant were to REPENT; then as Christ's divinity was established, they were to believe in "HIM" (Matthew 21:32; John 20:30-31). We learn from Acts 19:4 that John's BAPTISM (as well as the *repentance* he preached) preceded their "faith" IN CHRIST! But who will now argue that in the order of occurrence, BAPTISM precedes FAITH???

(3) Paul said he had been "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Where Christ was not known they (1) were to repent of their sins against GOD — in whom they had faith already; then (2) they were to believe in CHRIST, which faith was to be produced by the *new testimony* Paul was presenting to them (Romans 10:17). They knew not Christ until that missionary journey which Paul is reviewing. However, FAITH in GOD preceded REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD! Subsequent to their getting a right attitude toward God (in whom they already believed), they would be ready to believe CHRIST, the Savior! Remember: an *obedient faith* toward Christ continues after, or follows, BAPTISM,


as well as it continues after, or follows, REPENTANCE. Yet none would argue that in the order of occurrence, BAPTISM precedes FAITH!

(4) The last text where REPENTANCE and FAITH are mentioned together, is Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Advocates of the doctrine under review sometimes insist: "This text does not say, 'Believe ye the gospel, and repent.'" This was the preaching of John the Immerser, and was to the Jews, who already believed *in God*. They — who accepted the Old Testament Scriptures — were required to repent of their sins against God, in whom they had previously believed! They were also required to BELIEVE THE GOSPEL later, when it would be preached in its fulness. Hear the apostle Paul regarding John's labors: "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that *they should believe on him* which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts 19:4). Thus both their *repentance* and *baptism* preceded their belief *in Christ Jesus*!

In all these four texts which mention REPENTANCE and FAITH, the "repentance" and the "faith" are NOT toward the same person. It is never "repentance toward GOD, AND faith toward God." It is not "repentance toward Christ and faith toward Christ." The *repentance* is toward GOD (in whom they already believed), and the *faith* (which they are called upon to have) is in CHRIST!

It is interesting to note that of the four passages which mention both REPENTANCE and FAITH, only one mentions *both* GOD and CHRIST. Examine them with me: (1) Matthew 21:32 mentions neither God nor Christ, but John the Baptist. Will faith in John the Immerser save us? Was their REPENTANCE to be toward John? and their FAITH toward John? Surely not! Jesus was there talking to the Chief Priests and Jewish elders concerning their attitude toward John: yet Jesus did not mention himself, nor the Father. (2) Mark 1:15 mentions neither Christ nor God the Father with what was to be believed and the repenting that was commanded. (3) Hebrews 6:1 mentions God and "dead works," but says nothing at all about *Christ*. The "faith" is to be "toward God" and the

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Does It Make All That Much Difference?

It would be difficult to conceive of a time in the history of the church when so many things threaten to disrupt and cause trouble for the people of God. False theories concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage are being widely accepted by brethren, and in some cases, those living in adultery are encouraged to continue therein. Morality among members of the church seems to be dropping lower and lower, and very few preachers are saying anything at all about it when members of the church dress and act like the devil's goats. Social drinking is practiced by an increasing number of church members, and very little is being said about it from our pulpits. A number of preachers and other brethren are trying to equate the church of our Lord to a denomination. Many among us are not convinced that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is really sinful. Some are insisting that elderships have no authority to make decisions in behalf of the congregation. There are still those who would divide churches over the matter of orphan



BOBBY DUNCAN

homes and church cooperation. It is being predicted that our next major battle in the church will be over whether or not the Bible is really inspired of God and is a reliable guide. The teaching of atheistic evolution is so widespread, and is being accepted under the guise of theistic evolution by many church members. Those of us who preach simply must direct attention to these matters.

Beside these problems among us, there is a lost world, which will continue to be lost, unless and until we reach it with the gospel of Christ. At last count we were not making very much progress in doing so.

It seems that those of us who preach would use our time wisely if we directed the bulk of our attention to such matters as these instead of castigating faithful brethren who agree with us in every matter which affects the teaching and practice of the religion of our Lord. I refer particularly to articles and sermons which brand as false teachers, unworthy of our confidence, those who might not agree with us on whether the law of Moses ended the minute Jesus died, the day of Pentecost, when the gospel was preached to the Samaritans, when the gospel was preached to Cornelius, in or about A.D. 62 when the gospel had been preached to every creature, or in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was overthrown. *What difference does it make*, so long as we all believe the law of Moses has been done away, and that all men today are amenable to the law of Christ?

I am not saying that one has no right to study these matters, or even that he has no right to teach what he believes to be the truth with reference to them. What I am calling into question is the seeming disposition on the part of some to consider as disloyal to the faith those who differ with them on the matter — to leave the impression in their preaching and writing that those who differ with them over the matter are the instigators of some sinister *movement* designed to overthrow the kingdom of God.

Brethren, does it really make all that much difference whether or not one agrees with me with reference to when the law of Moses ended, so long as he is committed to the teaching of the Bible with reference to *everything* that affects our faith and practice? There are just too few who are standing, and seeing, and asking for the old paths, for the faithful to divide themselves up into factions to fight against each other over matters that do not amount to a hill of beans. I plead with brethren not to forget the difference between allies and enemies to the truth.

Repentance Before Faith?

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repentance is from "dead works." (4) Acts 20:21 does mention GOD AND Christ: but the REPENTANCE is "toward God," while the FAITH is "toward Christ!" Thus, not one single passage says, "Repentance toward Jesus Christ" comes before — precedes — "faith toward Jesus Christ!" — Not one! (to be continued). — 1000 Saint John Road Route 9 Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

The Existence Of God, Clearly Seen

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen . . . even his eternal power . . ." (Romans 1:20).

Someone said that if you wanted to persuade an atheist of God's existence, invite him over for a good meal and then ask him if he believes in a cook. This may sound rather weak. Yet Romans 1:20 points out that not only is this a valid argument, it is valid enough to leave man without any excuse for failing to believe in God.



ANCIL JENKINS

The existence of our world presents almost an embarrassment to some. Although theories may be presented to attempt to explain where man came from, they have difficulty in explaining where matter came from. Has matter always existed? If so, is it eternal in origin. Frankly, I had rather believe in an eternal God than eternal matter. Some recent theories, such as the Big Bang theory, are very similar to the Genesis account of the world's beginning. Their problem is that they still leave God out of creation.

The orderliness of the universe is a powerful argument. The earth is exactly the distance from the sun needed to support life. The tilting of the earth on its axis provides us with changes in seasons. The earth revolves on a predictable schedule around the sun. For all of this to be an accident, there must be a large number of other planets which "did not make it." The probability of one planet out of a countless number of others being in just the right place is beyond probability.

There is a unity in the world. Nature, left to itself, will live in harmony. The animals will use the oxygen provided by plants. Only man has caused an imbalance in nature.

Do you believe in God? If not, have you examined the evidence? There is enough; God has given it to you in his word. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Respect For The Preacher

MARZEE KING TEW

"And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall . . ." (II Kings 4:8-10).

The Shunamite woman and her husband built the room for Elisha, and he was welcome every time he passed that way.

No doubt, the word *great* here means a woman of wealth, but this woman was great in another way. *She recognized the man of God as being someone special.* She wanted to provide comfort for him. By necessary inference, we can conclude she loved the man of God, respected him, trusted him, and wanted to encourage and support him.

How does our attitude toward men who preach the gospel compare to the Shunamite woman's attitude?

Romans 10:13-15 reads: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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

Continued on page 3

Preach The Gospel

The peerless apostle to the Gentiles was determined to know nothing in his preaching "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). Jesus of Nazareth was the long anticipated Messiah, and his death on Calvary was a fulfillment of the prophet's message (Isaiah 53:1-12; Acts 8:27-37). The core of the message proclaimed by all New Testament evangelists was that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:17-21; I Corinthians 15:1-4). This is the good news, the emancipation proclamation, the word of reconciliation, that Jesus directed his apostles to preach to every creature (Mark 16:15,16).



R. W. GRAY

The aim of all apostolic preaching may be summarized by Paul's affirmation: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17), or in John's affirmation: "And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (I John 5:11). The heart's desire and prayer of those Bible preachers was that men might be saved from the guilt and consequence of sin (Romans 10:1-3; 9:1-3). They understood that this was possible only for those who were "in Christ."

It is obvious as one reads the New Testament that some possessed a "felt need" for salvation and some did not. Cornelius of Acts ten and eleven, and the Ethiopian of Acts eight, apparently knew that something was missing in their lives, and they were receptive to the gospel. The Epicureans and Stoics of Acts seventeen were of a different background and disposition. They were not as receptive to the truth as were the former.

While the "approach" was somewhat different as required by the levels of understanding and attitudes of the prospect there was no change in the conclusion reached with the audience. Whatever the "felt need" of the prospect the message was Christ and him crucified. No alternate nor altered gospel could be tolerated (Galatians 1:6-9). Therefore, those who preach to a 20th Century audience must not lose sight

of the design of preaching. This will help them to see the need for staying on the subject, for preaching a crucified Lord as the remedy for sin. It is a perversion of the gospel when the content is aimed almost exclusively to meeting what the finite speaker perceives as the "felt need" of the prospect.

It is fine to let folk know "we care," and it is good that lost men know we understand their loneliness, etc., but this would-be "new" or "fresh" approach is justifiable as a confidence builder or attention arresting tool at best. When this is all we proclaim we leave the sinner where we find him; lost, without God, and without hope. Close examination of much of the so-called preaching in our brotherhood today reveals the extent of influence exerted by the social gospel advocates upon our preachers. Too much "love" and too little "judgment" leaves the sinner with a misconception of God and his saving grace. A crucified Christ reveals God's hatred for sin and his love for dying men. The soft soap or soft sell message of many today reveals a sympathetic heart but no remedy for the disease. Such preaching is out of balance and is not deserving of our support and encouragement.

A recent religious publication gave considerable attention to the gimmicks employed by those who suffer attendance losses in their denominational congregations. A special for sportsmen service included the blast of a whistle by the referee, a sermon on Jonah and the whale, followed by a fish dinner and a prize for the attender telling the tallest fish tale. Some churches offer trading stamps, one resorted to blessing motor cycles right in the meeting house, and one minister proposed a dance in the graveyard next to the church building.

Before we find ourselves too amused by the tactics employed by denominational preachers we would do well to examine some of our own. One is somewhat reluctant to reveal these ridiculous "tricks" of the trade for fear of inspiring some brother to "give it a try." It does not seem to occur to us as it might that such tricks cheapen the gospel, reducing it to a sort of side show entertainment, rather than the news of the ages and the wisdom of God it is designed to project.

When Paul preached Christ crucified some found it "foolish" or, to say the least of it, unattractive and uninspiring. When Jesus preached, some stopped their ears, closed their eyes and their hearts, but the Lord did not change the message to make it more palatable to them. He placed the blame of their

rejection upon the rejector. He knew, as we must learn, that all men will not receive the gospel. It is our responsibility to preach it as God gave it, without apology, without trick or gimmickery. When we speak the truth in love we have done all God has required. Our frustration over a lack of response stems from our wish to assume God's role of "giving the increase." Let us learn to be content with planting and watering. The gospel is God's power, not our's. It is his message and we dare not tamper with it. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

Respect For The Preacher

Continued from page 2

preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

Preachers of the gospel are men of God! They bring glad tidings of good things, and they promote peace. They are messengers; they preach the word in season and out of season; they study to show themselves approved unto God; they offer themselves as living sacrifices.

The preacher is not conscripted; he volunteers. He is *willing* to serve. He wants to serve God by serving his fellowman. Do we not owe him the same respect the Shunamite woman gave Elisha?

My husband and I were invited into a friend's home after Sunday night church. At least six other couples were present, and I was in the kitchen with the ladies when the conversation narrowed down to a gossip session concerning the local preacher. The ladies criticized everything from the way he wore his socks to the number of children he had.

My husband appeared in the doorway. "Are you ready to go?" I recognized the look on his face, and knew I had no choice. On the way home, he told me the men in the living room were also "raking the preacher over the coals." He did not want any part of the discussion. He was wise.

Now, many years later, we have more reason to be concerned about Christians' attitude toward the minister. Our son stands in front of a congregation. His earnest desire is to win souls for Christ. *He has volunteered.* "The need to preach just won't go away," he told us as he entered Alabama Christian School of Religion.

Every time I think about our son's becoming a full time preacher, I wonder if he, too, will be "raked over the coals." I see people breaking down the influence of the local preacher by criticizing every sermon he preaches.

They expect him *and his family* to live perfect lives.

They expect him to bring their mates or children back to Christ in one short visit, when they haven't been able to do it themselves.

They don't want him to have special friends, even though we know Jesus had three close friends in Peter, James, and John.

They seem jealous of his time, not wanting him to hunt, fish, or play ball, unless he does those things with them personally.

A friend added this to my list: "We expect the preacher to sacrifice all the material things we so desperately want for ourselves." And my mother had her own view. "Never call the preacher by his first name," she instructed. "Use his title to show your respect."

Our son is not perfect. Neither is the minister I listen to every Sunday. Preachers are human beings; yet they are set apart in that they have volunteered for full-time service to the Master. The next time you say something negative about a preacher of the gospel, stop to think. Are you following the example of the Shunamite woman? Do your actions show love, respect, and trust? Do they encourage and support the man of God? — Route 1, Box 47-T, Titus, AL 36080.

The Spirit Of Reverence

DALTON KEY

"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalms 89:7).

The God of heaven is not some sort of "Good buddy" to joke with or about. He is not a grandfatherly Santa Claus to be snickered at. Neither is he a mythological figment of some immature, overeager imagination.

The God we worship is not dead. He's not even sick. Our God is not visible to the eye — flesh cannot see spirit — yet he exists, he lives, he permeates the very universe notwithstanding. God is no laughing matter to be abused as the brunt of jokes. His majestic name deserves better than to be bandied about through exclamatory vulgarisms. He exists, he lives, and he deserves and demands our profound reverence.

God is both known and unknown, knowable yet unknowable. All with ability to read and reason can know the God of the Bible as he has revealed himself in the creation, in the sacred scriptures, and in the Christ. "And this is life eternal, that they might know

thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The boundless power, infinite love, and eternal nature of God can be realized as they have been revealed. And yet to completely comprehend, to fully fathom the awesome might and majesty, goodness and grace of God — this is far more than our finite, mortal minds can begin to grasp, much less wholly understand. The God we serve is too awesome for human comprehension. To fully grasp the nature of God we would need to be gods ourselves. Yes, the God we serve deserves our awe, our fear, our reverence.

No one will rise high who jeers at sacred things. He who makes light of deity, profaning the name of God by using it in a vulgar or flippant manner, will never make a man. He may become something that at a distance may look something like a man, but he will never be a man.

May we, in both our minds and manners, put the God of heaven back on the throne where he belongs. "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him" (Psalms 33:8). — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

The Pope Admits: "We Goofed On Galileo"

In 1881, George Salmon published his famous book on *The Infallibility of the Church*, and it went through four editions with its last printing in 1914. James D. Bales had the final edition reprinted in 1948 at Searcy, Arkansas. It was written as a response to the view of Roman Catholicism that through its Councils and Popes it could speak *ex cathedra* (literally "from the chair") or infallibly on matters of faith and morals. Salmon predicted that the many errors in Romanism and excuses made to explain them while still holding to infallibility would one day be found out (p. ix.).



MARTEL PACE

In chapter fourteen, under the heading, "The Blunders of the Infallible Guide," he deals with the celebrated case of Galileo and his defense of the idea that the earth rotates about the sun. Galileo had become a staunch proponent of the Copernican theory that the earth was not the center of the universe with all heavenly bodies revolving around it. Galileo was a "firm believer in the truth of Scripture, and as soon as he came to believe that the Copernican theory was true, he could not help also believing that it was not contrary to the Bible" (p. 231). However, though convinced the Bible could not err, its interpreters might, and some passages were not to be interpreted literally. He observed that the purpose of sacred writers was not to teach us astronomy, and they scarcely mentioned the heavenly bodies by name, "except the sun and moon, and once or twice only Venus, under the name of Lucifer . . ." (p. 231)

For Galileo to take upon himself the instruction of the Church was the greatest affront! How could a layman dare presume to teach theologians the best interpretation of Scripture? If the earth moves, the theologians were wrong in thinking the Bible taught it does not. As a result of his beliefs Galileo suffered immensely. At first the Inquisition sought not to deal harshly with the astronomer, because he was at the height of his popularity. So, at first they pronounced a verdict of, "Not Guilty, but don't do it again" (p. 235). Galileo submitted to the Inquisition and to the esteemed Cardinal Bellarmine, promising to obey and not teach his "heresy" again. All books which advocated the Pythagorean doctrine (Copernicus' theory) were banned until "corrected."

It was not until the time of Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) that insistence on believing in the immobility of the earth was finally abandoned by Catholics. But no apology was made for the mistreatment of Galileo. When the gentleman again published his views in disobedience to the Church, he was now treated harshly. He dared in 1632 to put arguments in the mouth of an ignorant person which had been made to him in personal discussion by Pope Urban VIII! He was promptly summoned by the Inquisition to Rome.

At the trial, Galileo pleaded in vain that he had obeyed the previous orders and only stated his views as theory. He was placed under house arrest for his remaining years. He was not put on the rack, but this is beside the point. Did the Inquisition, under the Pope's authority, denounce him as a heretic for his views about the movement of the earth? Did an "infallible" authority blunder? The answer of history is an irrefutable, "Yes, it did!"

For centuries men have waited for the Church of Rome to make an apology and admit it was in error on an *ex cathedra* statement. Some may reply that this

was not a matter of "faith and morals." But it was a matter of proper exegesis of Scripture. If the Church and its Pope could not determine the proper teaching of Scripture on this point, how can we be sure she has on any other?

At long last we have an apology from the Pope to Galileo, but not an admission of error in an *infallible* pronouncement. *Time* magazine (May 23, 1983, p. 58) has reported on the most recent action concerning the "great embarrassment." Note the following:

Last week John Paul II virtually admitted that the church had made a major mistake He showed his sympathy for Galileo in a speech to a Rome meeting of 200 leading scientists who were honoring the 350th anniversary of the publication of the *Dialogue* [Galileo's great work of 1632, M.P.].

"The church's experience during the Galileo affair and after it led to a more mature attitude toward, a more accurate grasp of its proper

authority," said the Pope.

Does this mean the Pope admits he does not have the power to speak infallibly on faith and morals subjects? I doubt it. But it should, for the Pope of 1632 was wrong and could not even determine what fell under the topic of "faith and morals." How can Catholics be certain today Pope Paul II is right on birth control or other cardinal doctrines?

We would have liked to hear a more full apology to Galileo, but we doubt it will be forthcoming. How wonderful if a document would be published under the auspices of the Holy Office stating: "We were wrong and Galileo was right. The Pope who directed the Inquisition of the 1630's to denounce and condemn the views of Galileo was mistaken. Therefore, we recognize the Pope of today is not infallible, for he is an ordinary man. Please study the Bible for yourself and follow its teaching. You will then be the kind of Christian God desires." — 3414 Elaine Montgomery, AI 36109.

Seeing Ourselves As Others See Us

Recently we have received announcements of graduation exercises wherein some fine young person of close acquaintance is to be awarded a diploma or degree. Such an award is designed to compliment the graduate for the completion of a given course of study and work leading toward higher levels of occupational or professional status. In consideration of such work performed requiring the application of one's physical and mental abilities, we would certainly agree that such congratulations are in order. At this season, it is not unusual to see church bulletins portraying a number of beautiful young graduates, boys and girls, who have successfully completed high school or college work. Hopefully, these will go on to serve God and humanity in excellence. We prayerfully wish for them a life of happiness and prosperity. Above all, we trust theirs will be a life of faithfulness in Christian service. Such a life requires the process of examination at frequent intervals. In II Corinthians 13:5, the inspired apostle Paul wrote: "Examine your own selves whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves . . ." In a former letter to this same church the exhortation is found, "But let a man prove himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." In this he referred to the preparation they were to have prior to their partaking of the communion feast, the Lord's supper; but the principle applies in all of man's relationships to God.

Reading even casually from the sacred scriptures will enable one to become and to be aware of the responsibility of turning attention inward that a spiritual self-examination be performed with even a greater degree of consistency and honesty than was required in evaluating one's academic standing or status.

Surely wisdom is displayed when one carefully studies his own behavior and regularly makes an honest appraisal of his spiritual progress and growth. How unfortunate is the individual who can see only



CLIFFORD M. SMITH

his better qualities and is blind to the need of adding as many Christian characteristics as is possible to his life. I'm convinced that some are honestly blind to their own faults, but isn't it much more disturbing to think of the many who are willfully blind to their own misgivings and faults. How easy it is to see the absence of certain graces in the lives of others and to overlook the need of similar attributes in our own lives. In II Corinthians 10:12 the apostle Paul explains this self-deception by saying, "They themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding." This was a very common practice, and still is for the person who would come to the conclusion that he, himself, is quite good, whereas he may be good only by comparison with those about him who are worse than himself.

Some years ago the Gallop pole reported on a series of religious questions that had been asked of a significant cross-section of the American people. One of the questions was: Do you believe in heaven? The answer was an overwhelming, Yes! A second question was: Do you expect to go to heaven? It may come as a surprise to you, but 88 percent of the ones questioned seemed very confident as they expressed their expectation to go to heaven when death overtook them. Yet, we remember the words of our Lord when he said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

It was Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, who once said: "O that God the gift would give us to see ourselves as others see us." — 1645 Doerun Drive Columbus, GA 31904.

God never tires of hearing us in prayer.

* * *

Prayer is not a gadget we use when nothing else works.

* * *

Are we as enthusiastic in our prayers as we are in all other areas of our lives?

* * *

The chaplains who pray for the United States Senate and the House of Representatives might speak a word now and then on behalf of the taxpayers.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 6)

"I
th

most noble Festus; but speak forth
truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, JUNE 17,

NUMBER 24

Capital Punishment — I n By Electrocution

In 1977, my friend Eddie Nassar was murdered in Mobile, Ala. In 1983, John Louis Evans, III, convicted murderer of Eddie Nassar, was put to death in Alabama by electrocution at 8:44 p.m. CST, Friday, April 22.



DEMAR ELAM

I went to college with Eddie Nassar in the mid-sixties. Like me, he was preparing to preach the Gospel. Eddie was a serious student and a real likable fellow. He was married, and from all indications had a bright future. There was no way then to know that in the mid-seventies my friend Eddie would be gunned down before the eyes of his two little girls while he worked in his store. His killer, Evans, took the money he got in the robbery and went to Disney World for fun and games. Eddie lay in a coffin while Evans kicked up his heels in Florida. Later, after his capture, Evans demanded the death penalty as he said he never intended to reform. However, in recent years reports spoke of how "humble" Evans had become. With the electric chair looming before Evans he did sober a bit.

Before and after Evans died, a group of protesters burned candles and claimed that Evans was subjected to "cruel and unusual punishment." What about Eddie Nassar? In the name of all that is right and decent, where were these protesters when Eddie was killed? Why weren't they burning candles for Eddie?

What does the Bible have to say on this subject? Romans chapter 13:1-6 teaches that capital punishment is divinely sanctioned as a prerogative of government in punishment of evildoers. The latter part of Romans 12 teaches that a Christian can not take *personal* vengeance because "vengeance belongeth" to the Lord. God's vengeance is exercised upon this earth through higher powers (civil government). "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). Ordained of God means arranged or appointed of God. Verses 3 & 4 state: "For rulers

are not a terror to good work, but to the evil. If thou wilt then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Please note three important lessons: (1) If you do that which is evil, be *afraid*. Why? (2) He beareth not the sword in vain. The sword is the symbol of the death penalty, and you don't slap one on the back of the hand with a sword to punish. (3) Higher powers are the "Ministers of God," a *revenger to execute* wrath upon the evil doer.

It strikes me as extremely significant that the switch on Alabama's electric chair had not been tripped in 18 years *until* the night Eddie's killer was executed. Eddie Nassar was a faithful child of God, a good father and husband, an honorable son, a Gospel preacher, a good citizen, a good man! He was a man who had great ability and usefulness

in the Kingdom of God. In this one case (the first time in 18 years) the higher powers *did* execute wrath upon the evildoer. I am certain that God takes great notice of his children and the injustices they suffer at the hands of evildoers. I am just as certain that it is not God's will that evildoers go unpunished.

If the criminals of our land knew that their evil deeds would not go unpunished, we would see fewer good citizens of this land murdered each year. Government has been ordained by God to serve as a deterrent to crime. More often than not it fails miserably. America is a weaker nation because it fails so often to execute wrath upon evil doers. Capital punishment — death by execution will make our nation safer, stronger, and a more just society in which to live.

At least in the case of Eddie Nassar, *justice* was done! — Forest Park Church of Christ P.O. Box 623 Forest Park, GA 30051.

Antipas, The Faithful Witness

At the end of the first century, Christians in the Roman world were confronted with a wave of persecution that threatened their very existence. Among those brethren that paid the ultimate price was Antipas of Pergamum. Christ said of him, "Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Revelation 2:13).

About the Man

All we know about Antipas is recorded in Revelation 2:12-17. But from these verses we can develop an interesting profile. His name meant "likeness of his father." It was a shortened form of Antipater. While his parents probably did not intend it, the meaning of his name well describes a faithful




JOHN WADDEY

Christian.

His home was Pergamum, the provincial capital of the district of Asia. It was located near the site of ancient Troy. Pergamum was an educational and cultural center. Her library once numbered some 200,000 volumes, second only to the one in Alexandria. "Parchment" book material was first developed in Pergamum and was yet manufactured there.

His home town was a notable center for pagan religion. A great temple dedicated to Athena was located there. An altar to Zeus stood before her temple. In addition, the local citizens worshipped Ascalapius the god of healing. His symbol being the serpent. Worshippers adored a huge serpent in his temple. Pergamum was also the regional seat for emperor worship. Roman law demanded that each citizen annually go to the Emperor's temple, burn a pinch of incense and confess publicly "Caesar is Lord." He would then receive a certificate of compliance. One was not expected to forsake his own

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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Antipas, The Faithful Witness

Continued from page 1

god; just to include Caesar. To refuse to participate was considered a denial of Caesar's divinity and an act of treason against the government. Penalties were severe.


What Antipas Did

He was Christ's witness (2:13). Witness in the Greek means *martyr*, i.e., one who is willing to die rather than renounce the Lord. It is likely that Antipas was a public leader of the church, for they were usually singled out for persecution in order to intimidate their followers.

He lived "where Satan's throne" was (2:13). This speaks of his city, Pergamum. It was wholly given over to idolatry. All the vices of paganism flourished there. Satan's power and influence were supreme in Pergamum at that time. Tremendous pressures were brought upon Christians by Satan's workers. Some weaker brethren had compromised with sin rather than endure the hardships. Some ate the pagan sacrifices and committed fornication. Idolatrous festivals commonly included eating the sacrificial meal and ritual fornication, even as the Baal worship of ancient times. Antipas was faithful and steadfast in the face of every temptation. He truly loved God with all his heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37). He kept his eyes straight ahead and turned neither to the right hand nor to the left (Proverbs 4:25-27). He was willing to die rather than to renounce his faith and sell his soul! May we have his conviction in the hour of trial.

Antipas fought the good fight of faith and died a hero's death (I Timothy 6:12). He was more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37). Like his fellow-martyrs he "overcame [Satan] because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of [his] testimony; and [he] loved not [his] life even unto death" (Revelation 12:11). Because of his faithfulness his reward was assured. Jesus promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). He received the hidden manna (2:17); this would be Jesus the bread of life (John 6:35). He was given the white stone which showed his acceptance and exhonoration of all charges against him. He received the new name.

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

We Need To Be Specific

There seems to be a calculated effort on the part of some to renounce error in general without ever giving a hint as to the identity of any specific error. Sin in general is renounced; but specific sins are seldom named. With such renunciation of sin and error one may preach the truth forcefully without ever incurring the displeasure of any of his auditors. Unfortunately, however, he will preach the truth without any of his auditors ever learning the truth with reference to any specific sin or error.



BOBBY DUNCAN

No one ever gets into trouble or loses any of his popularity by pointing out that people should not sin. The trouble comes when one begins to name specific sins. One can get by without any difficulty preaching against drunkenness; but he is likely to have trouble if he condemns social drinking. Abusing one's body is admitted by all to be a sin; but every preacher knows things are more peaceful if he never mentions smoking cigarettes. It is all right to preach against immodest apparel; but to preach against swimming or wearing shorts may create a furor. To preach against lasciviousness is very much in order; but it may be dangerous to mention dancing. Every preacher should warn against the dangers of false doctrine; but some get excited if the preacher identifies any specific doctrine as being false.

It is interesting to observe that Jesus indicted certain ones of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" only after he had cited a clear-cut discrepancy between what they taught and what God commanded (Matthew 15:4-9). Is it not in order for us to cite discrepancies between what some practice today and what is taught in the word of God?

When Paul rebuked immorality in the church at Corinth he did not merely point out that immorality is sinful. He made it very plain that he was talking about a specific kind of immorality: "... that one should have his father's wife" (I Corinthians 5:1). When he condemned division in the church at Corinth, he made sure there would be no misunderstanding concerning that of which he wrote: "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" (1:12). Should faithful preachers of the word in our generation not be specific when condemning sin and error?

Peter made it plain to his hearers on Pentecost that they were guilty of the sin of crucifying the Christ. He said: "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). In Acts 4:10 he referred to "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified," and in Acts 5:30 he referred to him as "Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." You see, Peter was specific in naming the sin he was condemning in his hearers. Can we afford to be other-

wise in our preaching?

Brethren, we must be specific in our teaching of the truth and refutation of error. Certainly we should not be unkind or rude. But to fail to be specific in condemning sin is a demonstration of cowardice.

Repentance Before Faith?

(No. 2)

If one is saved at the point of faith, he must be saved without **REPENTANCE**, or else repentance must *precede* faith. Admittedly one must repent to be saved (Luke 13:3,5). Therefore those who teach one is saved the very moment he **BELIEVES**, once openly affirmed that, in the order of occurrence, **REPENTANCE** precedes **FAITH**.

In a former article we examined every passage where both **REPENTANCE** and **FAITH** are mentioned. In not a single text does the Bible teach that without faith in God one repents of his sins against God. Let us consider now some evidences which further convince honest inquirers that one must **BELIEVE** before he can **REPENT**. If we succeed in showing this from the Scriptures, then the doctrine is false which says that one is saved the very "split second" that he **BELIEVES**.

Jesus said, "The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Matthew 12:41). Notice the sequence of events connected with their repentance: (1) Jonah preached (Jonah 3:4-5). (2) Nineveh believed (Jonah 3:4-5), which faith came by "hearing the word of God" (Romans 10:17). (3) Believing the word preached by Jonah, they "turned from their evil way" (Jonah 3:10). But that "turning" Jesus called **REPENTANCE** (Matthew 12:41). There was no possible inducement for them to **REPENT** until they first **BELIEVED** the message of God!

The apostle Paul declared "that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). How on earth can a sinner repent *because of the goodness of God*, unless he first **BELIEVES** that God is good? Who can imagine for one minute that the sinner changes his mind toward God before he even believes there is any goodness about God!

"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (II Corinthians 7:10). What leads a sinner to godly sorrow? What makes him sorrowful for his sins in the first place? Is it not his



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

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Antipas, The Faithful Witness

Continued from page 2

Ancient gladiators were given such a white stone engraved with a name. Upon their first victory they received the stone or ivory tablet engraved with their name, the name of their master, and the date of their first victory. It was called the "*tessera gladiatoria*." One who had proven himself victorious on many occasions, upon retirement would receive another stone with the word *spectatus* upon it, meaning that his valour had been beyond doubt.

Antipas' Cause Could Not Be Destroyed

With rage and fury Satan wrought to stamp out the growing young church. Polycarp, an elder of the church in Smyrna, died in 168 A.D. He was hunted down and dragged before the tribunal like a common thief and was urged to deny Christ. Before the

governor and mob, the old saint proclaimed, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my king who hath saved me?" Jews eagerly gathered the wood for the fire, even though it was the Sabbath day. Polycarp declined the ropes to bind him to the stake. He, too, was a faithful martyr.

A third century Christian wrote "Bassius is in the metal mines [slave labor], Malpalicus under torture, Fortunio in the dungeon. Paulus has been tortured. Victor, Julia [and others] were put to death in prison by hunger. In a few days you will hear that I have died the same." Another wrote "the brave Saturnius, who would not abjure Christ even when they tore him with pieces of iron." (The History and Teaching of the

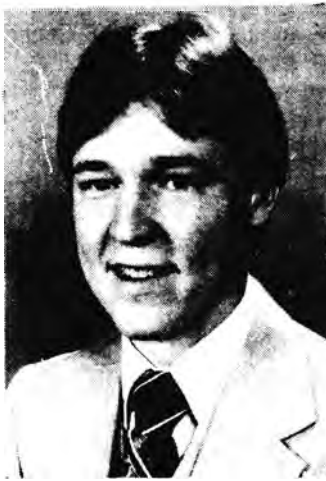
Early Church).

Tertullian (200 A.D.) wrote, "Go on, zealous governors, sacrifice the Christians at the will of the people, kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust. Your cruelty will not avail you; the oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed" (*The Apology*).

Let us be like Antipas, a faithful martyr for Jesus: faithful in the truth intrusted to us; faithful in the work he has assigned us to do; faithful in the holy life he expects us to live; faithful in the attitude and disposition he calls for; faithful to his church; faithful unto death and, we will receive the crown of life. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

A Thankless Generation

When Paul described the ungodly and unrighteous men of Rome (Romans 1:18), one of their faults was that of not being thankful (v. 21). Are we identified in that light today? "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thess. 5:18). Paul lived a life of "Giving thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). Do we have the same attitude of gratitude?



BARRY FIKE

It is so easy in our relationship to our heavenly Father to forget God? Does it sound ridiculous? How many times when you sit down to a meal do you thank God for the food before you? How many times have you thanked God for a country that doesn't molest you for worshiping God the way the Bible directs? Do you thank God for your family, the church, your clothing, your shelter, and his Son?

This may be the reason we are losing 75% of our youth to the world. As parents we have failed in our trying to impress the gratefulness that we feel toward God. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Ps. 95:1, 2).

We see new converts impressed with the joy of coming to the Lord and many seem to know how thankful they really can be: "that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9b). We must not just impress this attitude upon people; we must RADIATE it!

Suppose you had a child that refused to do anything you asked him to do. How would you interpret the child's refusal to obey you?

Wouldn't you think that the child had a lack of love, appreciation, and gratitude for you? How does God interpret it when people refuse to do simple things he has asked them to do?

Acts 2:38 tells us to repent and be baptized, and yet how many people still refuse to do so? How many are still being stingy with money when the collection plate is passed each Sunday? How many are still obstinate when it comes to winning souls for Christ? How many? Too many! How does God interpret such actions? Isn't it plain disobedience because of a lack of love for him and what he has done for us? Surely it is.

Let us all radiate an attitude of gratitude by serving him and realizing that we lose him because he first loved us!

What do you owe God you ask?

Suppose he sent his bill.

A thousand dollars for the sun upon the hill.

Two thousand for the little brook that runs along the way.

Five hundred for the night time,

And a thousand for the day.

Six hundred for the little birds that twirp, and twill, and sing.

These are bills which everyone of every clime forget. If God should charge you what you owe,

You'd never pay the debt. — Ida G. Smith

Rt. 2, Box 806-B, Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

Repentance Before Faith

continued From Page 2

BELIEF in the word of God, which convicts him of sin? Some would have us suppose that a sinner (1) becomes sorrowful for his sins, (2) repents because of that godly sorrow, and (3) — *then* he believes! However, the apostle Paul wrote, "I perceive that the same *epistle* hath made you sorry" (II Corinthians 7:8). So the divine order is: (1) the epistle, or word of God; (2) reading (or hearing) and believing what the word says; (3) this convicts of sin and produces godly sorrow, which (4) results in REPENTANCE!

Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3,5). This certainly means that one who repents will escape perishing. But if repentance comes before faith, what will happen to the penitent man if he dies before he believes? (1) He has repented, hence he will not perish (Luke 13:3,5)! (2) But he has not yet believed, so he cannot be saved (Mark 16:16)! I wonder what will happen to the poor fellow?

Jesus directed his apostles that "*repentance* . . . should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:46-47). But if a sinner cannot believe until after he has repented, why even *preach* to him until *after* he has repented? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Why does he even need to hear the word of God until AFTER he has REPENTED? Why PREACH "repentance?"

Hebrews 11:6 presents another obstacle to this doctrine! "Without faith, it is impossible to please" God. If repentance comes before FAITH, does a sinner who thus repents (without faith) please God? Does he please God when he *repents* before he believes? This supposed sequence of events would create a mixed state of affairs in heaven: For Jesus said, "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that *repenteth*" (Luke 15:7). Such does *not* please God, (Hebrews 11:6) — yet the angels rejoice? Rather confusing, isn't it??? But Jesus compounds the confusion with this declaration: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed . . ." (John 3:18). The angels rejoice because the unbelieving sinner repents; but since he repented without faith, his repentance did not please God; and — despite the angels'

joy — the unbelieving sinner who repented before he had faith, is CONDEMNED because he has *not believed!* Of course, this doctrine is false; for faith begins before it leads one to repentance, then continues to grow — as we see from II Thessalonians 1:3.

It would be interesting to hear one who teaches that, in the order of occurrence, repentance precedes faith, explain James 2:19. Our Lord's brother wrote: "The devils also believe and tremble." If repentance comes before faith, and the Bible says the devils "believe" — have the devils *repented?* If so, why are they not saved??? And how about the chief rulers of whom we read in John 12:42-43? John affirms: they "believed on him." But if, in the order of events, repentance precedes faith, they had also REPENTED. Question: Were they saved then the very moment they believed? Before you answer, you should read the entire passage: ". . . they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God!"

Imagine the following scene: One who does not believe there is a God, rejects the claims of Jesus Christ, does not believe he has an everlasting soul, nor does he believe in angels, heaven, or hell. Such an one is approached by a preacher who believes that "in the order of occurrence, repentance precedes faith."

Preacher: "Repent of your sins, which you have committed against God, and then believe in Christ as the Son of God, and he will save you."

Infidel: "I do not believe there is a God, or a Christ; neither do I believe I have sinned."

Preacher: "I understand that you do not believe in God or Christ, and that you do not believe you have sinned; — but, REPENT, and then you can believe."

Infidel: "But how can I repent, when I do not believe there is a God against whom I have sinned — nor that I have sinned?"

Preacher: "The Bible says, 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance' (II Corinthians 7:10)."

Infidel: "If it takes 'Godly Sorrow' to work repentance, tell me how I can have sorrow for sins you say I have committed against God, when I do not

Continued on page 4

Repentance Before Faith

Continued from page 3

believe there is a God, nor do I believe that I have sinned against such a being?"

Preacher: "The 'goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance' (Romans 2:4)."

Infidel: "But I do not believe there is any God who has been 'good' to me — nor do I believe there is a God against whom I have sinned, as you accuse me."

Preacher: "'Faith comes by hearing the word'

(Romans 10:17). Repent of your sins, and then I will preach to you so that you may believe there is a God — against whom you have sinned. But, you cannot BELIEVE till you have REPENTED!"

Dear reader, we have seen that neither Scripture nor common sense supports the doctrine that one repents of sins against God before and without faith in God. Neither does one repent

of his sins against Christ prior to believing in Christ. The proposition that, in the order of occurrence, REPENTANCE precedes FAITH, is false. Just as surely as one must REPENT to be saved (Luke 13:3,5), just that certain is it that one is *not* saved the very moment he believes! — 1000 Saint John Road Route 9 Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

"No Man Cared For My Soul"

MRS. CHARLESCRUMP

These words from Psalms 142:4 were spoken by the Psalmist David as a prayer of supplication unto the Lord. David has been abandoned by his friends and felt so shut out there seemed no way of escape for him. He was being heavily persecuted and felt these persecutions were too strong for him to handle.

It may be he was thinking chiefly of his physical life, but more commonly when we speak of the soul, we refer to that which is of more value than the body, that which is immortal, never dies and made in the image of God. Thus we will understand this to be the case here.

"No man cared for my soul." This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible, Is this true? It often seems so. There are so many to whom no one ever speaks or makes any effort to care for their souls.

The first part of the verse states, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no one that would know me: refuge failed me." Are souls today looking on their right hand toward us and "behold no man will know them"? "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul" (Matthew 16:26). We are stewards (Luke 16:1-13; Matthew 24:45), someone placed in charge of another's goods, of God's Kingdom. The last words spoken before our Lord ascended into heaven were "Go ye into all the world . . ." (Mark 16:15-16), and care for the souls of others.

In the New Testament days when the church was scattered, the disciples went everywhere preaching the word. The message was urgent and Christians were excited! None of us deserves to be given the Bible or Jesus; God would not have been unfair if he had withheld it from us. Today, we need planters and waterers (I Corinthians 3:6), as they had then. "And 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 Timothy 2:2). "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void" (Isaiah 55:11).

Two brothers, Peter and Andrew, came to Jesus early in his ministry. Andrew's name is mentioned about twelve times in the Bible; Peter's is mentioned one hundred sixty one. Peter was given the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:18), preached the great sermon on Pentecost that marked the beginning of the church (Acts 2), and took the gospel to Cornelius and his house (Acts 10). This was the beginning of the Gentiles' being brought to the Lord. Peter was a dynamic figure in his life time for the cause of Christ. Very little is said of Andrew, but his contribution to the work was great; he found Peter and brought him to Jesus.

All that Peter did was accomplished because someone cared for his soul enough to bring him to Jesus. Should we not care as much for souls today? Why do we meet people day after day and speak of such trivial things as the weather, sports, etc.? We overlook their souls. We need to practice the example of Andrew.

Why do I care for the souls of others? Someone has said, "The deeper the conviction, the greater the

joy." I believe this is true. The more we are convinced of the reality of heaven the greater the joy of anticipation.

It is a sobering thought to know so many depend on others to teach them. If we fail, not only will we be lost, but the souls who look to us for guidance will be lost also. There is no telling how many places there are where we could lead one or maybe one hundred

souls to obey Christ and be saved.

Many friends and loved ones are making no preparation to meet the Lord when he comes. There is no time to be idle and unfruitful. This is the time to go forth with a burning desire to save the lost. "No man cared for my soul." This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. — 6 Orchard Street, Augusta, Maine 04330.

"You Won't Believe It Until You Experience It!"

Many talk about "experiential religion" and advocate the idea that one will not be able truly to accept Christianity until he experiences something. A form of this view is accepted by such diverse folk as Mormons, Pentecostals, and even Modernists. Harry Emerson Fosdick was a rank Modernist who believed truth had to be experienced to know what in the Bible was for real and what wasn't.

The problem is that some truth cannot be experienced! Should we believe there is a hell? How can you believe it until you have experienced it? Won't it be a little late then? Fosdick professed to have a high regard for Jesus, who had more to say about hell in the New Testament than any other, and yet he rejected hell.

Experiencing things doesn't always give the assurance folk would like. Experience may lead us to believe that some things are possible or even probable but the experience cannot guarantee a thing to be true. For instance, it is everywhere alleged that one must experience a "new birth" to know the truthfulness of Christ and what he can do in your life. But if it is at all possible that the experience is just an inner feeling, as a psychological result of beliefs held, the experience proves nothing at all about the reality of a living Christ. It just proves I had a feeling which I think was an experience! There is a great deal of room for doubt left over.

Whatever experience you may have had there is still room for doubt and interpretation about its meaning. One who depends on his personal experience, therefore, flounders about still searching for certainty. The one who holds that God's infallible word is the test of all religious truth can have far



MARTEL PACE

more certainty than one who makes his experience the standard. Mormons insist that if you don't believe in Joseph Smith, Jr. as a prophet of God it is simply because you haven't prayed sincerely about it. If you pray sincerely (according to Moroni 10:4-5) you will have an experience informing you of the person who wants evidence in himself that Mormonism is from God. Further, what objection can the modern Pentecostal make to the Mormon when each claims experience as evidence for the truth of their convictions which are strongly at odds with the other?

When one depends on an experience regarding the nature of truth he will find himself changing much over the years. Many modernists (such as Fosdick) felt that war was a justifiable means of advancing the causes of evolutionary improvement in the world. However, along came World War II and Fosdick as well as many others saw that man was not evolving into a higher moral creature (besides, what is "moral" if we have no standard other than man's experiences?). H. G. Wells could write optimistically of *A Modern Utopia* (1905) but by the end of World War II he lost all hope of man's "experiences" producing a better world and wrote *Mind At The End of Its Tether* (1945). In this, his last book, he depicted man as totally hopeless. Such is the end of one who depends on experience, whether believer or unbeliever.

My belief is (call it "experience" if you will) that many who have depended so assuredly on their inner feelings will reach a point in life when such will not help them to maintain assurance. How can a believer in a "miraculous experience of healing" remain confident in his faith as he dies of cancer? How can an Oral Roberts keep his faith in his healing prowess as he builds a hospital? How can students at Oral Roberts University have confidence in their President's power to heal (or God healing through him) when every student there is now required to have hospitalization insurance? Indeed, the "legs of the lame are not equal." — 3414 Elaine Drive Montgomery, Alabama 36109.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not
the Words

ness." speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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Simon The Zealot

We marvel at the strange combination of men Christ chose to lead his church. Perhaps he wished to foreshadow the general character of the church for the ages to come. The apostles portray the divergent gifts, temperaments, classes and conditions; the strengths and weaknesses of the church throughout the ages. Simon the Zealot is surely one of the most unusual of the twelve.

Simon is a man without a history. While none of his personal deeds or sermons are recorded, we can piece together a composite story about this man who served Christ so well.

His name "the Zealot" meant "the zealous one." It was a title for members of a radical Jewish political party. The zealots were a quasi-political, paramilitary group of Jewish nationalists. They were founded by Judas of Gamalas, called the Galilean, in 7 A.D. They originated in reaction to a Roman census taken for the purpose of taxation. Zealots looked to the patriot Mattathias, father of the Maccabees, for their inspiration. He had challenged the Hebrews of his day to resist the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes with these words: "Now my children, be zealous for the Law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers" (I Maccabees 2:50). The original zealots separated from the Pharisees, believing they were too tolerant of Gentile intrusions.

Judas of Galilee taught, "no God but Jehovah; no tax but to the temple; no friend but a Zealot." They especially hated Rome's dominion over Palestine and were pledged to overthrow it at any price. Zealots were men of great fervor and fanatical devotion to their cause. They were eager and hot-blooded and burned with a consuming passion for their goals. They despised reasonable men who appealed to Rome for redress, who worked at their jobs, stayed at home with their families and paid



JOHN WADDEY

their taxes. The typical Pharisee had for his motto, "Love work, keep apart from politics, have nothing to do with office." To a Zealot this was weakness. Josephus wrote of them: "They have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is their only Ruler and Lord. They do not mind dying any kind of death, nor do they heed the torture of their kindred and their friends"

Zealots were extremists and fanatics of the most rabid type who did not hesitate to resort to violence and murder to gain their objectives. Josephus described them as "rather extravagant and reckless in the worst actions." They were called *Sicarii*, i.e., the assassins. They were notorious for attacking their unsuspecting enemies with their short, curved knives. These fanatics killed not only Romans but any Jew who showed sympathy toward them or even hinted at compromise. For years they waged a guerilla war of terrorism until it finally provoked the Roman conflagration of A.D. 68-70 which destroyed and scattered their broken nation. The Zealots' last battle was fought at the desert fortress of Masada, where 960 perished in mass suicide.

It is likely that Barabbas, who was released instead of Jesus, was a fellow Zealot. We are told that he was guilty of murder and insurrection (Mark 15:7).

We have no way of knowing what drew Simon to the Master and away from his violent comrades. He was along the multitude that followed him from Galilee (Matthew 4:23-25). Because of his faith and loyalty, Jesus selected him to be one of his apostles (Matthew 10:1-4). With the twelve, he was sent to preach to his fellow Hebrews, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (10:5-6). They were promised divine guidance by the Holy Spirit (10:16-20). Jesus' charge stirred a responsive note in Simon's heart. They were to fear no man, even if it meant death (10:28). His Lord had not come "to send peace, but a sword." "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me . . ." (10:34-38). Christ did not destroy Simon's zeal, rather he redirected it. He cleared his vision and clarified his goals. Think of the risk Christ ran in choosing such a radical, revolutionary character for a key helper. Could he be kept under control? Could he be depended on? What would people say? What would the authorities think?

The Lord's apostolic band presents a marvel in human relations. There was Matthew, the tax collector for the Romans and there was Simon the Zealot. Had they met under any other circumstance, Simon would probably have put his knife in Matthew! Rather, they present a beautiful example of personal enmity destroyed by Christ. If these two natural enemies could be brothers united in a common cause, there is no reason others cannot do the same.

Simon's faith failed him when the soldiers arrested Jesus. "They all left him and fled" (Mark 14:50). But he later recovered and was there in his place when Jesus gave the great commission (Mark 16:14-15). He stood up with Peter and preached Christ on Pentecost (Acts 2:14). Simon's cause changed, but not his zealous nature. Even as an apostle of the Prince of Peace, a new and transformed man, Simon was still called "the Zealot." Not a single word he said nor a single thing he did was recorded, yet his name is known and honored by millions.

Mark tells us that "they [the apostles] went forth and preached everywhere . . ." (16:20). Legend tells us that Simon evangelized in Egypt, Carthage in North Africa, Spain, and Briton. Later, he travelled in Syria and Mesopotamia. His last work was in Persia where he was martyred.


Jesus did not join the Zealots, but he did call the Zealots and all men to follow him.

Christ was willing to run risks with people like Simon — Are we?

No type of mind or character is excluded from Christ's kingdom. We must not seek to build a congregation of spiritual look-alikes.

Christ and his church need men of zeal, but not zealots. A zealot is an intellectual dwarf, unable to see truth in all its relationships. His rationality is consumed by his zeal. The worst feature of a zealot is that he believes God is behind all his actions and that he inspires and approves of all he does. Zealots have done the church untold harm. Nothing great or good was ever accomplished without zeal. Jesus gave himself for a people zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). His church needs zealous disciples, willing to die for the faith. She languishes with impotent, nerveless leaders.

In the Zealot's fiery fiasco at Jerusalem,
Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Supporting Good Works

There are a number of works worthy of our support which are not a part of the work of the church. Appeals are made to individual members of the church for support of these good works. In addition to these, there are a number of appeals we as individuals receive to support various works being done by churches. It is good for us to be generous with our support of every good work (Titus 3:1).



BOBBY DUNCAN

But there is a practice which some need to recognize as not being in harmony with the will of God, and yet which involves the support of good works — both works of the church and other good works. I refer to the practice of taking what one considers to be his contribution to the church, as determined by his prosperity, according to I Corinthians 16:1,2, and distributing it out among various good works. For example, suppose a man believes, based upon his prosperity and ability, that his weekly contribution should be "X" number of dollars. But instead of putting this amount into the collection upon the first day of the week, he puts only a part of it in. The rest he distributes out among youth camps, Christian colleges, missionaries he knows, etc.

Needless to say, one who engages in such a practice will be known by brethren far and wide for his generosity in supporting good works. But is this what God wants us to do? Is it not the case that God wants us to make our weekly contribution, based upon our

prosperity, according to I Corinthians 16:1,2, to the church? Is not that contribution to be placed in the treasury, and used according to the best judgment of the overseers of the church? If *one* has the right to withhold part of his contribution to give to other good works, then all others have that same right. And if *part* of one's contribution could be withheld to give to other good works, then all of it could be. In other words, if *one* person has the right to withhold *part* of his contribution to contribute to other good works, then all people have the right to withhold *all* of their contributions to contribute to other good works. If not, why not? Such a practice would do away with the church treasury altogether.

"But I have a right to contribute to what I wish," says one. That is true. But you, as an individual, do not have a right to decide that *the church* will contribute a certain amount to a certain work; that is exactly what one is doing when he withholds from the church that which belongs to the church, and gives it to some other work. What if I owed you a hundred dollars, and instead of paying you the full amount, I should pay you fifty dollars and give the other fifty to some needy family. I am sure the needy family would sing my praises, but what have I given them? Not one cent! I actually made you give them fifty dollars, whether you wanted to or not, and they gave me the credit for it. Is this not exactly what happens when one uses part of his church contribution to help some good work on an individual basis?

I certainly am not saying that individuals should not support various good works on an individual basis. But no individual has a right to take that which belongs in the collection plate and send it to some other place. When he does so, he is not making a contribution to that other place; he is forcing the church to do so.

Simon The Zealot

Continued from page 1

we see the evil of a rigid patriotism that loved only those who thought, felt, and acted like themselves.

Simon had to learn some hard lessons in becoming Christ's disciple. The Lord's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Peacemakers, not warmongers, are blest of God (Matthew 5:9). He had to learn to love and pray for his enemies, rather than destroy them (Matthew 5:44). He learned that they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Matthew 26:52). He learned to render unto Caesar the things of Caesar's (Mark 2:17).

At the feet of Jesus, the Zealot and the publican can join hands in brotherhood.

Simon abandoned his dagger for the sword of the Spirit. May we abandon our sins and take up our cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

"And Ruth said, I-treat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16-17). These two verses teach more than I can possibly



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

expound upon in this brief article, but I trust that you will read and meditate upon the book of Ruth in your own private study. The book of Ruth was written during the days of the Judges as recorded in chapter one, verse one. The book of Ruth consists of only

The Gems Of Ruth

four chapters but it is wonderful and beautiful in quality.

From our study of Ruth, we note she had a choice to make. Let's consider some of the details of Ruth's choice. The choice of Ruth was a personal choice. No one persuaded her to make it. None of her relatives had set the example for her, but of her own accord she made it. The religion of Christ is a religion of the individual. There is the personal choice that each must make for himself. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). In duties to be done, it is personal: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). In the rewards to be received, it is personal. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

The choice of Ruth was also a determined choice. Ruth did not allow the example of her sister-in-law to change her decision. The entreaty of Naomi did not change her mind. Ruth and the Apostle Paul were alike in this respect; for

Paul said, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself . . ." (Acts 20:24).

Ruth's choice was a comprehensive one. It involved a number of new relationships, namely, (1) A new country — Naomi reminded her that she was going to Judah, a strange land to Ruth. Ruth replied, "Whither thou goest, I will go . . ." (Ruth 1:16). (2) A new home — Naomi said, "Return each to her mother's house . . ." (Ruth 1:8). Ruth replied, "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge . . ." (Ruth 1:16). (3) New associates — Naomi said, "Thy sister in law is gone back to her people . . ." (Ruth 1:15). Ruth replied, "Thy people shall be my people . . ." (Ruth 1:16). (4) A new religion — Naomi was going to worship the God of Israel. Ruth said, "Thy God [shall be] my God" (Ruth 1:16).

As Ruth was involved in a number of new relationships, we must learn that the choice of Christ involves new relationships. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed

Continued on page 3

The Veracity And Finality Of Scripture

(No. 1)

Is Jesus' resurrection historically reliable? Are we dependent solely upon the claims of the Bible for our knowledge of this stupendous miracle? Must we reason in a circle from Christ's supernatural resurrection as confirmation of scriptural revelation to scriptural revelation's being the only witness to the fact of the resurrection? It is the purpose of this article to provide a basic apologetical framework, or general outline, for the study of this issue which will avoid such crass circularity. The aim in the first installment of this series will be to establish the historicity of the resurrection from sources extraneous to the Biblical narrative as evidence of the veracity of Christ's claim to deity. Next issue, other proofs of the inspiration of scripture will be marshalled to corroborate the conclusion of this first installment. Then, the finality of the Old and New Testament scriptures will be demonstrated followed by a practical discussion of principles of interpretation. It is hoped that the entire series will be faith-building for both the believer and unbeliever alike.



PHILLIP GRAY

The miracles of Christ are said by John to have been for the purpose of producing faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of God (Jno. 20:30,31). Yet, of all the miracles recorded in the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is supreme. The fact of the resurrection is central to the faith of Christians for, if it be false, we "are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. 15:19).

But, the current, popular cast of mind does not easily allow for such an anomaly in history as a person arising from the dead. Modern critics of Christianity, as have most skeptics throughout the centuries, deny that it is possible for the dead to rise. "This is contrary to the natural order of things," they cry! However, if the premise be true that there is a Supernatural Being who is Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, then it is not at all difficult to accept a miraculous intervention into the normal processes of nature as would be demanded by a resurrection. Thus, if there is a God, he certainly could raise someone from the dead (cf. Acts 26:8). Although it is not within the purview of this paper to array proofs for the existence of God, such evidence is nevertheless readily accessible to every inquiring mind (Rom. 1:18-20; Acts 14:17). Hence, one who can approach this study with a theistic presupposition will realize that a resurrection is at least possible.

It is also possible to construct a sound, logical argument from generally accepted principles of historical studies that will provide indisputable proof for the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth which occurred in Jerusalem of Judea approximately 1,950 years ago. (Although the basic material for this presentation is not original with me, it is my purpose to provide a concise, constructive outline of the argument, the bones of which may be fleshed out from my reader's own continued research.)

First, in a series of logical steps, it must be demonstrated that the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea was actually empty on the first day of the week following Jesus' crucifixion. This may be done by showing that IF THE TOMB WERE NOT EMPTY, then (1) Jesus' disciples would NOT have claimed his resurrection immediately after his death, especially in Jerusalem where it could have been forthrightly

falsified; (2) they would NOT have been willing to die for their faith, knowing it to be fraudulent; and, (3) the "official explanation" of the Jews as to how the tomb was emptied would NOT have been necessary (cf. Matt. 28:11-15; and also Justin Martyr, who in *Dialogue With Typho*, written in A.D. 150, informs us that the Jewish authorities were still relying on their "official explanation").

But, the disciples DID claim a resurrection immediately after Jesus' death right in the city where the body had been interred (cf. Acts 2:24; for Luke's competence as a historian quite apart from the question of inspiration, see Sir William Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*); the disciples were willing to die for their faith, rather than recant; and, the "official explanation" of the Jews was necessary to account for the empty tomb. Therefore, the tomb of Joseph was empty on that first day of the week after the execution of Jesus.

Secondly, now that a vacant tomb has been established, what are the only possible explanations as to how it was bereft of its content? There are but two — and only two — basic explanations. Either (1) the body was stolen or, (2) it was resurrected.

If the body were stolen, then either (1) the disciples stole it; (2) the unbelieving Jews stole it; or, (3) a detached, disinterested third party (i.e., someone not directly connected with the events of Christ's ministry and death) stole it. But, would the disciples have stolen Jesus' body, secreted it away somewhere, and died for a hoax they knew to be false? The very thought of such an act is utterly unreasonable. So, the disciples did not steal it. What about the unbelieving Jews? Would they have stolen the body, then allowed the disciples continually to hurl condemnations against them for murdering a man who allegedly was proven to be the Christ by his resurrection? Would they not have surely found

occasion to produce his body as "exhibit A" forever to settle the matter? To ask it is to answer it.

As a last resort, some might possibly contend that the body was stolen, not by Jesus' disciples or the unbelieving Jews, but by some disinterested third party. But, if so, what would have been the motive? Could this "third party" have been a righteous party? Surely we realize that good men do not rob graves. Thus, if there were ever a third party to those proceedings who stole Jesus' body they were less than honorable in their intentions. But, if such an ignoble party did steal the body, would they have remained silent for all those years during such a phenomenal growth of the early church took place? (Keep in mind that such a hypothetical third party could not have circumvented the Roman guard positioned at the tomb if it were only one individual; hence, the probability of several thieves all dying without apprising someone of the body's location can easily be dismissed.) Would they not rather have realized that their knowledge of the body's disappearance and whereabouts could have surely brought them "large money" (cf. Matt. 28:12) and possibly great fame? Certainly they would have. Thus, no alleged "third party" stole the body.

Do you see the significance of this? Since neither the disciples, the Jews, nor anyone else stole Jesus' body, IT WAS NOT STOLEN. But, the tomb WAS EMPTY! Therefore, the only remaining alternative is that the body was resurrected by the power of Almighty God. By this we may know that the Bible is true, for Jesus endorsed the Old Testament as inspired (Matt. 5:17,18; Lk. 24:44; Mk. 12:36), and himself commissioned the writing of the New (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). Hence, the fact of Christ's supernatural resurrection confirms scriptural revelation. — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

The Gems Of Ruth

Continued from page 2

away: behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

This was also a choice of the young. In chapter two, verse eight, Boaz called Ruth, "my daughter." Today Satan has fooled many hearts into believing that the Christian religion is primarily for the elderly. He encourages the young to live their lives with all the gusto possible, since they will only be young once. Satan's appeals are so strong that he convinces many to wait until they are old to serve God. We must be bold in our proclamation and let it be known that the Christian religion is not for only one age group, but for all ages. The young can obey and live the Christian life as any other age group can. Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Everything that a young person does in youth must be accounted for in judgment. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth . . . but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

And finally, the choice of Ruth was a choice for all time. Ruth did not make the choice for experiment. Ruth did not look backward but forward. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

Let us learn from Ruth that we must make a choice, and the greatest of all choices is the choice to obey and do the will of the Father. "Not every one that saith

unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Ruth has a place in sacred history. She is in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew, chapter one, verses five and six. David, the sweet singer of Israel, was her grandson (Ruth 4:17). There are many lessons on what God can do with and for a person who gives himself to God Almighty. Let's make certain that we are serving him who made heaven and earth. — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, MS 38858.

Knowledge may have its limits — but not so with ignorance.

Too many fellows pop up with "I think I know" when they haven't the ability to think or to know.

It's remarkable how large a part ignorance plays in making a man satisfied with himself.

Ignorance is when you don't know anything, and somebody finds it out.

If ignorance is no excuse, there doesn't seem to be much use for it.

There's one thing to be said for ignorance — it causes a lot of interesting arguments.

The only known cure for ignorance is education.

Heartfelt Religion

The term, "HEART-FELT RELIGION" is not used in the Bible, but it is taught therein. All my life I have believed in heartfelt religion. I believe that religion that is not heartfelt is worthless. Any effort to serve God which is not conscientious, sincere, and deeply felt would not be worth the time it takes to make the effort! Those who claim that members of the church of Christ do not believe in heartfelt religion are very, very, mistaken!



W. A. HOLLEY

What is religion? According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, eighth edition*, the word means, "The service and worship of God or the supernatural . . . a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices." This definition does not fit the Bible definition of true, Biblical religion!

The preceding definition from Webster would include all kinds of religions, whether true or false. For example, the Hindu, the Moslem, the Shinto, the Buddhist, the Atheists, are all followers of religions contrary to the Bible. One cannot be saved unless he subscribes to that religion set forth in the Bible, but it is possible for one to be religious, yet religiously wrong!

Since sin has separated man from God, man desperately needs that divine religion as set forth in the Holy Bible so that he may be rebound or retied to Almighty God (Isaiah 59:1-2; James 1:27).

As set forth in the Bible there are four kinds of religion: The Jew's religion (Galatians 1:13-14), the Pharisees' religion (Acts 26:5), vain religion (James 1:26), and pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27). Of these four religions only one — the pure and undefiled religion — is acceptable to Almighty God. Thus, merely to be religious is insufficient, because such does not meet the demands of the Sacred Text.

(1) *What is the Bible heart?* It is not one's imaginations or one's feelings. It is not that lobe of flesh that pumps blood through our bodies. Pardon takes place in the mind of God; not in the minds of men. And since this is true, we cannot feel God pardon us. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered" (Proverbs 28:26).

Well, according to the Bible, what is the heart? The Bible heart is the seat of one's affections or the inner man (I Peter 3:4). Psalms 22:26 says, "Your heart shall live forever." Those who lay up their treasure in heaven, do not send their hearts of flesh there (Matthew 6:18-21). When the Bible teaches that the early disciples "were of one heart and of one soul," it does not mean that they all had one great big physical heart (Acts 4:32). Furthermore, II Samuel 15:6, says, "So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Does this statement mean that somehow Absalom reached into the chests of these men and took out their hearts, and that they didn't know about such an operation? Surely not!

(2) *According to the Holy Bible, what is the function of the heart?* We shall see that the Bible heart can be divided into three parts.

A. *The intellect:* What is the function of this part of the heart? It is that part of the mind or heart that reasons (Luke 5:22); that thinks (Matthew 9:4); that understands (Matthew 13:15); and believes (Romans 10:9-10).

B. *The will is that part of man's mind or heart which makes it possible for him to express desire,*

choice, willingness, consent. Note: It is the heart that intends (Hebrews 4:12); that purposes (II Corinthians 9:6-7); that executes (Romans 6:17-18). Without this quality one could not bring himself to respond to the demands of God.

C. *The emotion is that part of man's heart that expresses righteous desires of one's inner wishes* (Romans 10:1); *that makes it possible for the true disciple to truly love God "with all thy heart, and with all thy understanding, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices* (Mark 12:28-34). The emotion makes it possible to "trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

Has not enough been said? If one exercises his heart as set forth in those Scriptures mentioned above, would this not be heartfelt religion? True, according to the Bible, conversion does not take place in a nightmare or a conniption fit. Yes, heartfelt religion is taught in the Bible, and all Christians

are keenly aware of that response of their hearts through that consciousness of having obeyed the truth of God (I John 2:3-4; I Peter 1:23-25). Paul, John, Timothy, and countless others heard, believed, and obeyed the truth. These knew the truth and they knew that they had obeyed it. What better way could they have assurance of these facts? No one knows better than you if you have heard and obeyed the truth taught in the Bible or not (Romans 8:16).

There is one other thought which I would like to leave in your mind. One cannot "get religion." I know that thousands claim to have gotten religion. But, according to the Bible, one is to *do* religion, not "get religion." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

What does one *do* when he *does* religion? Well, he visits the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, thus supplying their needs, and keeps himself pure and clean, both in the sight of God and man. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

An Example Of Gospel Rejection

When we first read of Stephen, he is described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5). He was listed among seven men to care for those in need of benevolent care by the church.

The appointment of these men by the apostles brought the murmuring to a close. The apostles were relieved to "continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word." The disciples in Jerusalem multiplied as the result of the apostles decision.

Stephen soon became active. He "did great wonders and miracles among the people." This brought conflict. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and them of Celicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen" (Acts. 6:9). The next verse states, "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke."

When men of ill will and prejudiced minds cannot answer arguments, they resort to underhanded efforts. They brought false witnesses. They said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God" (Acts 6:11).

He was arrested and brought before the council. The formal accusation was, "This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us" (Acts 6:13-14).

J. W. McGarvey wrote, "Stephen, being also a Hellenist [a Grecian Jew, W.E.K.], had doubtless been a member of this synagogue before he became a Christian, and by his new connection he had not forfeited his membership. Most naturally, when he began the public advocacy of the new faith, he did so in the synagogue of which he was already a member, and undertook the conviction and conversion of his former associates. This brought on the conflict" (*New Commentary on Acts of*



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

Apostles, by J. W. McGarvey, pg. 112).

When the high priest said, "Are these things so?" Stephen began his defense. He began with Abraham's call by God in Mesopotamia. Abraham, "the father of the faithful," was accepted by all. He mentioned the covenant of circumcision which began with the eighth day of Isaac. Joseph was elevated in Egypt and brought the seventy-five descendants of Jacob into Egypt. He reminded them of the bondage in Egypt and the deliverance through Moses. He brought to their attention Moses' prophecy concerning Christ. The prophecy reads, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear" (Acts 7:37).

He affirms Christ "is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt" (Acts 7:39). They had Aaron to make a golden calf and offered sacrifice to their idol.

Stephen made application to his audience: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). He then accused them of betraying and murdering the Christ.

The burden of Peter's sermon on Pentecost and Stephen's sermon was the same. The reaction was completely opposite. On Pentecost three thousand obeyed the gospel, but here they sought to destroy the preacher.

Luke records, "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth" (Acts 7:54). Not only would they not hear his message, they would not hear his statement about seeing "the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." "They they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord" (Acts 7:57). They took him out of the city and stoned him to death.

As he was dying, he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

Man has the God-given choice to reject the gospel of Christ. He cannot escape the eternal consequences of his choice.

WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE? — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Ga. 31803.



Words Of Truth.

(USPS 691-76)

"I am
the Word for truth and soberness."

— speak forth

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 26

Dr. Crichton Misses The Mark

We do not wish to misrepresent Dr. Crichton, but his remarks carried in the Daily Mountain Eagle, December 17, 1982, Jasper, Alabama, just must be reviewed that God's truth might shine through in all of its radiance and beauty.

We do not wish to review Dr. Crichton's entire article, but we will select one of his most glaring errors and give some attention to it. He says, "The



W. A. HOLLEY

Bible teaches that all men are born with a sinful nature, a sinful nature inherited from our parents . . . All men inherit a sinful nature." Let it be noted that the foregoing quotation is palpably false!

The good Doctor uses Psalm 51:5, as his proof text; but neither this text nor any other text found in the Sacred Bible teaches his contention. We shall quote the verse cited: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." What the author under review is contending for is the doctrine of hereditary total depravity — a doctrine not taught any place in the Holy Scriptures! A fair interpretation of the above quoted scripture would indicate that sin would be on the part of the mother, not on the part of the child! The doctrine that babies are born sinners is abhorrent and abominable to right thinking people. For shame, Doctor, for suggesting such a thing!

We are not sinners because we have been born into the world; rather, we become sinners because we have transgressed the law of God (I John 3:4). Sin is the transgression of the law of God; and no baby can transgress the law of God! Those who believe that babies are born totally depraved argue that it is impossible for sinners to obey the gospel without the direct enabling power of the Holy Spirit. If such a contention were true, whose fault would it be, since the sinner cannot force the Holy Spirit to act, if the sinner never receives the enabling power to become saved?? On the other hand, since God is no respecter

of persons, if he saves one sinner by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, is God not obligated to save all sinners? If not, why not!! (CF. Acts 10:34-35).

Is man born totally depraved? Certainly not!! Our spirits come from God Almighty, not from Adam, and our spirits are perfect when God created them in us (the human family). (1) God, not Adam, is the Father of our spirits (Hebrews 12:9). Would it be possible for one to inherit "total depravity" from a holy God? (2) The prophet Zechariah denies that man is born totally depraved. Hear him: "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1., Emphasis mine, WAH.). God would not form an evil, depraved spirit for man!! (3) According to Ecclesiastes 12:6-7, man's spirit comes from God, not from Adam. Actually, Adam had no earthly parents from which to inherit depravity, that sinful nature that the Doctor thinks he sees. Incidentally, if in conversion by the direct operation of the Spirit, this sinful nature — hereditary total depravity — were removed, why are not the children of Christian parents born without this so-called sinful nature?? Let the good Doctor answer! (4) Acts 17:29, says, "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." God is not kinfolk to depraved spirits! (5) Of Cyrus, the Prophet Ezekiel, wrote: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15; emphasis mine, WAH). If Dr. Crichton knew the truth, he would know that Cyrus was "perfect" till he sinned or transgressed God's law (I John 3:4).

We herewith console all mothers and fathers whose precious and innocent babies have died before they attained the age of accountability with the holy assurance that their little ones are now resting in eternal bliss — that wonderful land that is fairer than our brightest day. Babies are not sinners and never have been. Never was a baby born totally depraved!! Parents, weep not for them, but weep for yourselves and make the necessary preparation so that you may join them "in that land where we shall never grow old" (Cf. II Samuel 12:18-23; Luke 23:27-31). Verily, Jesus taught his disciples to be-


come like little children (Matthew 18:3; 19:13-15). If little children are born totally depraved, was Jesus teaching his disciples to become worse and worse?? Or, was he encouraging his disciples to become better and better??

We shall now proceed to answer some of the arguments often used in an effort to establish the doctrine of hereditary total depravity.

Total depravity proponents misuse and abuse Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9. These verses say nothing about the horrible theory of total depravity! These verses do say: "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." But these verses refer specifically to the consequences of the fathers' sins. For example, "Congenital syphilis," says Russel J. Thomsen, M.D., "may have been alluded to by God in the Third Commandment when he proclaimed that children would be punished 'for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.'" A further quotation from the same source states, "Stigmata of congenital syphilis are well described in those persons with blindness, stunting, or bone malformations dating from birth . . ." (*Medical Wisdom from The Bible*, Russel J. Thomsen, M.D.). It is true that others may reap the consequences of one's sins, but NEVER, NEVER, the guilt!! Biblically, there is no such thing as "Original sin," or "Inborn Sin," theologians to the contrary notwithstanding.

Moreover, it is argued that David the king was a sinner from his birth, but the Bible does not substantiate such a foolish conclusion. Psalms 51:5 is often cited as proof of hereditary total depravity, but it falls far short of proving such a contention. We quote, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." If sin was involved, it was on the part of the mother, not on part of the child. What was in the mind of the Psalmist? If we will but turn back to Genesis 38:24-30 and then read Matthew 1:3-6, we can see that David was the tenth generation from Tamar, an harlot. There could be physical punishment to the tenth generation, but sin cannot be inherited. Deuteronomy 23:2 teaches that such a child could not enter the congregation,

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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Dr. Crichton Misses The Mark

Continued from page 1

"even to his tenth generation." Thus, if this be the case, David was conceived under such a sin, but he was not born a sinner. To say that one is "born in sin" is like saying that one is "born in a tongue" (Acts 2:8).

Another passage used to try to prove hereditary total depravity is Psalms 58:3-4. But, the wicked "go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." The verse says, "go astray," not born astray. And besides, the texts mentions, "speaking lies." Does this verse mean that the wicked were able to talk from birth? In addition, verse 8 suggests that God should "break their teeth." Were these babes born with a set of teeth?? We suggest that both Psalms 51:5 and 58:3,8, may simply be poetic hyperbole.

Finally, it is sometimes argued that Ephesians 2:1-3 supports the false notion that men are born totally depraved. But such is not the truth! The Ephesians, before their conversion, were dead in their own trespasses — not in Adam's trespasses! The Ephesians, like all the human race, had suffered the consequence of Adam's sin, but not the guilt! To be sinners "by nature" means that they had become sinners by their own practice and custom (I Corinthians 11:14).

Verily, no sinner is so depraved till he is unable to obey the gospel without the direct enabling power of the Holy Spirit. All sinners can hear (John 5:25; Acts 3:22-23); can believe (John 20:30-31); can repent (Luke 13:3); can be baptized (Mark 16:16). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

* * *

Please don't pray for rain if you're going to complain about the mud.

* * *

When the road of life is steep and slippery, prayer in action gives us traction.

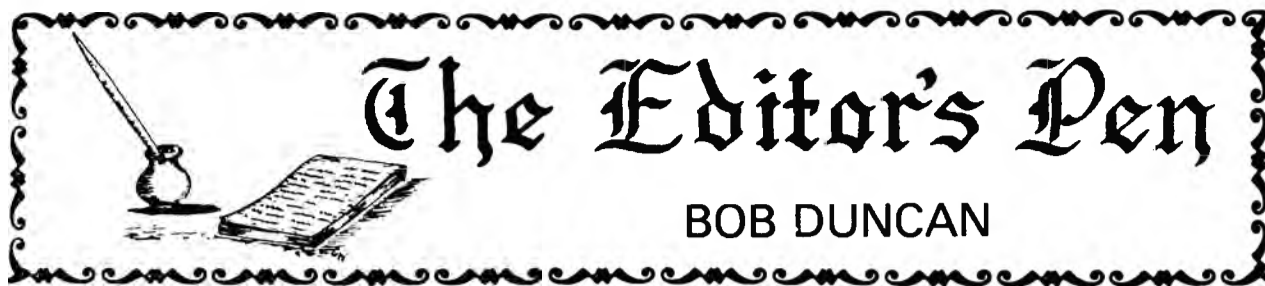
* * *

As long as there are final examinations, there will be at least secret prayers in our schools.

* * *

Bending our knees in prayer keeps us from breaking under the load of cares.

* * *



Earmarks Of Liberalism

A great deal — but perhaps not enough — is being said in pulpits and religious papers about liberalism. While it is true that some would erroneously brand any who differ with them on any subject as liberal, real liberalism does exist. And those who refuse to recognize its existence, or to do or say anything to combat it, are among its greatest allies.

Like other false teachers, the liberalist does not announce that he is a false teacher. And, like other false teachers, he teaches a great deal that is true. But the thing that makes him a liberalist is the fact that he challenges and denies the authority of the Bible. Usually this is done in such subtlety that one does not realize what is taking place until his faith has been undermined and his respect for the authority of the Bible has been destroyed.

This discussion has to do with some of the characteristics of the liberal movement among our brethren. Just as one who recognizes poison oak or poison ivy may avoid its harmful effects, it is hoped that our mentioning some of the characteristics of liberalism will be instrumental in helping some to avoid its harmful effects.

CERTAINTY OF UNCERTAINTY

The liberalist likes to refer to what he calls "traditional church of Christ doctrines." He scoffs at the idea that one should be dogmatic in teaching that baptism is a burial in water, that the Lord's supper should be eaten every Sunday, that instrumental music in worship is not in harmony with the will of God, or anything else, regardless of how plainly it is taught in the Bible. He says that we cannot be certain about these things. After all, men who are eminently scholarly hold differing views with regard to all of them. How can we be sure ours is the right view? And beside this, we will admit that we do not know everything. And since we do not know everything, it may just be that we are wrong about these things. In other words, the liberalist is *absolutely certain* that one cannot be *absolutely certain* about anything. The only thing he knows *for sure* is that he doesn't know anything *for sure*.

While it is true that there is room for differing opinions regarding matters of opinion, there are some things clearly revealed. These are matters of faith, not opinion. And while it is certainly true that we do not and cannot know everything, this does not mean that we do not and cannot certainly know anything. One may not know everything about mathematics, but this does not mean that he cannot be absolutely sure that two plus two make four. The old, threadbare, denominational idea that the Bible is susceptible to conflicting interpretations is not in harmony with sound reasoning, much less the teaching of the Bible.



BOBBY DUNCAN

ETERNAL ATTACHMENT TO THE TRANSITORY

The fads in theological pronouncements change almost as rapidly as the fads in women's fashions. The liberalist seems to enjoy hearing himself parrot these pronouncements to the ridicule of the eternal truth of God. Attitudes and philosophies in the religious world are continually changing. What was quite modern and stylish yesterday is now old and worn. Think how much attention was attracted just a few years ago at the announcement that "God is dead!" This theology had its fleeting day of publicity, and has now become antiquated. So it is with all the fads of the theologians. But the eternal truth of God does not change. How ridiculous it is for the liberal to insist that we turn loose of the eternal word of God in order to latch on to the latest fad in theology, knowing full well that tomorrow this transitory fad will be replaced by another, which in turn will be replaced by another, which in turn . . .

EXPRESS INABILITY OF EXPRESSION

Despite illusions of intellectualism characteristic of liberalists in general, the liberalist usually has a great deal of difficulty in saying what he means. We refer to the fact that so often when we learn from one's own tongue or pen what he believes in reference to a particular matter, we are told that he really does not believe that at all. He has just been misunderstood. Now, we know that the most careful speaker or writer will occasionally say something that he does not mean to say. And we further know that sometimes the clearest language is misunderstood by a careless audience. But here, we are considering those whose speeches and writings time and time again represent them as holding positions which they say they do not hold. When their own statements are used to show their positions on certain matters, they say: "You misunderstood me." While anyone can be misunderstood, there is something seriously wrong with a man's ability to express himself when he is forever having to explain that his position on some controversial issue is actually just the opposite of what his speeches and writings have been generally understood to indicate. There seems to be some possibility that the defect in such a person is not in his ability to express himself, but rather in his integrity. Perhaps his speeches and writings accurately represent his position, but he is not willing for some to know what he really believes, lest they consider him unsound. Rather than admitting to these what he really believes, he simply says he was misunderstood.

CRITICISM OF CRITICISM

We know it is much easier to criticize others for what they are doing than it is to do something constructive ourselves. And there are, no doubt, some who attack the positions of influential brethren because of jealousy or envy, or to attract attention to themselves. But there are also some who attack error and false doctrine because of their love for the truth and their determination to be faithful to the charge committed to them: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

Continued on page 3

Individual Responsibility

Every individual has responsibilities that he should not attempt to shun. He has responsibilities to God, to his fellowman, and to himself which he is obligated to fulfill.

When a house in which human beings are sleeping is on fire, anyone who is aware of the fire has the responsibility of awakening them. When one is drowning, a person capable of doing so is responsible for rescuing him. In similar fashion, the Christian is faced with certain responsibilities.

We can know what our individual responsibilities are. We do not follow human judgment in the realm of faith. Jeremiah wrote, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Paul wrote, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). This faith "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Therefore, to determine what our individual responsibilities are, let us turn to the word of God.

We are individually responsible for our sins. Sin is a universal problem. "If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) . . ." (I Kings 8:46). "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7:20). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Christ made it abundantly clear that we do not inherit sin when he said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). How then do we become sinners? Isaiah answers: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God . . ." (Isa. 59:2). When we reach the age of accountability and sin against God we are separated from him.

Having established the premise that we are

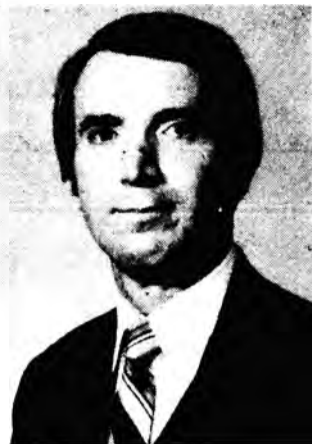
Earmarks Of Liberalism

Continued from page 2

exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). Christ was quite critical of some in his day (Matt. 23). The apostle Paul attacked the false doctrines of those in his time (Gal. 1:6-10; I Cor. 15; Acts 17; etc.). No faithful servant of our Lord can sit quietly and allow error to go unchecked and unchallenged. And those who stand for error are to be marked so that they may be avoided (Rom. 16:17).

Yet almost every effort on the part of faithful brethren to offset ungodliness and error within the church is met by a barrage of criticism by those who do not believe we ought to criticize. There are many brethren who never will be led away into religious error, but who make their contribution toward its advancement by their disposition not to oppose, and to criticize all who would. In other words, they criticize the faithful, but refuse to criticize the unfaithful.

The church of Christ is never more than one generation away from apostasy. If we allow one generation to grow up not being taught the distinct difference between denominationalism and the Lord's church, apostasy has become a reality. This will have happened when liberal brethren can ridicule the church, challenge the integrity of the Bible, poke fun at the Restoration Movement, and sow the seeds of denominationalism without any fear of being branded as liberalists by faithful brethren.



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

individually responsible for our sin, let us note some specific responsibilities.

We are individually responsible for what we say. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36). It is very often the case that others say things which upset us. We are still responsible for how we reply. Let us remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath . . ." (Prov. 15:1).

It is our responsibility not to start gossip nor to repeat it. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people . . ." (Lev. 19:16). Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, condemned those who were guilty of gossiping (I Tim. 5:13). Much harm has been done in many congregations through this very means. Perhaps we need to be reminded again that God hates "a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:19).

We are individually responsible for our vows. Solomon wrote, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay" (Eccl. 5:4-5). Abraham was faithful to his vow (Gen. 14:21-24). We should be faithful to our vows. Husbands and wives need to be faithful to their marriage vows. There was a time when divorce was almost unheard of in the Church. Today, it is a common occurrence. We need to reaffirm our teaching that marriage is for life. We need to be extremely careful not to make rash and unwise vows. Above all we need to keep the vow that we made to be faithful to God. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

We are individually responsible for our thoughts. We are admonished, "If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Our thoughts help to determine what we are.

Solomon wrote, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he . . ." (Prov. 23:7). Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). We are what we think. It is for this reason that we are to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

We are individually responsible for attending the services of the church. It is impossible for one to be faithful to the Lord without being faithful to his body, the Church. It is impossible for one to be faithful to the body, the Church, without attending the services. If not, why not? There is something wrong with a man's religion, if it does not cause him to want to be with the saints when they assemble. The writer of Hebrews 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" (Heb. 10:25). Verse 26 points out that forsaking the assembly is a wilful sin.

One should also be punctual for all the services of the church. Paul wrote, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). It is extremely difficult to have decent and orderly services when people habitually arrive late for every service. People who are habitually late, all have the same basic problem. They do not arrive on time because they do not leave home on time. This can and should be corrected.

These are just a few of the things for which we, as Christians, are individually responsible to God. Because we have the power of choice, we can choose to fulfill our responsibilities or refuse to fulfill them. If we choose to fulfill them, we will be greatly blessed and be a blessing to others. If we refuse to fulfill them, we stand condemned. Which choice will you make? — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, AL 36609.

Gems Of Judges

Following the brilliant leadership of Moses and Joshua we are introduced to an extremely weak section of history known as the period of the Judges. Why was this period of time weak? "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). These verses teach the importance of leadership. How strong or weak will the Lord's church be next year, in five years, in ten years or twenty-five years from now? The answer lies within how strong the leadership will be. Following the death of Joshua, the word of God said, "And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). With man doing that which was right in his own eyes and his not knowing God, there resulted this period of time that can best be described in one word as "confusion."

In Judges 2:11-19 we can see a graphic illustration of the wages of sin. Let us notice their points of weakness and shame.

1. Idolatry overwhelmed them.
2. They forsook God.



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

3. They were ungrateful for God's guidance.
4. They would not hearken to leaders God appointed.
5. They refused to obey God's commands.
6. Their stubborn will prevailed.
7. They were guilty of spiritual adultery.

The above weaknesses should give us greater appreciation for what the apostle Paul taught when he said, "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).

Chapters seven and eight contain great lessons about Jerubbaal or Gideon. As the story unfolds we see Gideon with 135,000 men, but the number was reduced to 300 through a test the Lord recommended to determine those who would make good soldiers. Gideon and those 300 defeated 135,000 Midianites in a battle where 120,000 Midianites were slain. The odds of 300 to 135,000 was to show God's power in winning the battle so Israel would never say, "mine own hand hath saved me" (Judges 7:2). Many of us make our decisions upon odds. The lesson about Gideon is one that we all need to consider, because without God man cannot win the battle of life. With God on our side we can forget about the odds for or against. Another lesson is the amount of faith we have in God. My attitude and yours should forever be, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8).

In verses ten and fifteen we read that the

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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estus; but speak forth soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, JULY 8, 1983

NUMBER 27

Which Services Of The Church Should I Deliberately Miss?

Some seem to think that church attendance is "optional" — that they may choose to attend some services, while others may be neglected or ignored with impunity. If this be true, which passage of Scripture so states? We have long been known as *people of the Book*; so please give me Book, Chapter, and Verse where I can read this for myself!!! Where does the Bible teach that church attendance is optional?



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

As you search for such a proof-text, perhaps you will discover this reference to those baptized on Pentecost Day: "And they *continued steadfastly* in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Four verses later we read: "And they, *continuing daily with one accord in the temple . . .*" Those converted to Christ met frequently!

Or, you may discover these statements about Peter and John, after they had been questioned by the authorities: "And being let go, they *went to their own company*, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God *with one accord . . .*" (Acts 4:23-24). We know this was a *gathering* of Christians, for we read, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were *assembled together . . .*" (verse 31). They assembled frequently! And modern "excuse-seekers" would not have been present when Peter related the thrilling story of the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 11:1-18), and would not have "glorified God" for this exciting report!

While searching for a text which justifies (?) church absenteeism, you may read what happened

when Barnabas sought Paul and brought him to Antioch (in Syria): "And it came to pass, that a whole year they *assembled themselves with the church*, and taught much people" (Acts 11:26). Seekers for proof that church attendance is "optional" would very likely have missed the assembly where "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch!" Old Testament prophecies were being fulfilled (Isa. 62:2; 65:15; 56:5); but some would have missed that service!

Paul was in Troas only "seven days," and was on his way to Syria. Yet he took time to worship! "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 . . ." (Acts 20:7). He did not suggest, "I am getting ready to leave town in the morning and just can't attend!" Those who insist that church attendance is not necessary would have missed hearing that grand Apostle Paul that day!

Although it is stated negatively, here is a New Testament command: "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" (Heb. 10:25). Stated positively, we would say: "Be sure to assemble!"

Of this verse brother Robert Milligan wrote in 1875:

"The Apostle refers here, not to apostasy from the Church, as some allege, but simply to the neglect of public and social worship. The time when this letter was written was manifestly a time of persecution in Jerusalem and, perhaps, throughout Palestine (Heb. 12:4). Many of the Hebrew brethren were no doubt greatly discouraged; and some of them had fallen into the habit of neglecting the regular meetings of the Church. This was clearly wrong for several reasons. (1) Because by so doing, they neglected and set at naught an ordinance of God. Nothing is more obvious in the history of the primitive Church than that the members of the several congregations were wont to meet together on every Lord's Day, and no doubt also frequently during the week for public and social worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Cor. 16:1,2 etc.) And as these meetings were held with the sanction of the Apostles, and for a time under their immediate supervision, they

had, as a matter of course, all the force and obligation of a Divine ordinance. (2) Because by neglecting this ordinance of God, the disciples deprived themselves of many social and religious privileges. The church of Christ is a social institution designed for the edification and improvement of all its members. And besides, Christ says that wherever even two or three are met together in his name he will be with them (Matt. 18:20). But when Christ meets with his people it is of course to bless them, and to strengthen them for the many trials and conflicts of life. No one can, therefore, properly estimate his loss in willingly absenting himself from the meetings of his brethren. (3) The delinquent Hebrews were doing wrong, also, because of the bad example which they were setting before others. Christ intends that every one of his disciples shall be a living witness for the truth. No wonder, then, that the Apostle so earnestly exhorted the Hebrews "not to neglect the duty and privilege of meeting with their brethren for public and social worship."

(Commentary on Hebrews, pp. 283-284).

Where else would a child of God prefer to be when his brothers and sisters in Christ are meeting to study the Bible or for other items of worship? Willfully staying away from any assembly of the saints is a "sorry" way to spend your last day on earth!!! Since you don't know when your last day is going to be, isn't it wise to attend EVERY SERVICE of God's people when possible?


I ask again: If church attendance is "optional," which passage so states? Where can I read that in the Bible? — 1000 Saint John Road Route 9 Elizabethtown, Ky 42701.

Prayer gives strength to the weak, faith to the faint-hearted, and courage to the fearful.

Wonderful things happen to us when we live expectantly, believe confidently, and pray affirmatively.

Satan hinders prayer, but prayer also hinders Satan.

It is impossible to be prayerful and pessimistic at the same time.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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I'd Rather Do It Myself

WINFREY HENNESSEE

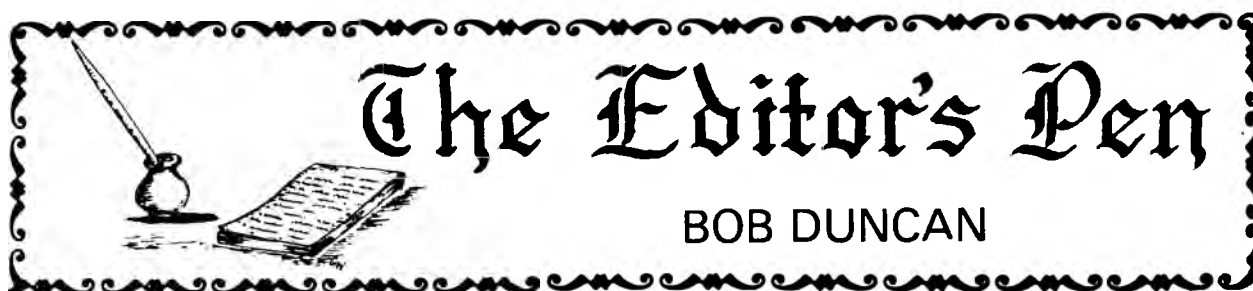
A few years ago a company which manufactures a well known pain reliever came out with a TV commercial which featured a young housewife who became annoyed at an older person trying to do something. One can almost feel the pain of her headache as she becomes hysterical and screams out the words, "I'd rather do it myself."

The Israelites seemed to have this attitude as they went about the task of working out their own salvation. Although God's law had been made available to them, they seemed to go out of their way in order to make it hard on themselves. Instead of their conforming to God's law, they established and imposed upon themselves such laws as were impossible to live up to. When they did this they were saying to God, "We'd rather do it ourselves."

Such actions prompted the apostle Paul to say, "They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). When we have a zeal to do something, but do not have the knowledge which should accompany it, can we be very successful? I have a great zeal to become an expert auto mechanic, but every time my zeal overcomes my will power we end up paying a big garage bill in order to get the car going again. This is zeal, but not according to knowledge.

When we try to work out our own salvation, we seem to be showing God that we do not appreciate his help. As our mind becomes pre-occupied with other things we leave undone that which God would have us do. Paul went on to say, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3).

Of course we still have those who are saying, "I'd rather do it myself." If we do not, then how else can we explain why there are so many denominational groups scattered throughout the world? Too bad we can't take a pill which would relieve us of this inefficiency; but then we could — it's right there in the Bible, if we would only swallow it. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.



Placing Membership

A reader has written to ask about the practice of what is commonly referred to as "placing membership." We appreciate his letter, and are happy to discuss the matter in *WORDS OF TRUTH*.

It is essential that we understand that the church, in the great and universal sense, including all the saved, never assembles, nor worships. It is not organized for work and service. It has no mailing address, no telephone number, no treasury. The only organization of the church itself is the local congregation. It is this unit that assembles for worship (Acts 11:26; I Cor. 14:23). It is with the local church that disciples are commanded to assemble (Heb. 10:25). Elders are overseers of the local church (Acts 20:17,28), and it is to the elders of the local church that all Christians are commanded to submit (Heb. 13:17).

In view of these facts, no person can be a faithful Christian and stand aloof the local congregation. It is a sin for one to treat the local church as if it were started by the devil, and not by God.

It seems to this writer that there is a move on the part of some, either consciously or unconsciously to "play down" the role of the local congregation in God's scheme of redemption. The popular thing among some is to take the young people out on a hillside or down by the river to worship God while the church is assembled. Others want to substitute home meetings and private Bible study periods for the public assembly of the local church. It is certainly in order to engage in private Bible study and to have periods of private worship. But it is rebellion against God to arrange or encourage meetings that are in competition with the local congregation.

While it is clear that each Christian should be identified with a local congregation, there is no set pattern laid out in the New Testament which we are to follow in becoming so identified. "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:26,27). Saul needed, and received, help in becoming identified with the church at Jerusalem. Observe that he did not try to ignore the local congregation, and yet continue to live the Christian life. Though the term is not found in Scripture, we might correctly say that Paul "placed membership," or "became identified" with the church of Jerusalem.

When a Christian moves into an area, he should very quickly do as Paul did, in order that he might be as useful as possible. If there are several congregations in the area, he should become identified with one of them. Worshiping at first one place and then



BOBBY DUNCAN

another, with no home congregation, is a sure and quick way to lose one's influence for Christ and to become a weaker Christian. It is to rebel against the admonition of God to "obey them that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13:17). Which elders are to watch for my soul, if I refuse to be identified with any local church? And how can they watch for my soul if they do not know who I am and that I am a member of the congregation they oversee?

It seems to be using good judgment to make some kind of announcement when one moves into an area and desires to become a part of a particular congregation. Otherwise it might be weeks, or even months, before that person would be recognized by the congregation or by the community as a faithful Christian and member of the congregation. If one is moving into an area where he is unknown, it would be wise for him to bring with him a letter of introduction from the church where he has been worshipping. It would be wise also for churches to ask those moving into their area and identifying with them to furnish references. These references should be checked thoroughly. Much difficulty and heartache could be avoided if all would be more thorough in this respect.

While it is not on the same subject entirely, we would add a further word about the deplorable practice of some to switch congregations needlessly. We realize there may be times when it becomes necessary for one reason or another to change congregations. But we know of many cases in which members of the church who were not faithful, and were being admonished by the elders to be faithful, have decided to change congregations. And the deplorable thing is that some other congregation would actually receive them with open arms, without regard to their faithfulness, and without making any effort to determine whether they are sound in doctrine or life.

Alabama's Not Heaven

People who live in Alabama certainly have many things to be proud of. From the magnificent Tennessee River in the north to the southern tip of our ocean-lined shore there is the great beauty of God's wondrous handiwork.

The winningest collegiate football coach in history, Paul "Bear" Bryant lived and died in Alabama. The Country Music Association "Entertainer of The Year" is a band of young men from Fort Payne, called, "Alabama."

Our's is a "Bible-Belt" state in which churches of



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

Continued on page 3

The Veracity And Finality Of Scripture

NO. 3

If the Bible is really the inspired, authoritative revelation of God, and if it claims to be the exclusive and final word for men today, then the Bible is the exclusive and final word for men today. It has been demonstrated in previous studies that the Bible is the Word of God. This must be concluded, for there is no other reasonable way to account for its amazing — super-human! — unit, historical accuracy, and predictive prophecy. Furthermore, Jesus of Nazareth, who through his resurrection was vindicated as being the Son of God, attested to the inspiration and authority of both the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, if the Bible claims to be the final and exclusive revelation of God's will for men today, then it must be given the last word in any religious discussion. Does the Bible make such a claim for itself? The answer is a resounding Yes! There should be no mistaking it. It denies all others (no matter how pious or intelligent they may be) the right to have the final and ultimate authority in religious matters.

Some of the passages that lay claim to such finality for the scriptures are as follows (the reader is urged to consult as many of these as possible): (1) II Timothy 3:16,17 teaches that the scriptures are all-sufficient. Hence, teaching that cannot be found in scripture is superfluous.

(2) John 16:13. In this passage, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide certain inspired men into "all truth." We learn that the apostles and their associates possessed this gift of inspiration (I Cor. 2:9-13; I Pet. 1:12). Thus, the apostles and their associates (i.e., those who wrote the New Testament) were given the ability to speak, by the Spirit, "all truth." No doubt, at first "all truth" was presented orally by inspired spokesmen but, soon was committed to writing (II Pet. 3:15,16; I Cor. 14:37) and preserved for posterity through the providence of God (Matt. 24:35). Thus, since the gift of inspiration (or, "prophecy") was to "fail" (I Cor. 13:8-10), and "that which is perfect [complete]" was to take its place, then the complete written revelation of God is the final revelation until the end of time.

(3) Jude 3. Jude writes of the "faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (ASV). Surely, he must have been writing of the message, or gospel ("faith" being used in the sense of the content of our belief), which had been delivered both orally and in writing by the first-century messengers of God.

(4) Galatians 1:8,9. Paul reminded Christians of Galatia that the words they had heard delivered them ("by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," cf. I Pet. 1:12) while he previously had been with them were the final and exclusive gospel of God. Anyone who promotes a doctrine other than that which is contained in the gospel of Christ as taught by Christ himself, his apostles and their associates is **ANATHEMA! ACCURSED! IRREVOCABLY CUT OFF FROM GOD!**

From the foregoing, therefore, it is undeniable for the candid reader that there is no room left for any teaching other than that of the inspired spokesmen of the first century (and of course the inspired Old Testament which Jesus came to



PHILLIP GRAY

fulfill). Therefore, for any religious teacher to make claim to having received a divine revelation (be he Moslem, Mormon, or Moony), or for anyone to follow the leadership of a teacher making such a claim, is to deny the claims of

God himself thus, calling him a liar! (In our next installment, we shall consider the question of whose interpretation of the Bible we should follow.) — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

Alabama's Not Heaven

Continued from page 2

Christ, comparatively speaking, are numerous.

Great weather, great football, great music and great people — but, Alabama's not heaven! With all our state has to offer, it cannot possibly compare with that city four-square in which the streets are lined with gold (Revelation 21:21).

Alabama's not forever. Life here is not forever. So why live as if it is? Friend, unless Jesus comes, you are going to die. Our life here, therefore, is

brief at best (James 4:13.)

Are you going to trade the passing pleasure of a temporary land for the ceaseless ages of joy in God's eternal home?

I beg of you to appreciate your homeland; be thankful for all that you have. But remember, Alabama's not heaven; the City of God is, that is, for all who really want to go. Do you? — P.O. Box 242 Morris, Al. 35116.

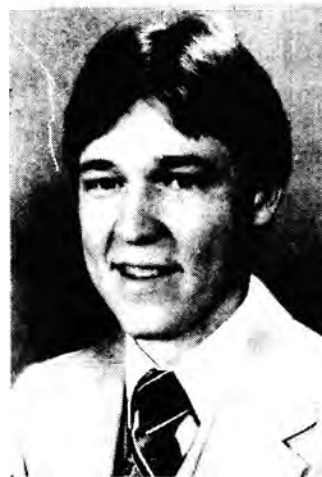
The Grasshopper Complex

We just cannot do all of that work because we're too small! We've probably all heard such statements from our brethren as an excuse as to why some great work of the church could not be done. It's not a new excuse. The same was used by the ten spies when they came back from spying out the land of Canaan in Numbers 13. In verses 23-31 the spies gave a disastrous report to the nation, one that would cause all of them eventually to die in the desert because of their disobedience. In essence they said, "We're so small that those people will crush us if we try to take the land away from them." The Lord had told them forty days earlier, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I GIVE UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL . . ." The Lord told them that they could take it, but they said God was a liar and suffered because of it.

They were grasshoppers. Spiritually their faith was even smaller because Christ told us that even faith like a mustard seed could move mountains (Matt. 17:20). Yet where is our faith?

The great commission was initially given to twelve men in A.D. 33 by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15,16), and in less than thirty years they had preached the gospel to the whole world (Col. 1:23). What kind of faith did those men possess? Matt. 8:25,26; 14:28-31, and several other passages show us that they didn't have it in the beginning, for they were rebuked for their little faith. But as their faith grew so did their courage and belief that they could do all things through Christ who strengthened them (Phil. 4:13). They knew that the Lord was not slack concerning his promises (II Pet. 3:9), and that the task before them was not as great as the power behind them.

We say that we are the New Testament church, bought by the blood of Christ, and that God the Father directs our lives, and that we follow the Bible which was directed by the Spirit of God; and yet the whole world has not yet been given the



BARRY FIKE

gospel. In fact I hear of many congregations that have about as much action as a graveyard. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:14-17).

We know from Heb. 11 that those listed among the greatest men and women of faith all acted upon their faith. Because of their actions they were heavily persecuted, and sometimes even killed. They did not have a grasshopper complex! Do We? Are we really too small, too poor, too ill talented to do what the Lord requires us to do? If we can do all things through Christ, then let's do all things! Let's agitate dissatisfaction within ourselves, like those of the first century, and spread the gospel to every creature under God's sun, fulfilling the mission of the church upon this earth. We are not grasshoppers! — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

Sooner or later we all need some foreign aid — the kind we get from praying.

* * * * *

The recipe for perpetual ignorance is to be satisfied with your opinions and content with your knowledge.

* * * * *

Prayer must mean something to us if it is to mean anything to God.

* * * * *

Unless you are willing to admit your ignorance, you will never be able to acquire knowledge.

* * * * *

Regardless of your position in life, getting on your knees will help to keep you on your toes.

* * * * *

It is futile for a preacher to drum up trade during the week unless he is prepared to deliver the goods on Sunday.

* * * * *

The misleading thing about some preachers is that they carry their sermons around in a brief case.

Tessa McBrayer Gray

We all know that it is better to give flowers to the living; bear with me as I attempt to pay tribute to a wonderful lady, my mother.

Born on July 5, 1893 to William and Ardelia Brown McBrayer in Paulding County, Georgia, Tessa was the seventh child of eight children. Her father was a school teacher, business man, postmaster, tax assessor and an itinerant Baptist preacher. Except for a knee injury he would have served in the Civil War.

As a child, Tessa joined the Baptist Church. At age 17 in the year 1910, while on a visit with an older married sister, Rose McBrayer Ragsdale, of Atlanta, Tessa attended a tent meeting conducted by the late brother S. H. Hall and was convinced of the truth. Her sister Rose had already obeyed the gospel along with her husband Charlie. Tessa desired to obey the gospel but realizing there was no congregation of the Lord's church near where she lived, she quenched the urge, returning home to her parents as a Baptist in practice but a New Testament Christian at heart.

In the year 1914 at the age of 21, Tessa became the wife of Richard Clarence Gray, a farmer of Carroll County, Georgia, where she was then a school teacher. Believing that the wife should be in subjection to her husband, Tessa joined the Methodist Church with her husband, whose family were Methodist, dating back to the days of the Wesleys.

As a child, this writer recalls summer visits of his Aunt Rose Ragsdale and how that she and mother Gray would constantly discuss the Bible. At that time mother (Tessa) was teaching Sunday School at the Center Point Methodist Church in Carroll County. Also, at that time, the churches of Christ used the Scripture text of the International Sunday School Lessons for their Sunday Bible study lessons and Tessa taught from the Gospel Advocate quarterly, furnished by her sister Rose. It goes without saying that her Bible classes were the best attended and she was known as "the best Bible teacher this church has ever known."

In the year 1948 when Tessa was 55 years of age, her baby son (yours truly) was 17. By chance he was invited to attend a gospel meeting at the Bremen, Georgia church of Christ. He was reluctant to attend, thinking it was a "Holiness Church." However, thanks to a personal interest by



S. G. GRAY

one of the young men of the congregation (Ray Spake, now an elder), plus an opportunity to attend several services of a tent meeting for the black people of Bremen, conducted by the Simpson Street congregation with Alonza Rose preaching, her youngest son was convinced of the truth and obeyed the gospel.

He was apprehensive about telling his parents of his decision, thinking it would offend them, thinking of it as a personal rejection. Being baptized on a Sunday morning in September of 1948, he waited until he came in from his job on Monday evening. On entering the house, his mother, Tessa, was ironing clothes in the kitchen. In a hesitant, awkward way, he told her that he had been baptized into the church of Christ. To his surprise, she deliberately walked around the ironing board toward him. He did not know what to expect. He thought she may be going to thrash him. However, she threw her arms around his neck and wept, saying, "Thank God. A door has finally been opened for me to do what I have been wanting to do for many, many years." Almost exactly one year later she, along with another son who is now a gospel preacher, along with his wife, and

an old maid sister, were baptized into Christ. Some six years later, 1955, her husband, Clarence, was baptized into Christ. The remaining 14 years until his death in 1969 were the happiest years of her life.

As every gospel preacher will attest, who ever preached with Tessa in the audience, she is the best listener a preacher ever had, as well as the most encouraging.

On July 5, 1983 Tessa will celebrate her 90th birthday. She has rarely missed a Lord's day service or a mid-week Bible class since becoming a Christian some 35 years ago. May God bless this devout Christian lady with many more years of physical and mental health so she can continue her work of encouraging gospel preachers, along with her two preacher sons and preacher grandson. — P.O. Box 856 Washington, Ga. 30673.

(Editor's Note: I have known sister Gray for the past seven or eight years. Only last week she attended a meeting where I preached in Forest Park, Georgia. She is a dear lady indeed. Her other preacher son is R. W. Gray.)

Word Search Puzzle

JOHN HUDSON TINER

TITLE: The World Is Taxed

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 2:1-5

WORDS:	THOSE	DAYS	DECREE
	CAESAR	AUGUSTUS	WORLD
	TAXED	OWN	CITY
	JOSEPH	NAZARETH	BETHLEHEM
	DAVID	MARY	

WORD SEARCH: (Words may be backward, forward, across, up, down, or diagonal.)

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Y N A Z A R E T H H
R Z Z U W G S S P O
A X Y O G D R E W E
M Z R E I U S N C S
C L G V E O S I P J
D U A D J R T T C H
Y D N S Z Y C P U T
M E H E L H T E B S
C A E S A R Q H D M
D E X A T D A Y S Y
    
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P. O. Box 38, House Springs, Mo. 63051

A Brighter Day Will Dawn

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E. P. Eugene Pearson

1. Oft- en times in the gloom of a storm- y night, I won- der
 2. Bro- ken hearts nev- er come in that home up there -No sor- rows
 3. There will be songs of praise fall- ing on my ear. My eyes will
 4. When my life here is o'er, and I've crossed the stream, What beau- ty

will the dawn be bright? Then I think of a day with its
 and no grief to bear. 'Tis a place fill'd with bliss where no
 nev- er shed a tear. Rest and peace will a- bound in that
 of that day's bright gleam! Where the sun nev- er sets on the

Fine Chorus:
 dawn- ing fair, In heav'n with its glo- ry so rare.
 fears an- noy, A land of e- ter- nal sweet joy. Yes, a
 home so bright, No storms in that land of de- light.
 rap- ture there with Christ and His bless- ings to share.

D.S. with God 'round the throne up a- bove.

bright- er day will dawn in the morn- ing, in that home with my Sav-
 ior and King. End- less life will be mine in that land of love,

(Editor's Note: The above new song was written by a faithful and devoted Christian, brother Eugene Pearson, Box 24, Savoy, Texas 75479. We rejoice that Gene is using his talent in this way.)



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad
the V"

k forth

26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 198

NUMBER 28

Unstable As Water

(No. 1)

The textual basis for this two-part series for *WORDS OF TRUTH* is drawn from an Old Testament passage that reads: "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, and the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Gen. 49:3,4).



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

This quoted statement is taken from the closing portion of Jacob's life and is found in one of his last statements to one of his twelve sons. But a little background is in order before taking note of Reuben's commendation and his being "unstable as water" and some applications drawn for us from that most unusual statement.

Genesis 49 is near the conclusion of the opening book of the Bible. In this interesting chapter we read of the death of Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. These three are frequently referred to in the Bible as a trio. Jehovah is frequently styled the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. It was a high honor for each of these three men to be so designated. In many respects Jacob was a great man. He is one of the most colorful characters of Sacred Scripture. In the chapters of Genesis that depict his life one can mark noted growth from the time that he was a deceiver, a supplanter to the time he matured in his spiritual growth and became a true prince of God or one who prevailed with God, i.e., had power in the presence of Deity. Jacob lived during the Patriarchal Dispensation of Biblical History. This was the period before God had any written revelation of his will for man. Up to this time and on to the days of Moses God spoke orally to family heads and they taught their children to know the Lord God of high and holy heaven.

The Patriarchal Age and the Mosaic Age are inclusive of the Old Testament and a part of the New Testament since Christ lived all his life under the Mosaic Economy and did not nail it to the cross till the end of his ministry on earth. We now live in the Christian Age which began on the first Pentecost subsequent to the resurrection and ascension of our Lord back to the Palace of the Universe on high. We are now in the twentieth century of Christianity. This age will last until the coming of Christ the second time.

In Genesis 49 Jacob, after a busy and eventful life in Canaan, Padan-aram and Egypt, called his sons around his death bed and spoke about the things that would befall them and their descendants in future years. The occasion was solemn for at least two earnest and weighty reasons. (1) What he said constituted his last message to them and concerned their future. (2) Upon finishing these remarks Jacob died. The Bible says in Genesis 49:33, "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

The sons of Jacob no doubt recognized the gravity of the occasion set forth as they met with their illustrious father for the final time. They knew that death lurked in the air as far as he was concerned. His opening remarks to them only added to the gravity of the solemn occasion. The Bible says in Genesis 49:1,2: "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father."


Since he was speaking by the inspiration of God as touching their future and the future of their descendants, quite naturally they would hang literally on to his every spoken word of counsel and warning, of exhortation and admonition.

The sons of Jacob numbered twelve. Six were by Leah. Two were by Rachel. Each of his secondary wives, Bilhah and Zilpah, bore him two sons apiece. According to the well-known customs of that day each son would normally and naturally expect his beginning with the eldest son or the firstborn. This was done and hence Reuben is mentioned initially. Two verses are devoted in his remarks to Reuben. The

first verse is filled with compliments; the second verse is filled with a stinging criticism of Reuben's major weakness and character defect — the very thing that would haunt him the remnant of his life. But to the complimentary first: Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, the might and beginning of his father's strength. Pre-eminence of dignity and the pre-eminence of power belonged to Reuben as the ASV translates the expression. Thus far this was a prized compliment to his eldest son Reuben. No doubt many holy aspirations were felt in the heart of Jacob when Leah first presented this baby boy to him in the land of Padan-aram. Only one who has experienced this great joy personally can enter fully into the feelings that must have permeated Jacob's heart and soul when he first saw the babe they named Reuben. Look at the eloquent expressions associated with the firstborn by Jacob the father. Jacob linked Reuben and power. Jacob said Reuben was his might, the beginning of his strength, the pre-eminence or excellency of dignity and the pre-eminence or excellency of power. What noble aspirations filled Jacob's soul relative to Reuben in an earlier time of their association!

In a number of impressive ways Reuben was characterized by excellency or pre-eminence of both dignity and power. Dignity is a virtue in which many young people and older people are lacking today. There has been a great erosion in our day of dignity in thought, dignity in dress, dignity in speech and dignity in actions or deeds. Base language is now allowed in our public media that would have been outlawed and was outlawed only a few years ago; it simply was not tolerated by a more decent society than we currently possess. When there is baseness of speech patterns by the rank and file of our citizens it but means there is baseness in the user's heart or mind. The Bible says that out of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt. 12:34ff). As one thinks in his heart so is he (Cf. Prov. 23:7). Somewhat earlier in his great book on wisdom Solomon declared, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). We are not what we think we are; we are what we think!! Dress habits in America

Continued on page 3



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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Judge Blames Provocative Clothing

In Madison, Wisconsin a county judge stirred up a "hornet's nest" by some remarks he made at a hearing for a fifteen year old boy who was charged with sexually assaulting a sixteen year old girl. According to news reports, Dane County Judge Archie Simonson said it is "normal for impressionable juveniles to react violently" to some of the clothing being worn by women and girls in our society. The local chapter of NOW (National Organization for Women) has demanded Judge Simonson's resignation, declaring that his usefulness as a judge is over.



BOBBY DUNCAN

It is not our purpose to pass judgment on this particular boy, or on the girl he allegedly assaulted; nor, for that matter, are we ready to pass judgment on the judge who made these particular remarks. However, it is not out of order for us to make some observations with regard to this matter.

In the first place, each person is responsible for his own deeds. He can choose to do right, or he can choose to do wrong, regardless of what others may do. The experiences of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon establish this fact. It is the height of folly for us to transfer blame for sinful actions from the one who committed the sin to others, even though

others may not be blameless. Sinful action is not justified on the basis that it was provoked by somebody else. No doubt, the disposition to shift the blame for crimes from the criminal to the society in which we live has done its part to encourage crime. After all, why should one make a point of doing only what is right, if his delinquencies are to be thought of as perfectly normal behavior?

In the second place, it is high time that people in a civilized society pull their heads out of the sand and quit pretending they are so naive as to think there is nothing inherently wrong with women's wearing scanty clothing. When one tries to justify her wearing of scanty clothing by pretending she thinks such clothing cannot possibly incite lust, she is refusing to be realistic; or, more accurately, she is refusing to be honest. David looked upon the nakedness of Bathsheba and lusted. His lust led to overt adultery, and that to murder. Jesus recognized that there is such a thing as lusting because of looking (Matt. 5:32). We agree with the good judge that it is unfair to punish severely one who commits a crime against a scantily clad woman, while holding guiltless the woman who incited the crime by the indecent exposure of her body.

Finally, we would suggest that the people of Dane County, Wisconsin consider themselves fortunate to have a man of such discernment as Judge Simonson. Whether the sentence meted out to the boy involved in the crime is just or not, we do not pretend to know. But we do know this: He is right in saying that women who dress indecently share in the blame for such crimes as sexual assault.

God's Eternal Purpose

Jehovah God never acts without purpose; never is his work accidental or capricious. The church of our Lord came by careful design and purpose. "To the intent that now . . . might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose [lit. purpose of the ages] which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11).



VIRGIL BRADFORD

The church of the Bible is no more an afterthought than Jesus himself. When God planned one he planned both. The Scripture in Genesis is the gate, as it were, to the rest of the Bible which reveals the struggle between God and Satan; one seeking to save the race, the other to destroy it.

Through the ages it appeared at times that Satan would prevail and God's purpose would be defeated. The whole world came near destruction in the days of Noah, but God saved Noah's family and the Seed promise remained intact. God's eternal purpose must be fulfilled.

About 2000 B.C. all the world might be regarded as Gentile, at which time Abram was separated, called a Hebrew, and established to be the progenitor of Jesus Christ and the father of the faithful. The story of Abraham (Genesis 12-22) gives more and more explicit information about the Christ and makes more emphatic the promise of Genesis 3:15. The Lord said to Abraham, "IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED" (Gen. 22:18).

Abraham's descendants moved to Egypt in the days of Joseph and there multiplied, becoming a great nation of people, but suffering bitter bondage at the hands of the Egyptians. Moses was born

The Conversion Of The Samaritans

After the death of Stephen, there arose a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem. The disciples were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. The apostles remained in Jerusalem.

PERSECUTION DID NOT DESTROY THE CHURCH BUT CAUSED IT TO GROW. Luke observes, "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

Philip preached Christ to the city of Samaria (Acts 8:5). Hearing the speaking of Philip and seeing the miracles which he did, the people with one accord gave heed. Simon the Sorcerer had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. Philip's performance of miracles was no match for Simon's tricks.

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Let us analyze Philip's preaching.

We are not told what he said about the Kingdom of God. Through the pens of other inspired men, we can know the substance of Philip's message. Jesus had promised the kingdom would come in the lifetime of his disciples (Mk. 9:1). Jesus promised to build the kingdom. He used the words kingdom and church interchangeably (Matt. 16:18-19). Since the kingdom and church are the same institution, we can say Christ purchased the kingdom with his blood (Acts 20:28). He is head of the kingdom (Eph. 1:22-23), and it is his body. It is composed of those who have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). It is composed of those "that heareth the word and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matt. 13:23). "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, til the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33). It is the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46). The saved are added to it (Acts 2:47). Christ will deliver the kingdom or church

Unstable As Water

Continued from page 1

today are frequently dictated by vulgarity and not by virtue, and men are just as guilty as women in this matter. It is a standing shame on our society that many people have lost all sense of shame. Blushing is about as outmoded in our day as are the horse and buggy for transportation purposes. Both men and women have lost their ability to be dignified in their actions toward each other and while in each other's company. When there is a loss of dignity in speech, dress and actions, then we expect wider and wider experiences in shame and degradation and fuller and fuller experiments with sinful activities. Those who lose their dignity forget just how great a possession a good name, a REALLY good name is. Solomon said it this way respectively in Proverbs 22:1 and in Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold . . . A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." Young people who turn to drugs,

strong drink, illicit sex, murder, theft and the like are off to a very bad beginning in life. When such practices are deeply ingrained in their hearts and lives, few of them ever succeed in building for themselves a good life and a great character. There is no way they can with such life-styles. The loss of moral dignity and spiritual uprightness leads to all sorts of crimes and sins in the future.

The message to Reuben also said he was pre-eminent or excellent in power or strength. But power has to be controlled. Unleashed and without proper regulations power can be so destructive. An automobile is a great blessing in transporting us from place to place. I have traveled by such a good half million miles or more over more than a third of a century in preaching the gospel of Christ from ocean to ocean and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. But the unleashing of hundreds of "horsepower" under the hood must be under proper, sober, alert and responsible control. Where such is lacking behind

the steering wheel an out-of-control car can kill and maim for life. It does it for hundreds of thousands annually in our world. Humans also have such powers personally. But these powers must be curbed; they MUST be controlled. Such power does not need to be unleashed in irresponsible manners. Many people today have used but little of their God-given powers and energies toward anything that is really worthwhile. Like the man in Matthew 25 who is called an unprofitable servant they bury their talents of power and good influence or else employ them only for worldly and evil endeavors. Reuben had much going for him in early life. But alas, he allowed a personal weakness to wreck so much of the potential good at his command. Of that we will study in the second and final of this two-part series for WORDS OF TRUTH. Reuben forms a portrait for our profit today, but we must emulate him only in the good and not follow him into sinful and degrading acts. But of the latter the second article will major. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The Conversion Of The Samaritans

Continued from page 2

to the Father when he comes again (I Cor. 15:24; Eph. 5:27). It wears the name of Christ (Col. 5:17; Rom. 16:16).

These are some of the things Philip taught the Samaritans about the kingdom.

Philip also taught the Samaritans about the name of Jesus Christ.

Who is Jesus Christ? He is the one spoken of in prophecy. He is the one prophesied of in the curse of Satan. He is the seed that bruised the head of the seed of the serpent. The serpent bruised Christ's heel in the crucifixion. Christ bruised the head of the serpent in his resurrection (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:16).

Isaiah described the Christ seven hundred years before he was born of Mary. "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, Counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Peter tells us Christ after his resurrection and ascension was elevated to sit on the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-30, 34-35). Therefore, he is now reigning upon his throne.

Isaiah sketches with words the suffering of Christ. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:3-5). In Acts 8 Philip quoted verses 6 and 7 of Isa. 53 and applies the prophecy to Christ. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell the story of the rejection, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Peter tells us salvation is in the name or authority of Christ (Acts 4:12). See also John 14:6. Jesus declared he has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Philip must have taught these truths.

They were baptized. In every case of conversion in the New Testament, they were baptized. Why were they baptized? Jesus had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mk. 16:16). Paul taught the churches of Galatia, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). He also wrote to the Romans,

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3). Christ shed his blood in his death. Spiritually we come into contact with the blood of Christ in baptism. We arise from the watery grave to walk a new life (Rom. 6:4-5).

This is what occurred to the Samaritans and

to all who believe these things concerning the Kingdom of Christ and the name of Christ and are baptized upon faith in Christ, a repentance from sins and a confession of faith in Christ.

Have you believed these truths and been baptized into Christ? — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Ga. 30728.

God's Eternal Purpose

Continued from page 3

during this period and after 80 years of preparation led the children of Israel toward the promised land, a land vouchsafed to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Israel had to learn what many of us need to learn today, that is, that we cannot save ourselves by our own power or goodness. To accomplish that end God gave the law to Israel alone and pointed the way to that "prophet like unto Moses," the Lord Jesus Christ (Cf. Deut. 18:15ff). "Which if a man do" occurs several times in the Old Testament in reference to the Law, and is the key to understanding why men could not be justified before God by the law. They could not keep that law because it required absolute and perfect obedience. One infraction of the law made a sinner, so "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16). But Moses' law acted as a tutor, or schoolmaster, to bring the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:24f). The law fulfilled its purpose and "was taken out of the way" by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

From the beginning of God's promises in Genesis the Lord required blood sacrifices, which blood was typical of the blood of Jesus, the "Lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:19). Thus the sins "done aforetime" were forgiven and Jesus paid the debt when he "poured out his soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12). All the discussion of animal blood in Hebrews shows it was temporary and substitutionary. Those sacrifices were no longer required after "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

God's "purpose of the ages" was ushered in an introductory way by the outstanding preaching of John the immerser. He called Israel to repentance

and baptized multitudes of them. He resolutely denied that he was Christ, but told of one coming after him whom he later described as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John was the "friend of the bridegroom" who heard his voice and who bore witness of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, saying, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

Though the church of Christ began in the mind of God, its actual existence as a living, spiritual organism was on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. The purchase price of the church was nothing less than the life blood of the Son of the living God: "the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Ac. 20:28).

Hence, the coming of Christ and the church that he designed and built constitute the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. The church alone has the responsibility of preaching the gospel to all the world. Since the church of our Lord is his body, the house of God, a holy priesthood, the building of God, and his spiritual kingdom on earth, what a glorious privilege it is for Christians to be such and to be workers together with God! "Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever, Amen" (Eph. 3:21)! — 4311 Castleman Court Nashville, TN 37215.

Prayer must not be taken out of the public schools. That's the way, the only way, many of us got through.

It seems that some people were born ignorant and later had a relapse.

The Veracity And Finality Of Scripture

(No. 4)

In this fourth article in the series on the authority and exclusivity of the Bible, we will consider the question of how one can arrive at a valid interpretation of this authority. The deity of Jesus, the unique features of scripture which are explicable on no other than supernatural grounds, and the finality of these sacred writings have already been demonstrated in this study. However, unless one can know



PHILLIP GRAY

assuredly the correct interpretation of scripture, little is gained by knowing that it is to be our sole religious guide. What does scripture actually say? To whom does it speak? How is it to be understood? A satisfactory answer to these questions is crucial to sustaining the conclusion that the Bible is our only guide to heaven.

It has already been seen that God is the ultimate Author of scripture. On purely "philosophical" grounds it may be concluded that a God of love and justice would not give his children serpents when they beg for fish, nor stones when they beg for bread. But, this is precisely the crime with which God is charged (by implication) when it is maintained that he has given a revelation of his will that cannot be understood or that is equivocal; that he tells us what we are to believe and do, but we have no way of knowing what it is he is really telling us. Let us therefore beg for the bread of life knowing that our Father is faithful as he has promised that, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32).

How in general may one know what any document says irrespective of any grandiose claims it might or might not make for itself? We understand that it is a matter of language; a matter of logic. The guiding question should always be, what is the writer's intent? To determine this, one has only to see what words the writer employed to express his thought. Each word should be examined with every other word in the context to see the grammatical relations. Simple common-sense rules of rationality may be applied to these words to ascertain what the writer was thinking. For example, in Matthew 2:1, the writer put down these words (assuming the English translation to be basically correct), "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem." To a reader unacquainted with the meanings of these words, the sentence is nonsense. But, to one conversant in English its significance is obvious. Simple rules of language and logic apply as one attempts to learn what Matthew was here attempting to convey. It cannot be that Matthew was saying Jesus was born in the days of Judas Maccabeas in the city of Jericho. Now, those who maintain that scripture is entirely a matter of personal, subjective interpretation might allow that one could derive such a message from this passage, and be absolutely correct. In fact, those of this persuasion are logically obligated to allow that this is just as "correct" an interpretation as anyone else's. If not, why not? But, is this not to make mockery of the use of language and common sense? This verse is a simple example among many other (admittedly difficult) verses in the Bible. However, the point is not that all scripture is easy to understand — it is not — but, that when the writers penned their messages in propositional form

(human language) they spoke unequivocally with no intent to deceive or confuse. Thus, scripture should be interpreted according to the ordinary principles for interpreting any other document in human language.

Must one have an infallible human guide to interpret scripture? Some say, yes. It is sometimes insisted that the Holy See is the final court of appeal in all matters of interpretation. Thus, devotees of this view minimize or deny the importance of individual, logical analysis of the source of authority which is scripture. They often aver that the process of arriving at a correct interpretation, as I have outlined it above, involves a basic dependence on human, reason, or logic. It tends to "deify" reason, they cry. Therefore, it cannot be right. However, papists seem to overlook the fact that in hearing or

reading the results of a papal pronouncement on the meaning of any given statement in scripture, they themselves must employ logic and ordinary rules of language if they are to understand or interpret the "infallible interpretation." Thus, they have not obviated their imagined difficulty with human reason in religion.

So it may be seen that there is no escaping the ineluctable truth that all thought ultimately rests upon the rationality of the subject thinking. This is as true in religion as in any other human enterprise. Therefore, scripture is to be interpreted as it was intended to be interpreted as discernable from the way in which human language was employed to provide an indispensable message for soul-hungry seekers of truth. — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

The Soil Of The World

What is the true success to a good garden? I've been wondering that for years, since most of mine have been total failures. It could be for two reasons. One would be my lack of knowledge of plants and farming in general. The second could be the ground's fault. I remember that when my father would want to plant a garden in Alabama he would send off a soil sample to Auburn University to see if the proper nutrients were there to assure a successful crop. If they weren't, we would purchase some minerals and add to the ground to help the yielding ability of it. It seems that this is what Christ was talking about in Mark 4:13-20 in the Parable of the Sower. In this parable we see four kinds of ground that yield four different ways when seed is sown into it.

First there is the wayside ground. This is the path or road leading to the field that is very hard. It may be fertile ground but it hasn't been prepared for the sowing of the seed and thus cannot accept it. The seed lies on the top of the ground and the birds carry it away (Lk. 8:5). This represents the heart of an idle, arrogant, dishonest, prejudice, indifferent, prideful, scornful mind. They hear the word of God but do not apply it to themselves. In the truest sense they have closed both their ears and their minds. The birds that took the seed away represent Satan who takes the seed of the gospel when planted but takes no root. Such people cannot have faith, salvation, or any understanding of the gospel of Christ because, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It would be like planting a seed on pavement. It cannot be done!

The second type of soil is that called stony ground. Unlike the wayside ground there is some soil, though shallow, and some preparation has been made for the planting of the seed; but unfortunately there is no depth (Jn. 6:66). This person is quick to do what is right, but his faith is shallow. The word is not snatched from his heart so quickly, but as soon as persecution or other spiritual troubles come he quickly falls away. How important it is to count the cost of Christianity (Lk. 14:27-33). A heart with no strong conviction is a belief moulded more on emotions than intellect and true faith in God. We



BARRY FIKE

must remain faithful to be saved (Rev. 2:10).

The third type of soil is the thorny ground. Unlike the former two, this ground is fertile and has some depth. But unfortunately the ground was also filled with thorns and briars which the farmer forgot to weed out. How useless for a person to be baptized into the body of Christ and not want to give himself totally to Christ. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). Those who continue to think about money, pleasure, power, popularity and whatever else takes them away from Christ after becoming a Christian need to take heed to what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:2-4. Earthly things are not bad until they begin to choke out the importance that Christ should play in our lives above ALL OTHER THINGS! We cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). The world and Christ are as compatible as water and fire. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

The last type of soil is the good ground. This ground is deep, rich, and well prepared to receive the seed. All rocks, weeds, thorns and other things that might hinder growth have been removed. This is the type of soil that will yield a harvest of 30,60 or 100 fold. Christ tells us that good hearts prepared to accept the gospel of grace will understand the word (Matt. 13:23); receive the word (Mk. 4:20); and keep the word (Luke 4:15). When we follow the word, it literally becomes a part of us, and we practice what we preach. But like the physical plant, such growth will not be seen over night. It would indeed be a poor farmer who would expect his plants to be fully matured and grown the day after he planted the seed. Christ said that such ground would "bring forth fruit with patience" (Lk. 8:15). Patience is indeed a virtue. How many souls have been lost because we were not patient enough to see if a good harvest could be wrought in the hearts of certain individuals? It is good advice to remember that when seed is sown it takes time to grow.

The greatest lesson we could learn from this parable on the soil of the world, or the sower, is that we are simply sowing the seed. We cannot make people believe the gospel and live a correct life as a Christian. We simply sow the word of God and let God increase the word of God and let God increase the growth (I Cor. 3:6). May God help us in this wonderful privilege that he has bestowed upon us! — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most not
the Words of Truth"

with

25

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Blood Obtained Redemption

With serene determination, the scheme of redemption runs through the pages of holy writ (cf. Ephesians 3:9-11). Equally true, the blood of Jesus flows with the scheme. In type, Jesus' blood streamed from the veins and arteries of the Old Testament blood sacrifices. In promise, Jesus' blood fed the capillaries of predictive prophecy. At Calvary his blood "obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11,12).



DAN WINKLER

Concerning Jesus' blood, the writer of Hebrews affirmed, "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). With this verse, the inspired penman addressed the blood of Jesus as it related to:

The Plan Of God

Jesus shed his blood "through the eternal Spirit"; that is, in keeping with the Spirit's teaching (cf. I Corinthians 15:3).

His blood was shed in keeping with the shadows cast by the Spirit in the Old Testament sacrifices (Hebrews 10:1). Before one turns the corner of a house, a tree around the corner gives evidence of its presence by the shadow it casts. Even so, the sacrifices of the Old Testament projectively evidenced the sacrifice of Jesus. Now, since a shadow bears the image of the substance it reflects, there should be some similarities between the Old Testament shadow sacrifices and the sacrifice of Jesus. Note the comparisons: With the burnt-offering sacrifices, the victim was without blemish (Leviticus 1:3,10), it was offered by the priests (Leviticus 1:5,7-9,11,15), and its blood was shed (Leviticus 1:5,11,15). With the peace-offering sacrifices, the victim was without blemish (Leviticus 3:1,6), it was offered by the priests (Leviticus 3:2,8,13), and its blood was shed (Leviticus 3:2,8,13). With the sin-offering sacrifices, the victim was without blemish (Leviticus 4:3,23,28,32),

it was offered by the priests (Leviticus 4:5,7,16, 17,25,28,30,34), and its blood was shed (Leviticus 4:5-7, 16-18,25,28,30,34). Then too, with the trespass-offering, the victim was without blemish (Leviticus 5:15,18; 6:6), it was offered by the priests (Leviticus 5:6,12,16,18), and its blood was shed (Leviticus 5:9; 7:2). In comparison, Jesus was sacrificed as one without blemish (II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 1:18; 2:21-24). He, being high priest, offered himself (Hebrews 9:11,26). Too, in the sacrifice his blood was shed (John 19:31-37). Therefore, his blood was shed in keeping with the shadows cast by the Spirit's Old Testament sacrifices.

His blood was shed in keeping with the prophecies the Spirit predicted (cf. Luke 24:25-27). In fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, Jesus' blood was poured out (Isaiah 53:10; Leviticus 17:11; Mark 14:24) for the remission of sins (Zechariah 13:1; cf. Matthew 26:28) when he was pierced (Zechariah 12:10; Psalms 22:16; cf. John 19:31-37) in death.

So it was not in keeping with the ceremonial ritual of the Old Testament economy, but in keeping with the Spirit that Jesus shed his blood, making provision for the plan of God to man. He was, indeed, "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).

The Problem Of Sin

With Jesus' shed blood, it is possible to "cleanse your conscience from dead works." The conscience is a safety valve of the heart admonishing, "Do right and do not do wrong" (cf. I Peter 3:21). With sin, the conscience becomes defiled (Titus 1:15). However, the blood of Jesus can scour the conscience of its calloused crust caused by the impenitent course of dead works. It can remove the seared scar of guilt, purify the soul, and render one acceptable to God. To understand how such is possible, five words should be studied:

(1) *Remission* — A "financial" term. With sin, man is in debt to God (Matthew 6:12). Jesus' blood remits or pays the debt of one's past sins and forwards a balance of zero (Matthew 26:28).

(2) *Justification* — A "judicial" term. With sin, man's soul is guilt-ridden (James 2:10). Jesus' blood absolves the guilt (Romans 5:9).

(3) *Purification* — A "ceremonial" term (cf. Numbers 6:9-13). With sin, man's soul is defiled (Jeremiah 2:23). He stands in the filthy rags of

iniquity before Jehovah. Jesus' blood cleanses man of such (I John 1:7).

(4) *Reconciliation* — A "renewal" term. With sin, man is estranged from God (Isaiah 59:1,2). Jesus' blood draws man back to God (Ephesians 2:13), renewing the fellowship that was broken by transgression.

(5) *Sanctification* — A "several [separating]" term. With sin, man is a friend of the world (James 4:4; cf. Romans 6-8). Jesus' blood severs man from the world and sets him apart for noble service in the Lord's army (Hebrews 10:29; 13:12; Romans 12:1,2).

The Purpose Of Man

Jesus' blood was shed that man might be cleansed "to serve the living God." Note the contextual contrast made between "dead works" in sin (cf. Ephesians 2:1-10; 5:11) and the "living God" (cf. Daniel 7:26). Of the two, man is to serve God (Romans 12:11; Hebrews 12:28), and to this end the scheme of redemption was obtained by the blood of Jesus. Later the writer of Hebrews referred to the blood-cleansed conscience (Hebrews 10:19-25) and cited some of the responsibilities involved in serving God. The redeemed are to:

(1) *Pray*. "Let us draw near [draw near the throne of God, cf. Hebrews 4:15,16] with a true heart in fulness of faith . . ." (Hebrews 10:19-22).

(2) *Persevere*. "Let us hold fast the confession of our faith that it waver not . . ." (Hebrews 10:23).


(3) *Provoke one another*. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works . . ." (Hebrews 10:24).

A failure to meet these responsibilities of service results in the gravest of consequences (Hebrews 10:29).

Without doubt, the blood of Jesus speaketh better than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:24). The blood of Abel spake with an avenging cry; whereas, the blood of Jesus speaks with an atoning cure for sin.

How does one contact the blood of Jesus and appropriate the benefits thereof? Through baptism. Both baptism and the blood are said to: wash (Acts 22:16; Revelation 7:14); remit (Acts 2:38; Matthew 20:28); render a good conscience (I Peter 3:21; Hebrews 9:24); sanctify (Ephesians 5:25,26; Hebrews 10:29); and justify (I Corinthians 6:11;

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Words Of Truth

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

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A Case Of Public Rebuke

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. 2:11-13).



BOBBY DUNCAN

Paul had earlier shown that the truth he preached was not taught him by the other apostles, but was given him by revelation (1:11,12). He now proceeds to point out that any person-- even an apostle-- who fails to live in harmony with the gospel preached by himself is not walking uprightly, and should be rebuked.

From these verses we learn, first, that Peter was not the Pope. While the doctrine of the papacy of Peter is completely unfounded in Scripture, there are many who take for granted its truthfulness. The Pope is supposed to be infallible, but Paul said Peter "was to be blamed." Men today in the Roman Catholic Church do not withstand the Pope to the face, as Paul did Peter on this occasion. Furthermore, Peter had a wife (I Cor. 9:5), which the modern Pope cannot have.

Secondly, we learn from these verses the danger of

an undue regard for pleasing men. Peter obviously knew there was nothing wrong with his eating with Gentiles. This he did, before certain came from James. But he knew the scruples of these Jewish brethren concerning eating with Gentiles. Rather than disturb these brethren, he simply acted hypocritically (dissembled). Now, there is nothing wrong with wanting to keep peace among brethren. But there is a point beyond which we cannot go in order to keep peace. The truth of the gospel cannot be sacrificed upon the altar of peace and harmony. Even for the sake of peace, it is a sin to give in to the dictatorial scruples of men, when these scruples are in violation of the will of God.

Thirdly, we learn from these verses that a public sin merits a public rebuke. Paul's statement in verse fourteen is: "I said unto Peter before them all . . ." Paul's rebuke of Peter on this occasion was not a private rebuke, because Peter's sin was not a private sin. It is suggested by some that Matthew 18:15 teaches that those who sin are to be approached privately; and that one who publicly refutes false doctrine or other types of sin without first approaching the offender privately is in violation of this passage. Such is not the case. Matthew 18:15ff has to do with a private and personal offense, not a public one. Think of the error that would have gone uncorrected if Paul had approached Peter privately with regard to this matter, and if it had been "settled" between the two of them. Public sin cannot be settled privately. I Timothy 5:20 says: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." This is what Paul did. Is this what you would have done?

Finally, these verses show us the great force of bad examples. First, Peter dissembled, then other Jews, and then Barnabas himself. Would Barnabas and the other Jews have acted as they did had not Peter led the way? How we behave is often more far reaching in effect than what we teach. The good teaching of a lifetime may be destroyed by one bad example. Edgar A. Guest wrote the following lines:

I'd rather see a sermon than hear
one any day,
I'd rather one should walk with me
than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more
willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but
example's always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are
the men who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action is what
everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it if you'll
let me see it done.
I can watch your hands in action, but
your tongue too fast may run.
And the lectures you deliver may be
very wise and true;
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing
what you do.
For I may not understand you and the
high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how
you act and how you live.

Blood Obtained Redemption

Continued from page 1

Romans 5:9). Contradiction? No. Baptism is the WHEN and Jesus' blood is the HOW benefiting each of the preceding. Thus the question, "Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" — Rt. 2 Box 240 Woodbury, Tennessee 37190.

Was Peter The First Pope?

The Roman Catholic Church freely asserts that Peter was indeed the first Pope. We deny the allegation with all the power of a Bible believer. Never is Peter referred to as *Pope*. We shall not attempt to settle the question under consideration according to Catholic dogma; rather, we shall settle it according to the teaching of God's word. We shall follow this course because the Bible is God's last



W. A. HOLLEY

word to man, as far as revelation and confirmation of eternal truth is concerned (Revelation 22:18-19; II Timothy 3:15-17; Jude 3; I Corinthians 2:6-13).

We firmly believe in the separation of church and state, as taught by Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25). Our Constitution says, "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion nor prohibiting the

free exercise thereof."

The Roman Catholic Church urges upon others the terrible doctrine of "Unam Sanctam." What is this doctrine? As stated by her own representatives, it is: "*There is nothing strange in attributing to the Roman Pontiff, as the Vicar of Him whose is the earth and the fullness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein, the fullest authority and power to lay bare, a just cause moving him, not only the spiritual sword but also the material sword, and so to transfer sovereignties, sceptres, and remove crowns . . . that both swords are in the power of the church, the spiritual and the material, but the latter is to be used for the church, and the former by the church; one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and magistrates, but at the pleasure and sufferance of the priest*" (Catholic Dictionary, page 280ff).

For more than 150 years, in the United States of America, the Roman church has marshaled a four-pronged attack against the wall of church and state separation: (1) *The population front*. Her membership has increased from a few thousand to some 40 million. How can we account for such rapid growth? Not because of her evangelistic zeal, but because of

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“Unstable As Water”

No. 2



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Genesis 49:3 sets forth the better nature of Reuben's life. He was Jacob's firstborn and the son of Leah. Of that aspect and lessons therefrom I wrote in the previous article. The very next verse in this Biblical context, Genesis 49:4, sets forth the sordid side of his life. He had been involved in the sin of incest with Bilhah, his father's secondary wife. Zilpah was another secondary wife to Jacob.

Reuben's father said to him in Genesis 49:4, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." The ASV of 1901 renders this verse as follows, "Boiling over as water, thou shalt not have the pre-eminence; Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; Then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." The actual occurrence of this great sin of incest is set forth in Genesis 35:22 wherein we read, "And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it." In later years the law of Moses was to say in regard to this great, glaring and grievous sin, "Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut. 27:20). Paul dealt in detail with the sin of incest in I Corinthians 5 where a brother in the church at Corinth had taken his father's wife. From the early morning of time such has always been considered one of the most glaring and insensitive of all sins. It still is and is widespread in our day.

Reuben allowed his environment to mold him instead of his seeking to mold the environment into something better and more moral. In this sordid case he became a product of the society around him. He became whatever the company and environment demanded. Jacob, the dying father, illustrated his son's weakness and grave defect by suggesting that his son Reuben was "unstable as water." There is nothing more unstable than water. It will fit whatever mold into which it is placed or poured. It will not stay on high ground when it falls as rain but will seek the lowest possible depths. Dear Readers, this is precisely the very way sin works in our lives. It is never satisfied until it gets the sinner down in the Dead Sea of filth and degradation and where there is no outlet. Water in the Dead Sea is stagnant; it is filthy; it is deadly to any life that comes into it from the waters of the Jordan which empty into it near Jericho. It is unfit for human consumption or to meet human thirst needs. Sin is of like character. It is stagnant; it is filthy; it is unfit for slaking the real thirsts of humanity. Only Christ and the water of life can do that.

Water is unstable in other ways. Put it into a place of warmth and it becomes warm. Put it on the stove to boil and it soon becomes steam. Put it into a cold place and it becomes cold. Freeze it and it becomes ice. Its temperature is controlled by its environment. Reuben was unstable as water in this very department. His environment controlled him and not he his environment. Such is frequently true of people today. When their environment controls them, they are failures in life regardless of education, talents, possessions and opportunities.

The depth, diameter and circumference of any certain water is determined and fashioned by its externals — by that which is outside of itself. Place water into a deep container and it will be deep water.

Place water into a shallow container and it will be shallow water. Place water into a round container and it takes on the characteristics of being round. Place water into a square container and it takes on square characteristics. If water is in a narrow stream, it will be narrow. If it is in a broad river, it will be a broad body of water. The container does the determining. The water is the unstable servant in the matter.

Water is unstable in its characteristics. So was Reuben in his day. So are the masses of men today. They are not molded and influenced by God and the Bible; they are molded by their external environment. What others around them are, so they become. If others curse, they curse. If others drink, they drink. If others smoke, they smoke. If others use dope, they use dope. If others pet and commit fornication, they do the same when opportunity permits. If others cheat on a spouse, they do the same when away from home and a willing partner is available. If others are liars, they become liars. If others are dishonest in their business dealings, they are dishonest also. They think like the world thinks; they read what the world reads in the way of trashy material; they talk like the world; they dress (or undress) like the world; they act like the world acts; they are headed the same place the world is — eternal torments in everlasting Gehenna.

Just a few years ago dresses and skirts of women and girls went up and up. Just that soon the morals of people went down, Down, DOWN. They went down into fornication, adultery, unwanted pregnancies, unwed parenthood, disease, despair and the like. After coming down for awhile in high fashions, now dresses and skirts are inching up again. In morals and manners our world is becoming more and more "unstable as water." In far too many instances the church is following in close pursuit.

Those who want to please God cannot be like water which is so very unstable. We must be molded and fashioned according to the word of the living God. John says in I John 5:19 that the whole world lies in wickedness, or as the ASV states, "the evil one." The apostle of love tells us not to love the world with its lusts of the flesh, of the eyes, and its pride or vainglory of life (I John 2:15-17). James 4:4 declares that friendship with the world is equated with enmity toward God. In Romans 12:2 Paul says we are not to be fashioned according to the world, but be

transformed by the renewing of our minds. James 1:27 demands that we remain unspotted from the world. The world will make all of us into degenerate people if we accept its molds, ideals, goals, standards of conduct, etc. It is so very easy to become modern day Reubens and thus become "unstable as water." Preachers, elders, deacons, Bible teachers, and all as members can so conform to a Reuben-type of life style. Some in the New Testament were of this disposition. Ananias and Sapphira were "unstable as water" in Acts 5 and defected. Some in John 6 did not like the tone and tenor of the Lord's sermon and so became "unstable as water." They turned their backs on him and vacated his presence. For awhile John Mark became "unstable as water" but later became a stable disciple again. Demas became "unstable as water" and forsook Paul (II Tim. 4:10). Peter referred to some who were unstable in his day. They wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Pet. 3:15-17).

Are we like water? Do we seek the lowest possible level like the waters of the Jordan do in rushing into the Dead Sea? Are we like water in conforming to our environment? If we are in a cold, formal atmosphere, are we cold and formal? If we are in an atmosphere that is lukewarm, are we lukewarm? When we are with sinners, do we talk just like they do, go where they go, do what they do, refuse to do what they refuse to do, etc.? If so, we are modern Reubens. As such we are "unstable as water?" If not, WHY NOT??

Those who are "unstable as water" need to obey the gospel if they are aliens. This means hearing God's word, believing in Christ, repenting of sins, confessing Christ before men, and being immersed into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24,21; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9,10; Matt. 28:19). If one is an erring child of God, he needs to forsake the instability of water and repent of his wrongs, confess his sins, and pray for pardon to be his prized and precious possession again. This latter is Jehovah's law of pardon. Relative to it we read in Acts 8:22; James 5:16 and I John 1:9.

Let us conform to Jehovah and Jesus. Let us learn and do the ways Deity has prescribed for us. Then we will not be Reuben-like people who are "unstable as water." — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Was Peter The First Pope?

Continued from page 2

her policy of controlled immigration and uncontrolled multiplication since she is unalterably opposed to almost all forms of birth control. (2) *The communication front.* It is a truism that those who control the media of communication will ultimately control the minds of the people.

It is obvious that certain newspaper and television personalities are supporters of the Roman church from their frequent laudatory comments supporting and praising the pope and his unholy cause. Many journalists and television newscasters and diplomats are trained to praise the Pope in all instances possible. It is said that from her colleges she has sent out 75 percent of our diplomats which serve in foreign countries. They thus interpret America to others through Catholic eyes. Thus television, the press, and radio are used to promote religion at tax-payers' expense, although not many object!

(3) *The legislative front.* The Roman Catholic Church maintains the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington for the specific purpose of lobbying for or against any bill that comes before

the Congress in proportion to what it does or does not do for her. In this area she is much concerned with filling high offices with her sons — congressmen, senators, governors, judges, and the like.

(4) *The education front.* Parochial schools, colleges, and universities are designed to take pupils away from public education, so that they can be filled with Catholic education. For years she has sought public tax money so as to support Catholic education. How would you like for your children to be forced to use an official prayer composed by the hierarchy of the Catholic church??

Of course, Peter was not the first Pope!! No pope is mentioned in the New Testament. The Papal system developed gradually. In New Testament or apostolic times each church had a plurality of elders and deacons (Acts 20:17,28; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:17). But, after a time a great departure from the truth of God set in (Acts 20:28-30; I Timothy 4:1-4; II Thessalonians 2:3-12). Historically, five great cities, Jerusalem, Antioch,

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Was Peter The First Pope?

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Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome began to exalt their respective "chief bishops," leaving the Bible order altogether. These five exalted bishops were called Metropolitans, then Exarchs, then Patriarchs, and finally the whole process culminated in the bishop of Rome's being called the Pope. John the Faster (588 A.D.) was the first person to claim that he was a "Universal bishop." It was Innocent III (A.D. 606) who first claimed to exercise "Universal Rule." Thus these claims came almost 500 years too late for them to be in keeping with God's eternal truth!

Sometimes one can read that the popes are successors of the apostles. Popes cannot qualify

to succeed the apostles. Why? Because to be an apostle one had to company with Christ from the baptism of John to the ascension of our Lord (Acts 1:21-22). When James was beheaded the apostles did not meet and select one to take his place, as in the case of Judas (Acts 1:15-26; Cf. Acts 12:1-3; 15:6-11). No person today, nor any immediately following the time of the apostles, could meet the qualifications of an apostle, nor can any supposed successor of an apostle. Thus the doctrine of apostolic succession is not taught in the Sacred Volume.

No person could be more unlike Peter than the Pope is! To illustrate, the Pope never preaches a

gospel sermon; the Pope never tells a sinner what to do to be saved; the Pope never urges people to follow the Holy Bible. The Catholic Church has much to say about the seven sacraments: viz, Baptism (affusion or sprinkling), penance, confirmation, Holy Eucharist, extreme unction, Holy orders, and matrimony — five acts for the living and two for the dead. The Bible reader will know that the Bible says nothing about Sacraments!

Now, dear readers, we urge you to open your Bibles, read them, believe them, and obey the commands of the Lord God Almighty revealed to you therein. Do not trust men! Your Bible contains God's message for you. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Things That God Hates*

All have heard numerous sermons on the love of God. Surely there is no grander, more thrilling theme. But have you ever heard a lesson on the hatred of God? Contrary to popular notion, God does have such negative emotions. Of course, the hatred of God is on a far different plane than the hatred of men. Men hate each other, but God loves all men, even his enemies (Romans 5:6-10). Men hate be-



JOHN WADDEY

cause of selfishness. When someone or something threatens their cherished position or possession, they experience the emotions of envy, jealousy and hate. Often sinners hate the good man for the good he is doing, as they did Jesus (John 7:7). God's hatred never affects his love for man. He loves all, including the lost (John 3:16). To fully know and appreciate the personality of God, we should note some of those things he hates.

God loves righteousness but *hates iniquity* (Hebrews 1:9). Righteousness is right doing. Iniquity is sin, or the perversion of right. Iniquity thwarts God's plans and purposes for man. It ruins the soul made in the image of God. It robs God's children of heaven's reward (Matthew 7:21-23). God loves sinners, but he hates their iniquitous ways.

God *hates false religion*. "Thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans which I also hate" (Revelation 2:6). Truth makes men free (John 8:32). Error and falsehood enslave and bring men to hell (Hosea 4:6; Proverbs 16:25). Like God, we should hate and abhor the false systems that lead men away from God. When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14). Some folks view the world religions such as Buddhism and Islam and praise their beauty. But how can that which is deadly and destructive be truly beautiful? Denominationalism is not just a harmless variety of true Christianity. It is a plant which the Father hath not planted which he will root up (Matthew 15:13). Those who pursue God through the medium of human traditions do so in vain (Matthew 15:9). Like David, we too should hate every false way (Psalms 119:104).

Solomon gives a divine catalogue of things which God hates in Proverbs 6:16,17: *Haughty eyes*. This suggests the proud, arrogant soul whose eyes reflect contempt for his fellow man and God's righteous law. The "pride of life" is not of the father but of the world (1 John 2:15:16). Christians must put away pride and

arrogance.

A lying tongue. All liars will have their part in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). We are tempted to excuse the "little" or "harmless" lies, so long as we abstain from the vicious, diabolic lies. Remember, *all liars* will pay the price. It is incumbent upon us to "put away falsehood" and speak truth if we would please the Master (Ephesians 4:25).

Hands that shed innocent blood. He speaks not of chickens or pigs. God gave man dominion over the creatures (Genesis 1:28). God hates the shedding of innocent human blood. He ordained that "whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis 9:6). Thus, God ordered capital punishment for the murderer. God surely hates the astounding amount of brutal violence on America's streets. He hates the violence of the Communist governments which have exterminated millions of dissenters. But he also hates the practice of abortion which has snuffed out over 11 million lives in America since 1973.

A heart that deviseth wicked purposes. God will give up those who have a "reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28). There is a type of heart that is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). Such individuals are dedicated to wickedness. They scheme, plot and plan to do mischievous deeds toward others. Sometimes they hide their meanness behind a cloak of pretended righteousness. The pure in heart will be blest of God in this life and see him in eternity (Matthew 5:8). Not so the wicked-minded.

Feet swift in running to mischief. There is a marked difference between accidentally falling into sin and deliberately running into it. Willful sin is especially hateful to God (Hebrews 10:26-27). In fact, the willful sinner can expect a fiery judgment. Because God so views deliberate sin, his children daily pray "lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13).

False witness. We have no way of computing the damage done to homes, to society, and the church because of false witnesses. Under Moses' law the false witness who testified against his neighbor was to be punished as "he had thought to do unto his brother" (Deuteronomy 19:19). God's children should always speak the truth and lie not (1 Timothy 2:7).

He that soweth discord among brethren. If the factious brother could perceive how God hates division and strife, he would surely repent of his contentiousness. We see just how bad such attitudes and conduct are when we consider the works of the flesh of Galatians 5:19-21. Strife, factions, divisions, and parties (cliques) he lists along with fornication, idolatry and drunkenness. He concludes that no one can go to heaven while practicing such things. The road to eternity is strewn with lost souls who were destroyed by discord in the church. Only the peacemakers are called the children of God (Matthew

5:9).

In Malachi 2:16, we are told that God hates *the breaking up of homes* by divorce. Some argue that Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19 is too severe. "Modern man cannot be expected to have but one marriage for life!" They feel that divorce and re-marriage only in the case of fornication is too limited. Such brethren obviously have never realized how God views the sacredness of the home. God hates putting away and so should we!

Holy hatred being an attribute of God, then it is fitting that they who would be godly share that emotion toward the things God hates. "The fear of Jehovah is to *hate evil* . . ." (Proverbs 8:13). With David we "hate and *abhor falsehood*" (Psalms 119:163). Paul exhorts us to abhor that which is evil . . ." (Romans 12:9). The Ephesian saints were commended for *hating "the works of the Nicolaitans,"* i.e., false teachers (Revelation 2:6). Jude admonishes us, "some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; *hating* even the garment spotted by the flesh" (vs. 23).

While we should hate evil with God, may we never be found hating God or his holy law. Moses warns, "He [God] will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment . . ." (Deuteronomy 7:10-11).

*The author is indebted to Gobel Music for the main idea of this lesson. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Christ In The Home Back In Print

ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

It gives me pleasure to announce that my book, *CHRIST IN THE HOME*, is now back in print again. I wrote this material a dozen years ago and Baker Book House of Grand Rapids, Michigan, published it. It went through three printings with them before they chose to discontinue it in 1982. It was out of print for several months. Quality Publications of Abilene is the new publisher and has just released the first printing with a new cover and some revisions made in the book. The new price is \$5.95 and may be purchased from your favorite bookstore or from this writer at P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063. Allow \$1.00 for postage and mailing packet. Across the years many readers of WORDS OF TRUTH have ordered this book to give as presents for holiday seasons, wedding presents, for individual use or for use in various Bible Classes. For all such kindnesses to this book I am profoundly grateful. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not man
the Words of"

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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Gems Of I Samuel

As we begin the study of I Samuel we are leaving the time of the judges and are now going to a period of kings. Saul, David and Solomon ruled forty years each. One of the greatest characters in this book is Samuel, a prophet of God, who spoke for God to the people. Many times a prophet would have to stand alone against popular desires of weak men. This book has given me strength many times



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

as a gospel preacher when I was depressed concerning the condition of the sinful and weak members of the church and when many show by their actions that they love the world more than God. Space will not permit me to elaborate on another great character in this book named Hannah, but I hope this article will motivate each of you to read this good book and in so doing read the wonderful lesson of a mother giving her son to God. Oh how we need more Hannahs!

"And the word of the Lord was precious in those days . . ." (I Samuel 3:1). The word of the Lord had become a rare and priceless item due to the spiritual decline during the days of the judges. The best way to cure a disease is to prevent it. To prevent the word of God's becoming rare and priceless today is to preach and teach the word at every given opportunity. May we never forget that Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Paul instructed Timothy to "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). Let us all keep on keeping on preaching God's word; for only the word of God will save (James 1:21).

In Chapter three and verse nine we learn of the devotion and attitude of Samuel. "Speak, Lord: for thy servant heareth . . ." Do we hear God's Son through his word today and obey his words?

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Do we attend worship service on Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights as we do on Sunday mornings. "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Do we do what Jesus said or do we retaliate and act as ugly as our enemies? "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matthew 6:14). Do we ask God to forgive us when we won't forgive others? No doubt some will say these verses are very hard to live by. Remember, dear reader, that anything is hard when our attitude is not what God wants it to be. Verse nine in chapter three contains a great lesson on attitude. Much can be done with a person with the proper attitude. Many people could be so useful in the Lord's kingdom if only they had the attitude of Samuel when he said, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth."


"Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (I Samuel 8:5). Many people today are ashamed of sermons on baptism and the church. They do not want their religious neighbors to hear anything from God's word that might disturb them. Many people would like to see the church become a big social club. Jesus said, "Whosoever 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). We must not be ashamed of the truth for only the truth can make us free (John 8:32). An important question is: what is the mission of the church? Listen to the apostle Paul for the answer. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10). The church of our Lord is not a place to go for social entertainment, but rather the church must make known unto a sinful world the manifold wisdom of God. In verse seven of chapter eight the Lord said they had not rejected Samuel but they had rejected God. When we today go astray and away from

God's command to be like the people around us, we have rejected God.

In chapter fifteen we have a very good biblical example on obedience and disobedience. In verse three Saul is given a command. But in verse nine we read where Saul was in disobedience to the command of God. As we read verse thirteen, we read where Saul has told Samuel of a falsehood. In verses seventeen through twenty-one, Saul is trying to shift his responsibility. Now as we read verses twenty-two and twenty-three we read where Samuel is doing some great preaching by pointing out Saul's mistakes without any *if's*, *but's*, or *maybe's*. Samuel was very plain and to the point. In verse twenty-four we see that Saul's weak defense is the epitome of a life of compromise. As we read further in this chapter we see that Samuel did not apologize for what he had preached nor did he turn to Saul and pet him for his disobedient act.

We now come to a lesson in I Samuel that is one of the best known portions of scripture in the entire Bible. What child is there that has attended Sunday School or Vacation Bible School who doesn't know something about David and Goliath? Many chapters and sermons have been written about this confrontation between these two men. A lesson that we all need to comprehend from David and Goliath is that we must look beyond human strength. If we do not heed this lesson we will miss a wonderful teaching from God's word. David looked beyond his own self to the strength and help of God. David said, "But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts . . ." (I Samuel 17:45). We must look beyond to the strength of God and put our trust in him. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust" (Psalms 18:2). "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalms 27:1). "O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer" (Psalms 31:23). David needed help and he looked to God for his help and strength. Today we fight many battles of life and fail because we go to man, the wrong source, when we should turn to God. "God is our refuge and strength,

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Brand "X"

Whatever happened to BRAND "X"? For nearly thirty years of television we saw any number of products compared to BRAND "X," but now BRAND "X" seems to have disappeared from the scene. Advertisers now call the names of products with which their own products are being compared. *Pepsi-Cola* is compared to *Coke*; *Hunt's* is compared to *Heinz*; *Ford* is compared to *Datsun* or *Toyota*. Nobody ever uses BRAND "X" for comparison purposes any more.



BOBBY DUNCAN

Is the disappearance of BRAND "X" significant? I believe it is, and for this reason: It suggests to us that the society in which we live now not only tolerates, but also appreciates plainness of speech. Perhaps this is the influence of that generation which grew up in the seventies, and whose motto seems to have been: "Tell it like it is!" By this attitude most of us have been emboldened to speak more plainly, and by the same token, we have become conditioned to hearing plain language. Perhaps this attitude has contributed to the shameful manner in which immorality is glorified in movies and on television.

But the attitude which brought about the disappearance of BRAND "X" furnishes a real challenge to the people of God. A society which has become conditioned to plainness of speech will tolerate and appreciate the plain proclamation of the truth. While there is never a time when Christians should be rude, the truth of God should be spoken so plainly that those who hear would have to have profession-

al help to misunderstand.

It has been the philosophy of some that the truth should be taught in such a manner as never to allow one to suspect that he is a sinner and stands in need of salvation. One would almost get the impression that sinners should somehow be persuaded to be baptized for the remission of sins without ever realizing they were sinners in the first place. Some seem to be inclined to appeal to sinners to obey God because they are already such good people, have so many friends, and could be such great assets to the church. Certainly God can and will use every person who will submit his will to the will of God. But sinners need to see that it is they who need God, and not God who is in need. They must understand that they are lost because of their sins, and not that they should be church members because they are already so good.

Also there are those who seem to try to lead people into the church of Christ without ever letting them know that the church of Christ is different from other churches. Instead of trying to attract people to obey the gospel by minimizing the differences and emphasizing the similarities between the Lord's church and other churches, we should be emphasizing the difference between the Lord's church and other churches and showing that the similarities are coincidental. The idea of preaching the truth, but couching it in language so that those in error will never recognize their error, is foreign to the word of God. Jesus and his apostles always spoke plainly in denouncing sin and error. (See Matthew 23, Acts 3,4,7,17, etc.)

The time is ripe for citizens of the kingdom of God to speak plainly to their friends and neighbors concerning truth and right. Plain language concerning God's plan of salvation, the church, scriptural worship, etc. is in order during this time when BRAND "X" is no longer needed. Let us take advantage of this period of frankness and openness to tell people frankly and openly about God and his will.

Wake Up!

Have you ever heard of a congregation that was evangelistic minded? No, I'm not talking about the kind that simply talked about being evangelistic. That kind of congregation is written about in Prov. 14:23 when Solomon stated, "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty" (NIV). I'm talking about a body of believers that really believe they are the children of God and act like it. If you know of such a congregation that does have the evangelistic spirit, talked frequently about in the New Testament, let me give you some brief pointers that may be of some help.



BARRY FIKE

First, keep that congregation away from that negative spirit that has become epidemic in the brotherhood of Christ. Do you realize that many of us are programmed for failure and smallness? We seem to know all of the reasons why programs and meetings can, and will, fail. I've sat in many meetings of our brethren and very rarely do I hear of anyone acting on even the briefest amount of faith. It's always that the congregation is too small, has too little money, and doesn't have the interest to continue, or begin, the project that could reach countless thousands of lost souls for Christ.

Second, try to get the goals of the congregation straight. In listening to some of our brethren one would think the mission of the church is to build big buildings, backbite our brother, and pacify the whims of weak members. This is not to say that when a brother sins we should not pay notice to it, nor to say that buildings are bad. But when our money and talents are totally directed toward one or the other something is very wrong.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I just don't think that I can do it"? I'm sure they can't. In fact the Bible is very plain in declaring that

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Lord, Will You Credit Us?

WINFREY HENNESSEE

When we make plans for the purpose of taking a trip out of town, many preparations must be made. The car must be serviced, the suitcase packed, instructions must be given to those who will carry on while we are away, and don't forget to take some cash, Visa, and Master Card.

All of these things are necessary if we are to have a safe and happy journey, but sometimes we leave undone one of the most important things which we should do. The apostle Paul says, "Upon the first day of the week, let each one lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" (I Cor. 16:2). This is not to be done at one's convenience, as many seem to think, but upon the first day of the week. If we are to abide by these instructions, then we should leave our contribution with a friend in order that it will find its way into the Lord's treasury at the correct time.

Some of us say, "So what? We can give this money to whichever congregation we choose to attend while

on our trip. God will receive it there same as here." But there are other things to be considered. When the elders at our local congregation prepare the budget, the expenditures of the coming year are based upon the amount which the church has been taking in, and prayerfully, and optimistically, on the projected amount which is expected in the coming months. When the budget is finally ready to be presented to the congregation, the elders are depending upon every member in order to carry out these projects. If we give our contribution somewhere else, the local congregation might come up short, many times resulting in some important project's being cut from the budget.

Then there are those of us who do take these things into consideration, but we say, "What difference can a week or two possibly make? I'll give the money when I get back; besides we never know when an emergency might arise. I might need some extra cash." Most of us would not think of

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There Will Be No Fornicators In Heaven

Not having been preaching the word all that long (eight years), I have noticed a great deal of diversity in our brotherhood concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. But one thing is definitely clear: **THERE WILL BE NO FORNICATORS IN HEAVEN.**



BY GEORGE REED

First of all, what is fornication? *Fornication (porneia)* is virtually defined as *all illicit sexual acts*. Yea, Jude mentions homosexuality as a form of fornication (Jude 7). Second, we are talking about those that refuse to repent of their fornication (II Cor. 12:21; Rev. 2:21; 9:21). Now let's notice especially what the New Testament says about the word *fornication*.

Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for *fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Mt. 19:9). If one wishes to remarry, he must have put his mate away for fornication. This is very clear from the passage.

A brother that is a fornicator must be withdrawn from. "But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a *fornicator*, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11). Brethren that live ungodly will leave the whole lump (v. 6), and must be delivered unto Satan (v. 6,13). Brethren, the Bible declares that he is walking disorderly, and must be withdrawn from (II Thess. 3:6,14).

How can anyone argue with these passages? The apostle Paul said, "For this ye know of a surety, that no *fornicator*, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance

in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. 5:5). We see in verse three that fornication is not even to be named among saints. Yet we have brethren (?) that are traveling far and near preaching that fornication does not matter. If a person has been divorced five or six times (the number doesn't matter), for an unscriptural reason, he is to keep the mate he is living with and God will accept him. This is what too many of my brethren (?) are preaching today.

The Hebrew writer says, "Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for *fornicators* and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Jesus has already told us what constitutes adultery (Mt. 19:9). Arndt and Gingrich, commenting on the word adultery, say, "to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, to commit adultery (if she contracts a new marriage) Mt. 5:32; Mk. 10:12. But also 2. of the man . . . who marries a divorced woman Mt. 5:32b; 19:9 . . . or who marries again after divorcing his wife 19:9 . . . commits adultery against her (his first wife) Mk. 10:11" (p. 528). The fornicator shall stand before the judgment seat of God guilty of violating such passages as Mt. 19:9; I Cor.

6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21, etc.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication" (I Thess. 4:3). The Bible warns us to abstain from fornication. There are two words that we all need to remember: "Flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:18). Too many of my brethren have given themselves over to fornication (Jude 7), and in the process sold their birthright (Heb. 12:16). And we would all do well to take heed to Proverbs 6:26: "For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a piece of bread."

The Bible clearly teaches that the *fornicator* will be in hell. "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and *fornicators*, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8; cf. 22:15).

We ought to learn one thing: no matter what men may teach concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage, the Bible still teaches **FORNICATORS WILL BE IN HELL**. And that's no joke! — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Law In Grace — Grace In Law

DEAN FUGETT

A contrast is often drawn between grace and law that leaves a dangerous condition of mind. This contrast is usually based upon an erroneous concept of God's grace. We are told that under the Law man had to keep all the Law (Galatians 5:3). We are not under the law, but grace! The conclusion then is drawn that we don't have to keep the law of Christ. What this seems to say is that grace removes responsibility and automatically negates any guilt of actions. This is utterly false. Grace doesn't negate law. It makes the law system perfect by making possible total and absolute forgiveness.

As Joshua was about to lead God's people into the conquest of the promised land the Lord cautioned, "Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which

Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or the left . . . that thou mayest turn not from it to the right hand or the left . . . that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:7-8). Compare the above under the Law with the following under the covenant of Christ. "For if the word spoken through angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 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 2:2-3). "He that set at nought Moses' law died without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses: of

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Wake Up!

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no one person can make it alone. We pray to God because we are all weak and sinful and we need the help of God in our lives (Rom. 8:31). It's about time God's people realized that they are **GOD'S PEOPLE!** The Bible says that if we pray to God he will give us the victory (II Sam. 23:10,12; Ps. 98:1).

It is extremely hard though. We are surrounded by negativism in this world. The weather man says that there is a 20 percent chance of rain without even saying anything about the 80 percent chance of sunshine. When asking about the work at a sister congregation how many times do you hear a refreshingly good report? If we look at ourselves as failures so will everyone else, including God. It's the same problem of failure that the 10 spies had in Numbers 13.

Some brethren say, "I'm just a negative person by nature." There is no such thing! The only negative people are those who chose to be because we are beings that have the power of choice (Joshua 24:15). By the choices we make we will be judged one day (Rev. 20:13).

It's time to wake up and realize if we really are God's people we can and will gain the victory if God is behind us. If God be for us **WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?** — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). "It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man" (Psalms 118:8). We must forever look to God.

I pray that you will read I Samuel slowly and carefully with a prayerful mind, and I believe you will be amazed at the number of lessons you will get to help you in your every day life. You will want to study the lesson on parents and children in I Samuel 3:13. Chapter sixteen is an interesting lesson on David being chosen by God and how man judges on the outward appearance but God looketh on the heart. One of the greatest lessons on love is Jona-

than's love for David as recorded in chapter eighteen. Chapter twenty-six contains the confession of sin by the king when he said, "I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly" (I Samuel 26:21).

My purpose in my writings is to motivate the reader to read and study God's word. If this article will help you to study and benefit from the book of I Samuel and to live as God would have us live, then I will be overjoyed. I realize more each day that I am a dying man writing to dying people. Let's determine to meditate upon God's word daily. — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, MS 38858.

Gems Of I Samuel

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Lord, Will You Credit Us?

Continued From Page 2

doing our friends this way, but we think nothing of not only asking God to credit us while we are away, but we also expect him to keep us safe from

harm until we return. No wonder we feel guilty when we sing the song, "All to Jesus I Surrender" — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37106

Law In Grace — Grace In Law

Continued from page 3

how much sorer punishment 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? . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:28-31).

If these verses lend themselves to the careless attitude expressed in the philosophy of indiscriminate grace, then I have misread the scriptures. It really seems that some in the first century were being admonished for the same careless living

that some in the twentieth century are advocating. Just as some were misapplying Paul on grace then (Romans 6:1), some are still misapplying grace today. Thank God for his grace, but those brethren who believe that we don't have to keep the law of Christ are treading on dangerous ground, even negating God's word and teaching others to do the same. They are contributing to lawless living and making shipwreck of the faith of many. Brethren, whenever we so teach the grace of God that we exclude the "law of liberty" (James 1:25), the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2),

and the "law to Christ" (I Corinthians 9:21), we just as surely pervert the gospel as the Judaizers did by mixing the Law and the Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). The anathema of God rests upon any who would so handle the word of God.

Law flows out of grace. It is not law for law's sake, but law for man's sake, for the happiness and completeness, for the maturity of man in his relation with his God. That is law in grace, and grace in law; not grace vs law! — Bellefonte Church of Christ Rt. 2 Harrison, AR 72601.

Importance Of Thinking

The importance of right thinking is taught throughout the Bible. Let us study together the following passages:

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). It has been said that we may not be everything we think we are; but what we think, we are! Emerson said: "A man is what he thinks about all day long." Some say, "You are what you eat." The Bible says, "You are what you think!"



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: And an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35). The word "heart," in this passage, means "mind." The "good man" is able to bring forth "good things" because he has a "good treasure" i.e., a right thinking mind. The "evil man" brings forth "evil things" because he has an "evil treasure" i.e., a wrong thinking mind. All our actions have as their origin the thoughts of our mind. If we think right we do right; if we think wrong we do wrong.

"The thoughts of the righteous are right" (Proverbs 12:5). The righteous man thinks righteous thoughts. Right thinking helps make one righteous. A man who thinks wrong can no more be a righteous man than a man who thinks right can be an unrighteous man. We are righteous or unrighteous on the basis of what we think. Jesus did right because he thought right. Judas did wrong because he thought wrong.

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). The Roman brethren were instructed not to be like the world. They were told to be different — to be "transformed." How can we be different from the world? We are different when we think differently. We think differently when we "renew our mind." All change starts with the mind. One can change his actions for a while simply on the basis of mechanical (going through the motions) suspension. Real and lasting change, however, comes only when new behavior is prompted by new thinking. If you think new you will be new.

"Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). Before we can obey Christ we must first think like Christ. Without thought control there can be no behavior control. Paul instructed the Corinthian brethren to control their thinking so as to control their behavior.

The above passages, along with many others, all stress the importance of right thinking. Therefore, to become all that God desires of us, we must develop the following thought patterns:

The Faith Thought Pattern: "So then faith cometh

by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). If you want to live a life of trust and confidence in God you must fill your mind with the word of God from which faith comes.

The Hope Thought Pattern: "That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). If you want to live a life of joyful expectation and assured contentment you must fill your mind with the word of God from which hope comes.

The Love Thought Pattern: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love" (Galatians 5:22). The Holy Spirit teaches through the word. When we apply the teaching of the Spirit to our lives we produce the Spirit's fruit — love! If you want to live a life in which you give and receive much love you must fill your mind with the word of God from which the fruit of love is produced.

To live to our fullest we must develop thought patterns of faith, hope and love. If we can fill our mind with the word of God our lives will be changed

and our existence on this earth will be "abundant" (John 10:10).

We are what we think (Proverbs 23:7). Those who think good do good. Those who think evil do evil (Matthew 12:35). To change our actions we must first change our attitudes. To change our speech patterns we must first change our attitudes. Faith, hope and love are the greatest thoughts. Faith, hope and love are developed through the Bible. The KEY to developing new thought patterns for greater living is the proper understanding and application of the Bible (Psalms 119:11). Fill your mind with good; empty your mind of evil.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS" (Philippians 4:8). — P.O. Box 242 Morris, AL 35116.

Relaxing God's Laws

In Matthew 5:19 the Revised translation tells us that anyone who "relaxes one of the least of these commandments shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." This is a solemn warning indeed. There have always been those who sought the path of least resistance. This is similar to the tennis player who exclaimed to his opponent: "I would do all right if someone would just remove the net!" The first time God had a law Satan attempted to "relax it." Tragically, the Devil was successful because man is exceedingly weak. The first murder was committed by a man who would not yield to Heaven's desires. Sodom was destroyed because its vast population enjoyed living on Easy Street. Even Abraham could not find ten men of genuine conviction there.

The libertines of Jeremiah's day are epitomized in the now famous language: "The prophets prophecy falsely and the priests follow their example . . . and the people love to have it so!" A century earlier Isaiah was heartsick when his fellows cried: "Speak to us smooth things." Eight centuries later Paul was confronted by those who looked for compromising preachers who would tickle their itching ears with fables instead of challenging their hearts



JOHNNY RAMSEY

with the pure Gospel.

Today, in and out of the church, one can find fervent appeals for the soft, easy, pretty sermon. This is one of the basic contributions to the decline of America and the decadence of the world in 1983! Satan is shrewd and devastating in his devious doctrines. He is the master craftsman of sham and pretense. Under the guise of humility some are influenced by the Devil to say: "Preacher, don't expose error so strongly; go easy with our loved ones. They might get the impression that you think they haven't obeyed the truth." The Bible, however, tells us that we are not *man's* enemy when we tell the truth (Galatians 4:16), but that we become *God's* enemy when we compromise (Galatians 1:10). Satan influences some men, under the banner of "love" to say: "Preacher, don't stress the plan of salvation so often because after all just being a good moral man is all that is essential." *But the Bible declares that Christ only saves those who obey him* (Hebrews 5:9). We dare not relax the law of Christ!

This principle of absolute integrity and supreme loyalty toward the Lord also forbids us to be silent in dealing with weakness in the church. Whether it be "forsaking the assembly," impurity in life, or indifference toward duty, Christians must be constantly reminded of James 4:17; Matthew 5:8; and Hebrews 10:25. Sin is sin regardless of *who* commits it. In Christianity it is not *who* you are but *whose* you are that counts! Instead of *relaxing* God's commandments let us *bolster* the truth by unstinting conviction and deep, abiding faith. — P.O. Box 975, Rowlett, TX 75088.



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Suggestions For Elders

W. A. HOLLEY

(1) *Know the Bible and how to apply its message properly and correctly.* Since elders are to be "apt to teach," and "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," it is imperative for them to become and be solid students of God's holy word (I Peter 5:1-4; I Timothy 3:1-7). Elders who are ignorant of the truth of God, are at a decided disadvantage, and can never achieve those higher and nobler goals God has designed for them.



W. A. HOLLEY

(2) Don't be a recluse. Elders, make yourselves

(2) *Don't be a recluse. Elders, make yourselves visible.* Become well acquainted with each member of the church, whether young or old, boy or girl, and, elders, permit each member of the church to become acquainted with you. Don't stand aloof. Men who are afraid to stand in the forefront of the battle against sin and unrighteousness should not be appointed to the eldership (Titus 1:5-11). I have known some elders who would show up only for business meetings, and sometimes, not even then.

(3) *Be warm and friendly; easily approached.* It is possible for you to turn on your charm. Jesus was not interested in things, but he was interested in people. A warm smile is worth a thousand solemn frowns. A little humor would not be amiss. If elders are to shepherd the flock, they must know the names and circumstances of the sheep!

(4) *Elders, set the finest example for the church to follow.* Jesus, the chief shepherd, "began both to do and to teach." Notice that the doing comes before the teaching! Elders who do not practice what they require of others are like the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees who demanded much of others but they would not lift a finger to aid others (Matthew 23:1-7). It is ridiculous for elders to think they can take a vacation or go fishing or take time off from church

activities while, at the same time, expecting members under their care and leadership to be faithful in their attendance.

(5) *Resolve to settle all problems at once.* This is when the fire needs to be put out. Do not tarry until the peace and harmony of the church have been destroyed. It is essential to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." The elders must not be divided themselves, thus destroying all chance of keeping peace among brethren (Cf. Romans 12:18; 14:19). Never become a part of the problem, rather be a part of the solution (Matthew 5:9).

(6) *Elders, do much praying.* Spend much time in reading and studying the Bible. Schedule your time so as to permit reasonable visitation. Since elders are under-shepherds, they must oversee the lambs (Hebrews 13:17-21; I Peter 3:1-4). No church can rise higher than its leadership. Napoleon said that the finest army ever put together is useless without leadership, and that the poorest army could be made

great by leadership. It is said that Henry Ford did not call men to his office; he went out to the plant to talk with them. In your position of leadership, never become domineering, imperious, arrogant. If you should make mistakes, correct them, just as others are required to repent of their transgressions.

(7) *Endeavor to demonstrate your qualifications as elders.* This means to show clearly, to illustrate especially with many examples of what genuine Christianity is. What are these qualifications? We shall note: An elder must be without reproach or blameless, the husband of one wife, one who rules well his own house, having children that believe, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, gentle, not contentious, no lover of money, no novice, of good testimony from without, not self-willed, a lover of good, just, holy and sound in the faith (I Timothy 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-10). An elder must be firm but not rude; firm but not stubborn; firm but not overbearing.

In addition to what has been said thus far, we would suggest that elders, with all their problems,

must never manifest resentment. They must be impartial in their treatment of others, showing no favoritism at all. Elders must appreciate the importance of holding confidential secrets to the extent that even their wives never learn of such.

(8) *Elders should support their preacher morally and financially.* When the preacher condemns sin and worldliness in the church, encourage him and thus let the church know that he has the power of the eldership back of him. Preachers must live too. Make sure that he is paid an adequate salary. Many excellent preachers have been lost because they were forced to move to get a wage increase. For shame! Never permit a year to pass without increasing his remuneration.

(9) *Since elders cannot do all the work themselves, they should learn how to make assignments.* Learn to use all the talent of the congregation. It was Jethro (Exodus 18:13-26), who suggested to Moses that he assign different tasks to certain men in view of the fact one man cannot do everything. Look over the congregation; find men and women with special talents, and put them to work for the Lord (Matthew 25:14-30).


Dear reader, the foregoing remarks are written against the back-ground of fifty years of preaching experience. My desire is to accomplish all the good I can, and to do no harm at all. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

A Lucky Break?

DOUG CLAYTON

In the May, 1983 issue of *Science Digest* there appears an article by Dr. John Gribbin (Astrophysicist and consultant to New Scientist) entitled "Earth's Lucky Break." This stroke of luck which Dr. Gribbin describes was the resulting location of the earth, in reference to the sun, after the dust of the Big Bang had cleared. Consequently, this haphazardness enabled our planet alone to possess liquid water, a prerequisite for life.

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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A Lucky Break?

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Dr. Gribbin begins his article by contemplating the origin of life on earth, and suggests the following possibilities: First, "Is life here a cosmic fluke that has arisen nowhere else in the universe?" Secondly, "Or, is life as we know it the inevitable consequence of a happy combination: just the right temperature, just the right amount of radiation, just the right chemical ingredients?" In affirming the latter, it would almost seem that Dr. Gribbin is about to set forth evidence, by way of the teliological argument, to prove the necessity of an infinite designer. However, when one considers these "solutions" in light of Gribbin's philosophy of origins, they are seen to be redundant. That is, without a mind or a purpose behind such, both of his solutions are relegated to a cosmic fluke.

Keeping Dr. Gribbin's suggestions in mind let us examine the evidence stated in the article and determine for ourselves if he has exhausted the possibilities of origin. Or, has he formulated a false dilemma (i.e. has he stated only two possibilities when there is actually a third to be considered)?

The evidence as stated by Dr. Gribbin is summed up in the following:

1. The critical variable which allows the earth to be a suitable place for life is its precise distance from the sun.
2. Due to #1, when the present forms of hydrogen and oxygen are combined they produce the wet seas of our planet.
3. As well as being wet, the Earth is a small, rocky planet with an oxygen-rich atmosphere. All of these features fit together and relate to our position in the solar system.
4. No other planet in our solar system has liquid water. Hence, life, as we know it, can only exist on Earth.
5. The closest planet to the sun, Mercury, is so hot that it scarcely has a trace of atmosphere. It could never have had oceans of running water and can be ruled out as a home for life.
6. Venus has a thick atmosphere, rich in carbon dioxide. This gaseous blanket traps solar heat in the same way the glass walls of a greenhouse do and raises the temperature of the surface to nearly 932 degrees Fahrenheit — much too hot to

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Praying For Spiritual Gifts

One thing clearly taught in the New Testament is the fact that spiritual gifts were imparted only through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-18; II Corinthians 12:12,13; II Timothy 1:6). This conclusively proves that none today possess miraculous powers, for none living today have had the hands of the apostles laid upon them.



BOBBY DUNCAN

But those who claim the gift of the Spirit today say these gifts come in answer to prayer, and not merely through the laying on of the hands of the apostles. I Corinthians 14:13 is used to show that such is the case: "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret." It is argued that this verse teaches that the gift of interpreting tongues was given in answer to prayer, and that it would be reasonable to conclude that other gifts would come in the same way. This reasoning seems good, if this passage teaches that the gift of interpreting tongues came in answer to prayer. But was Paul telling the tongues speaker to pray for the gift of interpretation? Let us see.

In the first place, did God intend for those who had the gift of tongues to have also the gift of interpretation? If so, why were some at Corinth obviously given the gift of tongues, but not given the gift of interpretation? And since tongues were primarily to convince unbelievers (I Corinthians 14:22), for the tongues speaker to do his own interpreting would destroy the effect of the miracle. Suppose the multitude assembled on Pentecost (Acts 2) could not have understood those speaking in tongues, and the tongues speakers themselves had interpreted for them. The force of the miracle would have been lost. How could the hearers be sure a miracle was even being performed, had such been the case?

In the second place, Paul had already told the Corinthians that they came "behind in no gift" (I Corinthians 1:7). The New American Standard Bible uses these words: "so that you are not lacking in any gift . . ." How could it be thought that Paul was telling them to pray for some additional gift?

What, then, is the meaning of the passage? An examination of the context will reveal that the subject under discussion was the proper use of spiritual gifts. The apostle is speaking specifically in this verse (14:13) and the ones immediately following it, about the prayers being led in the assembly by those who spoke in tongues. In verse 28 he sets forth the rule that those who spoke in tongues were not to speak at all in the assembly unless there was an interpreter present. In verse 13 he was simply directing the man who spoke in tongues to pray in such a manner as would enable the interpreter

to interpret to the congregation. Though this meaning is not evident from the wording of that one verse in the Authorized Version, the context lends itself to this understanding. Furthermore, this explanation does no damage to the language of the AV, provided the word *that* is understood to describe the manner in which one prayed, and the word *he* is understood to refer to the interpreter. We then have: "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray [so] that [one] may interpret."

Does the original language allow for this understanding of the verse? Yes, it does. In Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, the little Greek word *hina* 'that' is discussed over a space of a little more than two and one-half pages. A number of uses of the word are given, and a number of examples from the New Testament are cited. The word is said to signify, among other things: "With the issue, that; with the result, that; so that." And it is under this definition of the word that the prince of lexicographers lists I Corinthians 14:13. Clearly, Paul was giving instructions concerning the manner of praying, and not concerning the content of the prayer itself.

The clause, *he may interpret*, could just as correctly be translated, "one may interpret." In this clause the subject is not stated separately, but is arrived at by observing the form of the verb, which in this case is third person, singular. This would mean the subject of the verb would be either *he* or *one*. There are a number of passages in the New Testament where this type language occurs. John 3:3 speaks about "the voice of *one* crying in the wilderness." I Timothy 3:4 mentions "*one* that ruleth well his own house." And Hebrews 5:12 addresses those who "have need that *one* teach" them. In each of these passages, the subject is derived from the form of the verb, and not stated separately in the Greek. This is exactly the situation which exists in I Corinthians 14:13.

With these facts in mind, let us review the situation to which Paul addresses himself in I Corinthians 14. The Corinthians had an abundance of spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 1:7; II Corinthians 12:13). They were told that the primary purpose of tongues was as a sign to unbelievers (14:22). However, those who spoke in tongues were granted permission to use this gift in the public assembly, provided there was one present who could interpret (14:27,28). All things were to be done decently and in order (14:40). If the tongues speaker led in prayer, he was to do so in such manner that the interpreter could interpret the prayer to the congregation (14:13). This is precisely what Paul meant when he wrote: "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray [so] that he [the interpreter] may interpret."

Prejudice

The bigot agrees there are two sides to every question — his side and the wrong one.

The person who boasts of having no religious prejudice quite often has no religion.

No Christian is strong enough to carry a cross and a prejudice at the same time.

Denominational Or Non-Denominational

When one begins to talk to someone outside the church about the subject of religion how many times does denominationalism find its way into the conversation? When talking to someone about the blood bought body of Christ how many consider it just another denomination? How many times have you heard someone talk about a church of Christ preacher or church of Christ school? It's not



BARRY FIKE

too hard to see why many people consider the church of Christ as just another denomination when we use terms that denominations use. That brings us to the question: Is the church of Christ just another denomination, or is it non-denominational?

When Christ came into this world he found a world religiously divided. They thought more about their own particular doctrines than about the doctrine of God. Christ knew if people loved their parties and doctrines more than his Father's doctrine they were doomed from the very start. Therefore he came into this world to save mankind through one plan of salvation. He prayed for unity among the believers that would follow him (Jn. 17:20,21). We know that what Christ came to do was non-denominational, because he talked of no denominational ties with any particular group or party except his Father. This non-denominational body of believers that were to follow Christ were to be united in the faith of Christ and all of his commandments. Is the church of Christ that body? Let's look at some very simple aspects of the church that Christ established and then parallel them to the church today.

First, the Christ of the church was, and is, non-denominational. Which denomination today claims that Christ was from its body? None that I know of. The reason is because Christ was non-denominational. That, within itself, ought to tell us something. The church is called the fulness of God's body (Eph. 3:18,19); one body (Eph. 4:4); and Paul mentions that Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23). Therefore, the church is as un-denominational as Christ is. You've never been asked which Christ do you belong to. Then how can one Christ, the only Savior of mankind, be non-denominational and his body, of whom he is the head, be denominational?

Second, the gospel was, and is, non-denominational. In explaining the parable of the sower, Christ said that the seed of kingdom is the word of God (Lk. 8:11). Since there is only one Gospel and that one gospel is non-denominational how can it produce a denominational church? It takes teaching to produce anything, so for a denominational church to arise it would have to have denominational teaching to begin it. Today the true church will be as non-denominational as the gospel of Jesus Christ is!

Third, the requirements of the gospel were, and are, non-denominational. When reading the New Testament with an open mind one can easily tell that in the first century what was required of one man to be saved was required of all men. There is something wrong with a multiplicity of doctrines, all telling different ways to get to heaven. How can non-denominational requirements to be saved produce denominational ideas and requirements for eternal salvation?

Fourth, the word *Christian* is a non-denominational

name. In Acts 11:26 those brethren were called Christians **FIRST AT ANTIOCH**. Now what religious denomination was that? Today when we mention that we are only Christians many ask what kind of Christian. How many kinds of Christians are there? The Bible only mentions Christians — those who were followers of Christ **ONLY!**

Fifth, the blood of Christ is non-denominational. The church was bought with his blood (Acts 20:28), and only through his blood can we find eternal redemption (Eph. 1:7). Since the church is the product of the blood of Christ, and Christ is non-denominational, the product ought to be as non-denominational as the founder of it. Which blood were you saved by? There is only one blood that saves. If what puts one into the church is non-denominational (Rom. 6:3,4), how can it produce denominational Christians?

Sixth, the church that Christ established was, and is, non-denominational. In Ephesians 5:23 Paul stated that Christ was the Savior of the body, which is the church. Shouldn't the church, the body of Christ, be as non-denominational as he is? Many ask today, "What church are you a member of?" The

reason for such a question is because of the religious division and denominationalism in the world. But have you ever heard one ask, "What kingdom do you belong to?" No, and you probably won't. Most religiously minded people realize that there is only one kingdom and yet believe there are many churches. This comes from the misunderstanding that the kingdom and the church are two separate items, when the Bible says they are one and the same (Matt. 16:13-18; Col. 1:13,14). Both started on the day of Pentecost, Christ is the king and head of both (Acts 2:38; 8:5), and still people say that one can be saved outside of the church but not out of the kingdom. If it doesn't upset people to talk about one kingdom why is it so upsetting to talk about one church. There is one Savior, one kingdom, one faith, one church! (Eph. 4:3,4).

Look open-mindedly at all of the above and let the Bible, not religious traditions and the rules and regulations of men, speak. Everything about the church is non-denominational, and if we will only follow the Bible we will have the same church that Christ established in the first century. — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C.

A Lucky Break?

Continued from page 2

- allow liquid water.
7. Mars, farther out from the sun than is the Earth, is a lighter planet with a thin but respectable atmosphere. Mars, however, is too cold for water to exist as a liquid.
 8. The *exact* (emphasis Gribbin) distance of the Earth's orbit from the sun has determined the nature of the atmosphere and the oceans that cover the planet's surface.

Concluding this segment of his article, Gribbin observes:

"So thanks largely to its distance from the sun, the earth alone has an atmospheric blanket that is just right to keep the surface of the planet hotter than the freezing point of water and cooler than its boiling point. The result is a wet planet, where water continuously evaporates from the oceans and is recycled as rain — conditions that are ideal for life as we know it.

How did these *perfect* [emphasis mine] conditions come about?"

Dr. Gribbin goes on in his article to assert that these conditions came about by billions of years of the vaporizing and mixing of ultraviolet rays, molecules, gases, etc. And yet, he never concludes as to the ultimate origin or design of all of these variables. I suggest that Dr. Gribbin has indeed formulated a false dilemma. He has stated only two possible answers for the origin of the perfect conditions which continue to exist, both of which according to Gribbin's philosophy, do not allow for a designer.

The third alternative is that an infinite, purposeful Designer so formed and created the solar system that the conditions on the third planet from the sun would be perfectly suited for life.

I will leave it to the reader to consider Dr. Gribbin's evidence and make the most reasonable choice as to the origin of not only life, but the perfect conditions which allow such. — 895 Murfreesboro Rd., Nashville, TN 37217.

Successful Christianity

In spite of apostasy, persecution and poverty, the church of the first century was tremendously successful. Emblazoned across the Roman Empire the gospel of the Son of God vibrantly entered the hearts of thousands. The sound of the good news reverberated over hill and dale and even into palaces of rulers (Phil. 4:22). They were not at all ashamed to share the message of salvation before kings (Psalms 119:46). Traditions and customs of earth could not overwhelm the simple message of re-



JOHNNY RAMSEY

demption (Col. 2:8-10), nor could false teachers (I John 4:1) deter the course of righteousness. False apostles, prophets, and even false Christs (Matt. 24:24) would not be able to thwart the glad tidings. The name of the Savior was too precious to hide or mar by cowardice. Powerfully, like wild-fire, the message the prophets foretold was shared with "all creation under heaven" (Col. 1:6 and 23)! Far and near the seed was sown and the demons in hell trembled. It could be even so today if we really believed what early Christians demonstrated that they believed (II Cor. 4:13)!

Persecution and tribulation seemed to make those disciples even stronger (Phil. 1:29). Suffering for the Lord drew them nearer to the cause they were even willing to die for (II Cor. 1:9). Following the Christ who died for us never promises a life of ease. We often sing:

Continued on page 4

Gems Of II Samuel

As I write this brief article I pray that you will open your Bible to II Samuel and enjoy studying this good book as much as I enjoy sharing a few lessons with you. The book of II Samuel will give us the high and low points in David's life. If I had to pick out just one theme of this book I would say it is the realization that no matter how great a person may be or what one may accomplish upon this earth, man is still fallible and must forever look to an infallible God. We can never reach the point that we have arrived and cannot fall.



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

"And the king said unto his servants, know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" (II Samuel 3:38). This has been a funeral text for many funerals. Unless Jesus Christ comes again while we yet live, someone, somewhere will preach my funeral and yours. If a preacher should preach your funeral according to your actual life, what type of sermon would he preach? Many preachers, in conducting funerals, try to help those who are bereaved over the loss of their loved one, and rightly so. Wouldn't it be wonderful for each of us to live in a way as a child of God that the one preaching our funeral could quote the following: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: and their works do follow them" (Psalms 116:15; Revelation 14:13). Dying as a saint in the Lord would also help our loved ones during such a hard time.

"The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness" (II Samuel 3:39). Some people use their money, authority, position, and physical power to run over their fellowman. Many can hide from man and get by with man with their evil-doing, and consequently they think they can get by God. But it is impossible to hide from God. "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings" (Job 34:21). May we not make the mistake of trying to retaliate in an unChristian manner, but let us believe in the teaching of Paul when he stated, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). If we believe in God's word we will believe the person living in iniquity will not get by the Lord as he does with man.

Chapter eleven contains the sin of David and Bathsheba. Let us notice some sins of David.

1. Instead of David, the king's, going to battle he stayed at home. We can conclude that this was the sin of slothfulness. (Read Proverbs 15:19).
2. David committed the sin of lust. (Read Matthew 5:28).
3. In verse three he coveted Bathsheba, sending and inquiring about her. Paul taught that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5).
4. In verse four David committed the sin of adultery. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).\$ (Exodus 20:14).
5. David got Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, drunk (verse 13). Paul stated that "drunkenness . . . shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).
6. David was responsible for having Uriah killed

(verse fifteen).

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13).

We should not place all the guilt upon David, as Bathsheba was not perfect herself. Her heart was not right or she would not have committed adultery with David. We learn what will happen when a person's heart is not right in Matthew 15:18-20. If Bathsheba had been as modest as I Timothy, chapter two and verse nine instructs, maybe this terrible thing would not have happened. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel . . ." From the sin of David and Bathsheba we need to learn the following lessons.

1. When we sow to the flesh we reap corruption (Galatians 6:7-8).
2. Our sin or sins will find us out (Numbers 32:23).
3. When we sow the wind we shall reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7).

There are many lessons in chapter twelve that we need very much today, such as the confession of David in verse thirteen. Read the lesson that Nathan teaches David beginning in verse one. I really wonder if we give Nathan the credit that he is due in this chapter. I, as a gospel preacher, have always respected and loved Nathan for his courage as shown in verse 7: "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man . . ." It is not always easy to point out one's faults to him personally. It takes fortitude to state that one is wrong. If we today had the attitude and courage of Nathan, maybe more people would come to their senses and repent and turn to God. Yes, Nathan is a very important character in the Bible.

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" (II Samuel 18:29,32). If your son is not safe, why? Could it be

because of the life and influence of the parents? Could it be lack of love on behalf of the parents? Was your son reared in a Christian home? If not, why not? Parents, it is too late after the death of a child to try to teach him to become a Christian. Being a father of four children I realize the awesome responsibility of rearing children, and as parents we must have God to help us in rearing our children. But God is not an intruder — he will help us when we are obedient and submissive to his will.

The sin of David and Bathsheba discussed earlier in this article is known by many, but many are not aware of the sin that David commits in chapter twenty-four when he numbered Israel. David's sin was trusting in numerical strength instead of God's power. Do we not also trust many times in numerical strength instead of God's power? Yes! Below are three examples of this sin.

1. Trying to get more members by not preaching all the truth.
2. Trying to make members by other means than the gospel.
3. Trying to get members by being like our religious neighbors.

David confesses his sin in II Samuel 24:10,17. If you would like to know the attitude of David concerning what he thought about sin, please read Psalms 51:1-12. If, when we err, we had the attitude of David, we would not get farther from God, but we would become closer by confessing and repenting of our sins. If things are amiss in your life, I trust this article will motivate you to make things right without delay. — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, MS 38858.

Successful Christianity

Continued from page 3

"My feet were often weary upon the Calvary road, The cross became so heavy I fell beneath the load. Be faithful weary pilgrim; the morning I can see. Just lift your cross, and follow close to me."

The pristine view of New Testament Christianity found in the book of Acts is a tremendous challenge to us. Nineteen centuries ago a small nucleus of devoted saints accomplished more for the Lord than we have done with all of our modern means of communication and transportation. They were pure and holy (I Peter 1:16) as they lived soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2:12) as pilgrims in a wicked world (I Peter 2:11). Those saints of yesteryear were evangelistic and worshipful (Acts 8:4; John 4:24). Generous giving was characteristic of their conduct (II Cor. 9:6-11); as they first gave themselves unto the Lord, they truly believed these words of challenge:

"It is not what we own that gives us peace
In an age when peace is rare,
But how honest we are
When we set aside
Our own, and the Master's share."

The church of the New Testament was simple, not ostentatious. They were compassionate, and not calloused. They were zealous, but not flamboyant. They were steadfast, and not flashy. Their theme was based on Revelation 2:10: "Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life." Their impetus was Proverbs 11:30: "He that winneth souls is wise."

They knew that "the seed of the kingdom was the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Realizing they were in the body of Christ and that each member was necessary (I Cor. 12:23-27), they diligently pursued the life of godliness. Being a part of the royal priesthood (I Peter 2:9), they magnified the Savior day by day (Phil. 1:20). As soldiers in the army of the Lord, they pressed the fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12) on every

front — and won!

"The fight is on, O Christian soldier,
And face to face in stern array,
With armor gleaming, and colors streaming,
The right and wrong engage today . . ."

Built solidly upon the bed-rock foundation of the Deity of Christ, they absolutely glorified God in all their actions (Eph. 3:21). The church, as the bulwark of truth, swept across the first century with the banner of the Lord leading them on to certain victory!

Those brilliant servants of the Master were not easily discouraged, never ashamed of the gospel, and ever in love with the souls of lost and dying men. Bound together by the strong ties of brotherly love (I Peter 1:22), those Christians put the kingdom of God absolutely first (Matt. 6:33). When those traits abound in our lives, no power on earth — or in Hell — can stop us today!

"Give me some men who are stout-hearted men,
Who will fight for the right they adore.
Start me with ten who are stout-hearted men,
And I'll soon give you ten thousand more"

That secular song goes on to say that nothing can stop such folk when "they stick together man to man." How much more accurate is that maxim when loyal Christians march side by side under the panoply of Heaven!

Successful Christianity? It is still within our grasp. Surely, we dare not fail! — Box 235 Rowlett, TX 75088.

Ideas

You can judge your age by the amount of pain you feel when you come in contact with a new idea.

What America really needs most are those things which money can't buy.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, but I speak forth
the Words of Truth and I do not
hesitate."

Acts 26:25

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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Conversion Of The Ethiopian Nobleman

This example of conversion is one in which we see an individual with a desire to know the truth. As soon as he learns he obeys the truth. A beautiful story is unfolded as we read the encounter between the preacher and one lost in sin (Acts 8:26-40).

An angel leads Philip to go on the road from Jerusalem unto Gaza. This was a deserted area.

The candidate for conversion was from Ethiopia. He was the treasurer of the queen Candace.

THE NOBLEMAN WAS A ZEALOUS WORSHIP-ER. Jerusalem is about one thousand miles from Ethiopia. His means of travel was a chariot. He was willing to travel this distance to worship. Today people travel long distances to work or play but would not travel across the street to worship. Zeal develops only when faith is strong enough to compel spiritual activity.

However this zealous **NOBLEMAN WAS HONEST AND SINCERE, BUT HE WAS LOST.** Paul said concerning Israel, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness . . . have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:2-3).

Another fine attitude manifested by this nobleman is **HE WAS STUDIOUS.** As he traveled he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This is when Philip came to his chariot. Philip heard him reading and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him" (vs. 30-31). Ignorance of God's word is wide spread in the world. Studying the Bible is the only way to destroy spiritual ignorance (II Tim. 3:16).

THIS PROSPECT WAS OPEN MINDED. He wanted to be taught. It is easy to teach one who wants to know.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

What are some of the causes of closed minds? (1) Satisfaction with little knowledge prevents further inquiry. Jesus' answer to the devil was, "man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). We must not be satisfied with partial knowledge. (2) Wickedness so controls the minds of people that truth is not allowed to come into their minds. Paul taught, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thess. 2:10-12). God will allow people to believe what they want to believe. (3) Religious error blinds eyes from the truth. Paul gives an example of this to Timothy. "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith" (II Tim. 3:8). They were "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7).

HE WAS NOT BOUND BY TRADITION. Truth was more important to him than family or community approval.

From this story we are impressed with the fact **THE GOSPEL IS IN EARTHEN VESSELS** (II Cor. 4:7). The Spirit did not speak directly to the nobleman. He directed Philip to speak to him. "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts 8:29).

This treasurer of Ethiopia **OBEYED THE TRUTH HE LEARNED.** Philip began with the scripture he was reading "and preached unto him Jesus" (vs. 35). To preach Jesus included baptism in water. We know this, because "as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (vs. 36).

To preach Jesus was to teach a burial in water. The text states, "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (vs. 38). If this had been sprinkling or pouring for baptism, it would have been foolish to go down into the water. Therefore, it is reasonable to say the nobleman was immersed or buried in

water. Paul uses the word buried when he referred to baptism (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Sprinkling or pouring is not scriptural baptism.

THE NOBLEMAN REJOICED AFTER BAPTISM. Many teach rejoicing comes at the moment of faith. The scripture states, "And when they were come up out of the water . . . and he went on his way rejoicing" (vs. 39). Paul said he and the Romans were "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. 6:4). People are not saved until they are baptized into the death of Christ. In baptism we come into contact with the blood of Christ.

Let this nobleman become the example for you to follow, if you have not obeyed the gospel of Christ in its ancient purity and simplicity. — Rt. 4 Buena Vista, Georgia 31803.

Retrospective

WINFREY HENNESSEE


The fresh, uncluttered mind of a child carefully records, labels, and files away things which impress him the most. The bittersweet memories of childhood lie dormant most of the time, but awaken when one is older, to bring many hours of enjoyment, or sadness, whichever the case might be.

Children live in a world consisting of make believe mingled with reality, where everything is an adventure, and no problem is too complicated for their parents to solve.

But, too soon the growing up process comes to an end. Too quickly the long lazy days of just being an ordinary child are gone forever. Our parents, whom we always thought were ancient, we now find have really grown old. One by one we have gone our separate ways. Soon the home is invaded by unmerciful illness, and must be broken up. All must be sold.

The demolition crew comes and goes, taking away the doors, the windows, the logs, anything of

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

"I am not mad, nor noble Festus, but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
— Acts 26:25

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A Leader Not To Imitate

JIMMY EDWARDS

"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" (III John 9, 10).

Diotrephes is portrayed here as a dictator. He is undoubtedly one of the strongest and most dominating people mentioned in the New Testament. He was proud, ambitious, and arrogant. He desperately wanted to rule and occupy a place of pre-eminence. This individual would tolerate no one who threatened his authority. Specifically, Diotrephes had refused to receive the wandering teachers of the truth and had actually tried to force out of the church those who did receive them.

Diotrephes would not accept the authority of John. He made unChristian remarks against the apostle. He even went so far as to try to force the church to reject the letter John wrote.

Diotrephes' position in the early church is hard to discern. He could have been an extremely strong-minded elder or just an aggressive member of the church. Whatever his status, Diotrephes was using the force of his unChristian personality to carry out his own ideas.

There are some vital lessons for us in this account. First, leadership positions do not authorize men to force others to accept their own ideas or opinions. In addition, leaders must recognize that power and humility must go together. Leading people is done with love, not brute force. Thirdly, leaders may be right but they must not try to achieve the right thing the wrong way. Finally, leaders, whether elders, deacons, or gospel preachers, must always be motivated by Christian love.

All those in leadership positions should remember Diotrephes. May the Lord help men in the church today not to imitate him. — 3017 Lower Wetumpka Rd., Montgomery, AL 36110.

WORDS OF TRUTH

The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN



Back To Adamsville



BOBBY DUNCAN

After more than seven years with the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, we have resigned to move back to Adamsville, Alabama where we lived for about eighteen years before moving to Jasper. The decision to move back to Adamsville was not an easy one, because of our love for the people of Jasper, and our love of the work we are doing.

We feel doubly honored to be invited to move back to Adamsville. The church at Adamsville, like the Sixth Avenue church, is one of the great churches of our time. The fact we have worked with them before makes the invitation to come back even a greater honor.

Brother Charles (Rick) Rickard, who has preached at Adamsville for the past four years, will continue to work with the church there, but has asked to be relieved of full time pulpit duty. His work will be primarily with the young people of the congregation. Brother Franklin Camp also works with this church. I look forward to being associated with these two outstanding preachers in the work there.

Retrospective

Continued from page 1

value. Hurriedly the ruins are piled and burned.

Then, as if to add insult to injury, the bulldozer, like an oversized robot with a cold mechanical brain moves in. It is computerized to carry out only one mission: that of destroying all evidence that real human beings might have once lived here.

Quickly it moves to and fro, as though so many seconds have been allotted to complete this job, and if finished on time, some kind of reward will be offered.

Soon the mission is accomplished, and it clambers away. No reward is deserved, nothing is given.

The fences are all that's left. The despicable task of mending them is no longer necessary. There are no cows to get in, and no cows to get out. Somehow I wish there were.

My eyes fall upon the red clay where once laughter had reigned. The silence is deafening to my ears. But soon I realize, all have failed miserably in carrying out their mission. In my mind I can vividly see the rose bush where I learned my first lesson in creation. For a split second I am reminded of Isaiah 35:1: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." For some strange reason I appreciate more fully the choice of words the prophet used in describing the way of our Savior. I can still see the amber colored pine knot on the family room door as it is illuminated by the early morning sun when it begins its long journey to the west. If I listen closely I can hear my mother calling me from my playing at the other side of the meadow. Supper is on the table. Just outside the kitchen door is the peach tree where my mother often gave me almost more justice than a small boy could bear. The stripes on my back could easily testify to this. Before I slowly turn away for the

Most of the readers of the *WORDS OF TRUTH* understand that this paper is a work of the Sixth Avenue church, and that my resigning the work at Jasper means also I am resigning as editor of this paper. In selecting a man to follow me at Jasper, the elders of the Sixth Avenue church will take care to select a man who will serve well as editor for *WORDS OF TRUTH*. I love the paper, and will submit articles to the editor for publication from time to time as he sees fit. Not having editorial duties of a weekly publication will also provide some time to write for some other publications.

While I do not know at this time who will succeed me as editor of this paper, I do have confidence in the fine elders of the Sixth Avenue church, and am sure they will select a man who will provide the kind of editorial leadership that readers of this publication will want, and that the paper will remain true to the "old paths" and continue to be a force for good in our brotherhood and the world.

We solicit the prayers of Christians as we move to a different field of work. We ask also that Christians pray for the eldership of the Sixth Avenue church during the search for one to become editor of this paper and evangelist in Jasper.

Finally, we request that those who write for this publication and those who subscribe to it continue to do the good work you are doing in helping make this a tool for the glorification of God and the salvation of souls.

purpose of dismissing this subject from my mind, "Train up a child in the way he should go . . ." (Proverbs 22:6) flits briefly across my mind.

Looking toward the north I see the house still standing where my Christian lady friend lived. She was the one who motivated me in taking up the occupation which I have enjoyed so many years. I'm sure her influence also helped me in later becoming a Christian. But she was old and has now gone on.

When I walk away I think of the age old-saying, "History repeats itself," and realize that it shall soon repeat itself once again. In time, my present home will be broken up. My earthly possessions will be sold, but they have only sentimental value. There will be sadness, of course, but when I am taken away to wherever my temporary home shall be, I will have the good feeling of beating the "system." The auctioneer cannot get inside my head to auction off the rose bush, or the fellowship which I have enjoyed with my brothers and sisters in Christ. The demolition crew can take what they will, but they cannot take away the sense of values I learned while sharing our great fireplace with our large family; and push though it will, the noisy machine cannot take away the humility which I learned under the peach tree.

As we take this glimpse back into the past, are we satisfied with our lives? If we could live it over, would we do some of it differently? What about that business deal a few years ago? Would we do it again, or leave it alone? How many souls have we brought to the Lord? Did we hide our talents?

Yes, looking at the past now and then is a good cure for the sickness of complacency, but for fear we might begin retrogressing instead of pressing ahead, let us look back, not much. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

What Does "Born Again" Mean?

The above caption is taken from the Daily Mountain Eagle, Friday, May 13, 1983. It refers to an article written by James B. Crichton, who seems to be a regular writer for this paper.



W. A. HOLLEY

The article is filled with errors. Humbly and honorably, we shall reply with what the Bible expressly teaches. We shall not misrepresent Dr. Crichton. We simply ask our readers to open their Bible and their hearts to what is there clearly taught.

(1) *Dr. Crichton says that Nicodemus was interviewed by Jesus at "midnight."* This is his first error. While the Bible teaches that Nicodemus "came to Jesus by night," but at what hour of the night is not stipulated. Check John 3:1-12, and see for yourself.

(2) *The writer under review pays Nicodemus a high compliment indeed; but how does he know that Nicodemus was such a man?* Other Jews of Jesus' and Paul's day were not (Matthew 23:1-39; Romans 2:17-25). And, besides, was Nicodemus an elect or a non-elect person? The truth is: Mr. Crichton believes in "the total depravity of man." If he does not, let him deny it! If Nicodemus had been a non-elect person, would Jesus not have known it? If Nicodemus was an elect person, why was Jesus talking with him concerning the "new birth?" (Cf. John 2:24-25; Matthew 9:4; Mark 2:8; John 6:64; Revelation 2:23).

(3) *"But Jesus Christ, who alone can read the hearts of men, bluntly said to Nicodemus, 'You must be born again' And no man is exempt from this law,"* wrote Mr. Crichton. Now sir, is it possible for a non-elect person to be saved or "born again?" The Calvinistic view is: *"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, that their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. . . . Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."* We ask again, was Nicodemus a non-elect man? If so, he could not have been "born again," regardless of what he might have done.

(4) *The truth is, according to Mr. Crichton, the unconverted man, the non-elect man, "cannot understand divine truth."* He further says: *"The unregenerate man cannot understand the kingdom of God. He cannot enter the kingdom of God. And he cannot explain the miracle of regeneration."* We pause to ask, Why was Jesus talking to Nicodemus? If Nicodemus could not respond or had no responsibility with regard to the New Birth, why was Jesus urging him to be born again? Jesus was urging Nicodemus to be born again, saying to him personally, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee" "Thus Jesus was urging Nicodemus, himself, to be born Again." Let Mr. Crichton explain!! Just read John 3:1-12, and count the times Jesus said, "I say unto thee."

(5) *Mr. Crichton says, "The new birth is the*

supernatural act of God by which he imparts spiritual life." If this assertion is true, why does the Bible teach that the gospel is for all? (John 3:16-17; I John 4:14; II Peter 3:9). Since God is no respecter of persons, and since God loves one man as much as he loves all men, and if "the new birth is the supernatural act of God by which he imparts spiritual life," would it not be reasonable and Scriptural to think that all men would be saved? (Acts 10:34-35).

If "the new birth is the supernatural act of God by which he imparts spiritual life," why were the Pentecostians told to "repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:36-38)? If God "imparts spiritual life" to the sinner, why was Saul/Paul told to "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins?" (Acts 22:16). According to the Scripture, what, then, is meant by being born of water and the Spirit? In a nutshell, it is to enter the church or kingdom of Christ where salvation is located (Colossians 1:13-14; Romans 6:3-5; Ephesians 1:3,21-23; Acts 20:28). Dr. Crichton knows nothing of John 3:5. He labors hard to eliminate "water" altogether! But the Lord put "water" in, and no man should dare take it out (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-10). There is one new birth, but two elements, "water" and "the Spirit." These two elements are essential to entering the kingdom of God. One cannot enter the kingdom unless one is saved! What must one do to enter the kingdom? Well, one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of one's sins, confess the name of Jesus before men, and be baptized for (unto) the remission of sins, in the name of Christ (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5). **Stated plainly, one is begotten by the Spirit by believing the word which the Spirit spake, and one is born of water by coming forth from the waters of baptism.**

Mr. Crichton argues that "the new birth is the act of God by which He gives us new spiritual life," because he thinks, erroneously, that men and

women, boys and girls, are born with a sinful nature, a nature totally depraved. But the Bible teaches no such doctrine! The facts are: Man was created in the image of God, being, then, the offspring of the Almighty (Genesis 1:26-27; I Corinthians 11:7; Acts 17:29). Actually, man's spirit is perfect (not totally depraved) when first born (Ezekiel 28:15). It was God who "formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1). In the genealogy of Christ Adam "was the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Did God form a totally depraved spirit within Adam?

(6) *Since Jesus "tasted death" for every man, and since he is "the propitiation" for the "sins of the whole world," how can one reconcile Calvinistic doctrine which contends that some are born to be saved and some to be lost??* (John 3:16; Romans 5:18; II Corinthians 5:15; I Timothy 2:6; I John 2:2; Revelation 5:9). Verily, Calvinism is false but the Bible is true!! Salvation is conditional. All who will hear God's word, believe it, repent, confess Jesus' name, and be baptized according to the divine command are ushered into the kingdom of God (Acts 2:36-38,47; Colossians 1:13-14).

(7) *What does "born again" mean? It means to come into contact with the blood of Christ which cleanses one of one's sins.* How is this operation accomplished? It is simple. Jesus shed his blood in his death upon the cross (John 19:33-34). The Bible teaches that through an obedient faith one is baptized into the benefits of the death of Christ, and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-5). The "new birth" equals remission of sins. The "new birth" equals salvation. Whatever is required to obtain remission of sins or salvation equals the "new birth." — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Fall Lectureship To Honor Camp

"Forward With The Fundamentals" has been selected as the theme for the 1983 Bible Lectureship scheduled for September 18-21 at Alabama Christian College. This year's program has been dedicated to renowned evangelist and author, Franklin Camp.

A native of Munford, Alabama, Camp has served as a gospel preacher for the past forty-eight years. He is the author of four books as well as numerous manuscripts. His latest book, *Principles, Patterns, and Perils of Leadership*, will be available to the public in September.

He currently serves as the associate minister for the Adamsville (AL) Church of Christ as well as the editor of two publications, "Word of Life" and "Vigil," published by the Shades Mountain and Adamsville congregations respectively.

As a special lecturer/adjunct faculty member for the Alabama Christian School of Religion (ACSR), Camp conducts a "preacher's class" every Monday from September through May at the Adamsville church. He also serves as an ACSR Board of Directors member.

Camp will be honored by lectureship guests as an appreciation luncheon on Tuesday, September 20 in the J. L. Perry Cafeteria on the ACC campus.

Word Search Puzzle

(No. 2)

JOHN HUDSON TINER

TITLE: JESUS IS BORN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 2:8-18

WORDS:

DAYS	ACCOMPLISH	DELIVER
FIRST	BORN	SON
WRAPPED	SWADDLING	CLOTHES
LAI	MANGER	ROOM
THEM	INN	

WORD SEARCH: (Words may be backward, forward, across, up, down, or diagonal.)

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G D E L I V E R P N
D N D B P P Z L Z J
H S I L P M O C C A
X W W L A D D V F N
M Z R N D I A I I U
O Q G A A D N Y R B
O E V L P N A M S O
R N O S L P E W T R
P C L O T H E S S N
Y N X P T P K D I E
    
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— P. O. Box 38, House Springs, MO 63051

The Advantages Of Hell

Early in life we learn that even the worst situation usually has some points of merit in it. For example, a man was injured in a car wreck, but while in the hospital he found a nurse to be his wife.

It has recently come to my attention that there are some advantage to be found even in *hell*. I realize that this is contrary to popular opinion, but I think I can sustain my allegation if you will but carefully listen.



JOHN WADDEY

There will be no *preaching* in hell. For some this will be advantageous. Such folks seem to hate preachers and preaching. To them, preachers are spoil-sports and meddlers. All who feel this will have endured their last sermon when they enter the realms of Diabolos. We should mention, however, that although there will be no preaching, there will be plenty of preachers in hell. John tells us that false prophets will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). This is the case because all teachers who do not abide within the teaching of Christ have not God (II John 9-10).

In hell there will be no *praying*. To many people, praying is a foolish waste of time. Those boring prayer meetings are usually not well attended. Modern man has too many important things to do in his day, so he cannot afford the time to pray. For some, praying is actually embarrassing, especially in public. Don't worry, in hell there will be no more praying. Weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, yes, but no more prayer (Matthew 13:42).

There will be no *paying* in hell. By that I mean no collections for the Lord, the poor, missionaries, and good works. It seems that giving especially

galls some people. Your last request for an offering or contribution will be heard when you depart this realm. Such commands as, "Lay by in store on the first day of the week," will be long forgotten in hell (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

Neither will there be *programs* or *projects* of good works in hell. Churches seem always to be having some kind of class, or evangelistic outreach. There are workshops, lectureships, and jobs to do. Preachers keep telling us to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord . . ." (I Corinthians 15:58). In hell, none of these things will be bothering you and demanding your time and energy.

In hell there will be no *pious people*. Godly Christians really turn off some folks. They are so goody-goody that they don't like a good risqué joke. They won't even take a drink at a party. They make everyone feel uncomfortable. They are so clean they squeak. They stand so straight they lean backwards. These "saints" would actually put their religion before friends, family or work (John 15:18-20). In hell you will be forever rid of all such misfits, for they will be separated from you and kept behind heaven's walls (Revelation 22:15).

There will be no more *prohibitions* or *laws* to put up with in hell. There is a class of people who dispise the "thou shalt and thou shalt nots" of religion. They resent the silly rules (as they view them) that cramp their style and then make them feel guilty when broken. All such regulations will be done

away in that distant land. Christ will have delivered up his reign to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24), and those in hell will be separated from him (II Thessalonians 1:9).

Only a few problems can we foresee for those who choose hell rather than heaven. All liars will be there (Revelation 21:8). All the hypocrites will have a place reserved also (Matthew 23:33). There won't be just a few of these pretenders, as most churches have. There will be no recreation, leisure time, or rest periods in hell. "They have no rest day or night . . ." (Revelation 14:11). Unfortunately there will be no weekend passes, leaves of absence, graduations, or retirement. It is "eternal" in duration (Matthew 25:46).

Of course, we realize that the supposed advantages do not begin to equal the disadvantages of hell. Surely no sane person would want to go there. God doesn't want anyone to perish in hell (II Peter 3:9). In fact, hell was never intended for humankind. It was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Christ suffered and died so not one of us would have to go there (John 3:16).

Today there stands before us two gates, two ways, two destinations (Matthew 7:13-14). It is your prerogative to choose the way to everlasting pardon or eternal punishment. "Choose life that ye may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

God's People Are Powerful

How much capability does one human have? How about five? How about 100? The answer is found in Gen. 1:26 when Moses recorded, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion . . ." Does God make weaklings? It seems that anyone that is made in the image of God has a great deal of power at his disposal if it is used properly.

When you think of power what do you think of? An internal combustion engine, a plane, a nuclear bomb, a dam, the center of the earth, the sun? Look at all the power around us and then realize that man has dominion over it ALL because God gave it to him. Many non-Christians have realized that fact. The Wright brothers, Henry Ford, and countless thousands throughout the ages have realized that man has a great deal of power at his disposal; and they were not even Christians!

Of course, success at anything has its price, but the Bible tells the Christian to lean upon God; he can handle it all (Ps. 50:10). Unfortunately, to listen to many of our brethren, one would think they are tied to a ball and chain, the way they move about in their efforts to glorify the kingdom of God on this earth.

Most of the people who went from the saddle to the satellite didn't even know God. Thomas Edison after his 3000th experiment was asked why didn't he quit because of all of his failures. He stated that he had never had a failure; he had just found 3000 ways it wouldn't work. After his 10,000 experiment he succeeded at the lightbulb, and today the crowd says that he was one of the greatest inventors

ever born.

Even a world with handicaps has overcome them and has done great things without God! Charlie Goodyear got his greatest ideas about the tire while sitting in a cell in prison! And to think that many congregations can't even reach the area around them for Jesus Christ. If the world can do it without God, think of what we can do with him! We need to see our limitations and problems and then do it anyway! We ought to refuse to let our handicaps deter us from the purpose of doing our best with what we have for God!

If we would keep looking to Jesus (Heb. 12:2) nothing would stop or hinder us in any way! Peter walked on water when his eyes were fixed on Christ. What happened when he took his eyes off Jesus? Isn't that the same thing that is happening to many of our own brethren? It often seems that those who can't see Jesus themselves don't want others to see him either.

Look at the great examples within the Bible of men and women with great handicaps that overcame them and became great people in God's sight. Elisha would be a prime example. Here is a boy who is just a simple farmer; one who had not been trained in the seminaries or in the social grades of the populace. He was found by Elijah in the field plowing behind twelve yoke of oxen. Regardless of all of his handicaps he was willing and able to become a man of God. Because of these two qualities he could do anything that he wanted. When Elijah was about to leave this earth he asked Elisha what he could give him, and Elisha said he wanted a double portion of his spirit (II Kings 2:9). Elisha didn't have his eyes on Elijah but on God. Therefore to be just like Elijah wasn't enough. He wanted to be even greater and be given a double portion of his spirit.

We are as powerful as we let ourselves be. Let us look to Jesus and gain the inexhaustible supply of power that he is willing to give to us if we will only ask! — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

How Big A Fool Are You?

ANCIL JENKINS

A king once gave his court jester his staff to carry. He said the jester was a fool and when he found a bigger fool, he was to give him the staff. A few months later, the king was on his death bed. The jester visited him and asked the king if he was prepared to die. Sadly, the king said that he did not believe he was. The jester said, "Here is your staff."

How much we believe in preparation! We prepare for professions by going to school. We prepare for retirement by insurance or other programs. Why do people fail to prepare to die?

Some refuse to face the reality of death. They think it will not come to them. They may say they know they will die, but deep down, they feel some how they will escape it.

Others think it will not come soon. The great delusion is, "There is plenty of time." Most people plan to prepare to die, but not soon.

There are others who have adopted a religion or philosophy that make life after death pleasant without any preparation in this life. As the child said who had studied the rich man and Lazarus, "I want to live like the rich man and die like Lazarus." It is impossible to do this without preparation. To think otherwise is to be a fool. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



BARRY FIKE



Words Of Truth

(USPS 6)

... speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, 1983

NUMBER 33

The Relevance Of The Old Testament

DON RUHL

Many in the church today have little interest in the Old Testament. They disdain to hear it preached, and some would never read from it, because they see no value in it for their daily lives. This writer himself has been *chided* for preaching from the Old Testament! Some even stop coming to services or Bible class when it is being consistently taught.

The reasons for this are many. Some do not want to be challenged with things that they are not familiar with, nor do they want to have to think. Many are simply ignorant of the Old Testament/New Testament relationship. Also brethren tend to carry their conclusions from Eph. 2:14, 15, et al., further than they should. These passages clearly set forth the proposition that the Old Testament was nailed to the cross and done away. But brethren go too far when they say that the Old Testament is not relevant today. The Old Testament *is* relevant and those that say we should study the New Testament exclusively contradict themselves, because the New commands a study of the Old (Jn. 5:39).

First of all, let us consider that the New Testament *appeals* to the Old Testament. The New Testament appeals to the Old Testament because the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; and, the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. The New is in the Old contained, and, the Old is in the New explained. The New Testament quotes from the Old Testament *hundreds* of times. One has said, "A conservative count discloses some 295 separate *explicit* references to the Old Testament" (Roger Nicole. In: Bernard Ramm, ed., *Hermeneutics*. Baker Book House, 1974, p. 43. Emphasis mine, D. R.). The books of Romans, Hebrews and Revelation contain a heavy concentration of Old Testament material, which may explain why some have such a hard time understanding these books. If one's Old Testament knowledge is shallow, so will his knowledge of these New Testament books be. Try teaching someone the New Testament without referring to or quoting from the Old Testament. In order fully to understand the New Testament one must have a comprehensive

knowledge of the Old Testament.

Jesus and his apostles appealed to the Old Testament in many different situations. In debate (Jn. 10:34; Acts 18:28), when answering questions (Mt. 19:4), as an authority (Jn. 5:39; Acts 26:22, 23), to support their actions (Acts 13:47), in prayers (Acts 4:25, 26), and during temptation (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10). Jesus and the early Christians also used the Old Testament in establishing the fact that Jesus is the Christ (Lk. 24:27; Acts 8:34,35, et. al.). In Acts 18:28, Luke is very plain in showing *how* Apollos helped the brethren in Achaia: "For he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing *by the scriptures* that Jesus was the Christ." What Scriptures? Obviously the *Old Testament* scriptures! In order for people to be saved today they must know that Jesus is the Christ, and what better way to do it than using the Old Testament!

The book of Romans illustrates very well how the New Testament abundantly and richly appeals to the Old Testament. In 3:10-18 there are seven quotes! In chapters 9 and 10 there are twenty-two quotes! In the whole book of Romans there are fifty-nine *explicit* quotes from the Old Testament and this does not count all the allusions. Therefore, the Old Testament is relevant and must be used by us *today*, shown by the fact that *the New Testament appeals to it*.

Secondly, the New Testament teaches us to *learn* from the Old Testament. In Luke 17:32 Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." Well who was Lot, and who was his wife, and what is there to remember about her? To know, one must read what Genesis 19 says. Romans 15:4 is powerful in teaching that we are to learn from the Old Testament: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for *our learning*, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." Who among us does not have a need for patience? (See Heb. 10:36.) Who among us does not desire comfort and hope? The Old Testament is part of the answer. (The whole Bible is the complete answer). In I Corinthians 10:6, 11, Paul says the recording of the wilderness wanderings was written for our benefit that we might not sin like Israel did. The book of Jude, verse 5 says, "Now

I desire to put you in remembrance . . ." and then he abundantly refers to the Old Testament and *teaches* us some things we need so desperately today! Second Timothy 3:16, 17 tells us *every* scripture is *profitable* and that they make the man of God complete. Therefore the Old Testament is relevant and must be used by us *today*, because the New Testament admonishes us to *learn* from it.


Thirdly, the Old Testament *leads* or *brings us* to the New Testament (so that we may understand it). In Galatians 3:24 Paul said, "So that *the law* is become our tutor to *bring us unto Christ*, that we might be justified by faith." We all must be brought to Christ, and the law is a part of this process. Even the first verse of the New Testament, which states that Jesus is the son of David and Abraham, has no real significance if we do not allow the Old Testament to bring us to a proper understanding of the New. In Hebrews 5:11-14 the writer chided his readers because they did not understand some Old Testament principles which were designed to bring them to Christ. Most of New Testament doctrine is dependent upon a knowledge of the Old. For example, in Romans 3:20b Paul said, "For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin." Now the New Testament tells us how to be saved from sin. This is also true of: obedience and disobedience, reward and punishment, God's mercy and wrath, etc. Therefore, the Old Testament is relevant and we would be blessed by reading, studying, and preaching it more, not less! — 1128 E. Artesia Blvd., Long Beach, California 90805.

Why Paul Was Sent?

REG ROGERS

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in Christ: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. 1:17). He did, however, baptize a few there at Corinth. Some suppose that baptism is not necessary to salvation, and they cite this passage as proof. Is there some difficulty of interpretation here?

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

The Kingdom Is The Church

When the Jews, following the Babylonian captivity, read the words recorded in Daniel 2:44, they had to be impressed:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."



BOB DUNCAN

They had heard of the glory of their nation during the lives of their ancestors while David and then Solomon reigned over the kingdom. They knew something of the humiliation their nation had suffered in the Babylonian captivity. Actually, from the time of the captivity right on down to the time of Christ the Jewish nation never was free from domination by more powerful kingdoms than were they. No doubt the Jews would thrill to read the promise that God would someday set up a kingdom which should not be ruled over by another people, but which would consume all other kingdoms, and would stand forever.

This is the very kingdom the writer of Hebrews has in mind. Hebrews 12:28. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence godly fear."

THE KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN IS THE CHURCH

That the kingdom of this passage is the church of Christ is abundantly taught, both in this chapter, and in numerous other passages. Beginning in verse 22 of this chapter, the writer said:

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Notice the expression, *church of the firstborn*. The kingdom which cannot be moved of verse 28 is the church of the firstborn of verse 23.

Our Lord made it plain in Matthew 16 when he said in verse 18, "I will build my church," and then in verse 19, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that the church is the kingdom and the kingdom is the church.

But go back for a moment to the prophecy of Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings . . ." What kings? An examination of the context will reveal that Daniel had interpreted a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and had told him the dream had to do with a succession of kings and kingdoms. Babylon was the first, followed in order by the kingdom of the Medes and

Persians, then by the Grecian kingdom under Alexander the Great, and then by the mighty Roman Empire. It was in the days of these Roman kings that the God of heaven was to set up a kingdom which would stand forever. Jesus was born, lived his lifetime, and died during the days of the Roman kings. When Jesus began his preaching during the days of the Roman kings, he said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand . . ." (Mark 1:15). Since Daniel had prophesied that the kingdom of God would be set up in the days of the Roman kings, we should not be surprised to learn that Jesus preached, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."

A little later, Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1).

John the Baptist also preached: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Ma. 3:2). When the twelve were sent out to preach to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," they were told to say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Ma. 10:6, 7). When Jesus sent out the seventy, he told them to preach, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9).

Now the question is, was the kingdom set up in the days of the Roman kings, as was prophesied by Daniel, and as preached by John the Baptist, by Christ, by the twelve, and by the seventy? Or did they all miss it? The Premillennialist says they all missed it, and that the kingdom still has not been set up. He says Christ really meant to do what Daniel prophesied, what he himself promised, and what John the Baptist, the twelve and the seventy preached, but because the Jews rejected him, he was not able to do so. So he set in operation Plan B, and set up the church instead. Such teaching as this borders on blasphemy, and makes Christ and inspired writers of both Old and New Testaments false teachers.

What the Jew of Jesus' day and the Premillennialist (or Zionist) of our day never learned is that the kingdom is the church. Every single prophecy concerning the kingdom of God is fulfilled in the church. The church was not established according to "Plan B," but was established "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ep. 3:10, 11). In Acts 2:23, on the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that Jesus was "delivered [to be crucified] by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." In other words, everything went according to God's plan. In that same chapter, Peter quoted a prophecy from Psalms 132:11 concerning Christ on the throne of David, and then made it clear to his hearers that David, in that prophecy, was referring to the time when Christ would be raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father.

Another prophecy of Daniel is interesting in this connection:

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him:

Why Paul Was Sent?

Continued from page 1

Remember that Paul also wrote to the church at Rome about preachers being sent to preach the gospel. The word "sent" here, is a form of the word "apostle." Those sent by Christ to preach, delivered an infallible message and confirmed it with signs.

There was no possibility of any error getting between the mouth of the ones sent and the ears of the listeners. Paul was sent by Christ to Corinth to preach the gospel by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When he arrived there he was the only man present that could do what he was sent there to do. "And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). Who baptized all not baptized by Paul? We can't know and it doesn't matter. Every able-bodied man in Corinth could baptize, but not one of them could at the first speak a word of the gospel by the Spirit as Paul.

When Jesus went with Martha to the grave of Lazarus to raise him from the dead, he could have moved the stone from the door of the tomb himself, but there was no necessity of his expending labor upon that while those in the crowd could do it. Only Jesus could call the dead back to life, but every able-bodied man in Bethany could have removed the stone from the mouth of the burial cave. When Lazarus heard the voice of the Son of God say, "Come forth," he came out from the tomb bound with grave clothes. Jesus could have unwrapped Lazarus, but so could have anybody in the multitude: but not one save Jesus could call him forth. Therefore he said to the beholders, "Loose him and let him go."

It is a misuse of Paul's statement in First Corinthians 1:17 for men to apply it to themselves now. Christ is not sending forth apostles today at all. There is less than no reason at all found in First Corinthians 1 or anywhere else in the Bible, for that matter, to conclude that baptism is a non-essential, for all at Corinth were baptized. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). That was not Holy Spirit baptism either, for you remember, that Paul himself baptized some of them and gave their names. Being baptized into one body is equivalent to being baptized into the church, for the church is Christ's body (Co. 1:18).

Paul avoided baptizing more at Corinth than

Continued on page 4

Continued on page 3

“Trust In Jehovah!”

“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that trust thee” (Ps. 31:19). The treasures of divine goodness await those who trust God. Yet, many find it difficult to unleash their life and deposit their future into God’s will.

Soloman’s challenge is, “Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5). To meet this challenge, *Psalms 18*

proves very helpful. The psalm begins in declarations of trust with David describing Jehovah as his strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, God, shield, horn of salvation, and high tower (vv. 1, 2). It then proceeds to answer two questions relative to trust.

What Does It Mean To Trust In God?

To trust God means to confide in his care (vv. 3-6). Raphael’s painting of Jesus’ transfiguration attempts to capture the splendor of that moment while, in the corner of the same canvas, a distraught father is pictured in concern for his demoniac son. The point implied? It is impossible to separate the glory of God from the cares of man. David faced the dangers of death, the floods of filth, and the shackles of Sheol. In such distress he “called upon Jehovah, and cried unto...God.” Such is trust!

Oft the storms of life and sorrows of death stain the Christian’s countenance (Cf. II Cor. 1:3, 4; 4:17; Heb. 12:11). In such times, he must learn to confide in God’s care (Phil. 4:6; I Pet. 5:7). Consider the example of Jesus. Prior to death he cried, “My God...why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Though he never received answer to this cry of despair, he closed his life with unswerving faith: “Into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Lk. 23:46). In his darkest hour, he confided in his Father’s care. Such is trust!

To trust God is to rely on his promises and obey his word (vv. 19-28). God promised Israel the shower of his blessings if they obeyed (Lev. 26:3-13), and the terror of his wrath if they disobeyed (Lev. 26:14-28). David believed these promises, obeyed, and attributed his success to the recompense of Jehovah. Such is trust!

God has made the same broad promises today. Obey and he promises the beauty of forgiveness (Acts 2:38; Heb. 8:3), the freshness of a new beginning (Rom. 6:3, 4; II Cor. 5:17), and the stabilizing hope of heaven (Matt. 25:34; Heb. 6:18, 19). Disobey and he promises the everlasting nightmare of hell (Matt. 7:23; 25:41, 46). To rely on these promises



DAN WINKLER

and, thus, obey, is trust. Consider the examples of Abraham and Moses. They altered their lives because they relied on the promises and word of God (Heb. 11:17-19; 24-27). Such is trust!

To trust God means to risk all for him (vv. 29, 30). David enjoyed victory over terrible odds with God as his help and trust in the same. Remember Goliath? In preparing to face this war lord, David affirmed, “Jehovah...will deliver” (I Sam. 17:33, 37). In facing the giant, he answered the Philistine’s derision, “I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts . . . This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hands” (I Sam. 17:43-46). Such is trust!

Through the gospel, God challenges man to risk all in sacrificial living (Rom. 12:1,2) and sacrificial giving (II Cor. 8:1-7; 9:6-8). The challenge must be met by risking a denial of self (Matt. 16:24) and a renunciation of one’s all (Lk. 14:33). Consider the example of the apostles. They left all (Mk. 10:29,30). Such is trust!

Why Trust In God?

One should trust God because he is the providential guardian of the righteous (VV. 7-16). In providence, God worked and works through the laws of trust, all of nature is pictured in submission to Jehovah. The earth quivers while the foundation of mountains shiver and shake in fright. Why? The smoke of vengeance bellows from the Almighty’s nostrils and the fire of wrath screeches from his mouth in defense of the righteous (vv. 7-9). Like a king in procession, he rides on the back of a cherub and flies without restraint through the skies, supported by the wings of the wind. He draws taunt the bow of his omnipotence and sends crashing across the firmament bolts and arrows of lightning (v. 14).

Treasure In Earthen Vessels

Paul wrote, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Corinthians 4:7). The treasure is the gospel. The central facts of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Paul spoke of the gospel, he preached: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

This “treasure” (gospel of Christ) is placed in the hands of Christians. 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). Man cannot be saved without hearing and obeying the message of the gospel.

Paul says, “Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, WE FAINT NOT” (II Corinthians 4:1). Our gratitude should be as strong as Paul’s. This gave him strength to press on in his work of proclaiming the gospel. “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (II Corin-

thians 4:2). He it was that rebuked the proud nothing only to scoop out channels of water with an effortless sigh and lay bare the foundations of the earth (v. 15). How awesome! Yet, with such power, he still cares for the righteous (vv. 16,17).

One should trust God because, with God, man can do what he could not do otherwise (vv. 17, 32-43). Man is but finite, clothed within the rags of mortality and shackled within the limitations of humanity. Yet, he can become what he dreams and possess the future with God as his help and strength. Who would have thought that a humble shepherd boy would have grown into a giant-killer, a mighty warrior, a king of God’s chosen, and a grandfather of Jesus? In like manner, Christians are who they are and have what they have because of God (James 1:17). Yea, with Paul the Christian can say in confidence, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13)!

One should trust God because there is no one else (v. 31). “For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited: I am Jehovah; and there is none else” (Isa. 45:18). To trust in others is to be disappointed. To trust in self is to become discouraged. To trust in God is to be victorious!

Someone has said, “Faith either removes mountains or tunnels through them.” The idea is, “With trust in God, the obstacles of life seem to discompose.” So the challenge is clear, “Trust in Jehovah” (Prov. 3:5). “Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” (Eph. 6:10). — Rt. 2 Box 240 Woodbury, TN 37190.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

thians 4:2).

The gospel is hid to the lost. It is not hid because it cannot be understood. “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” As long as the love of sin, prejudice, hatred, etc. are in the hearts, people will not hear the truth.

The Christian’s responsibility is to get man to see his lost condition and lead him to Christ. In Christ, we have hope.

We must imitate Paul and preach Christ, not ourselves. He said, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (II Corinthians 4:5). Preachers who preach for self esteem, financial gratification, social relationships, etc., are stumbling blocks to reaching souls with the true and unadulterated gospel of Christ.

May the light which shined in our hearts shine to others. Paul stated, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). May we radiate the principles of Christ to others by imbibing them in our lives and proclaiming them with our lips. P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, GA 30728.

The Kingdom Is The Church

Continued from page 2

his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Da. 7:13, 14). Notice that this one “like the Son of man” was given this dominion—this kingdom—when he “came with the clouds of heaven,” and when he “came to [not from] the Ancient of days.” To what could this possibly refer except to the Lord’s ascension back to the Father in the clouds to become king over his kingdom, the church? The church is the “kingdom which cannot be moved.”

If there is anything stronger than your convictions, it’s the heat of your prejudices

The difference between a prejudice and a conviction is that you can explain a conviction without getting angry

What some people call a conviction may be just a prejudice.

Why We Reject Instrumental Music

[A reader recently wrote, asking, "If Jesus did not condemn the use of instruments in worship, how can we?" It is hoped the response given will be helpful to others as well.]

Dear Brother:

The answer we reach will depend upon the concept we hold about how God authorizes a thing.

Luther, with many others following, argued, "I can do anything the Bible does not condemn." Zwingli and others argued, "we can only do what God has authorized in his word." Our brethren have generally followed the latter; those who became the Christian Churches and accepted such items as mechanical instruments, followed Luther's concept.

I am convinced Zwingli was right since the Bible lays down that proposition.

Jesus instructed us to teach disciples to "observe all things whatsoever [he] commanded" the apostles (Matthew 28:20). Anything he taught them (personally while here or through his emissary the Holy Spirit), I am authorized to give to a disciple. That which he did not command, I cannot do with his approval. I can clearly read where we are instructed (thus authorized) to sing unto God, but I cannot read a line about the use of instruments of music in worship (See Ephesians 5:19 and Hebrews 2:11-12).

If I abide in the teaching of Christ, I enjoy the blessings of the Father and his Son. If I go beyond that doctrine in my teaching and practice, I have not God (II John 9). I can sing praises in worship within the boundaries of Christ's teaching, but to add instrumental accompaniment, I have to go outside the teaching of Jesus for my authority. Notice how some go to the old Testament, some to tradition, some to human wisdom. But no one can find its authorization in the New Testament of Jesus.

Paul warns us in I Corinthians 4:6 "not to go beyond the things that are written" in our religious practice. If I abide by his instruction, I can only sing in worship for that is all that is written.

We freely grant that the New Testament nowhere forbids by name the use of instruments, but it does do so by the principles stated above.

To argue for instrumental accompaniment on the



JOHN WADDEY

grounds that it is not specifically forbidden, proves too much. Scripture nowhere forbids me to use Pepsi Cola for the communion or ketchup on the holy bread. Yet all would immediately take exception if I did so. Why? Because Scripture plainly tells us what to use; bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29). If I should not go beyond what is written in the communion worship, on what grounds should I go beyond what it written in the song worship?

Remember, Christ did not specifically condemn instrumental music, burning incense, counting beads, holy water, infant baptism, sprinkling for baptism, clerical uniforms and a hundred other items of humanly originated religious practices. If that justifies us in the use of musical instruments, then it must of necessity approve the other items as well. Few would follow this logic to its end.

As to the matter of church buildings and song books, we must remember that God authorized things in two ways: (1) Specifically, and (2) Generically. When he instructed Noah to build an ark we see both of these illustrated. The ark, its dimensions and materials were specified. Noah was not free to change the number of decks, windows and doors, nor to use any other material than gopher wood (Genesis 6:14-16). The kind of tools, number of helpers, and

schedule of work were not stated. God left this to Noah's judgment. He was authorized to use whatever tools, helpers, and schedule he needed to fulfill the general command to build the ark. So today the charge to assemble and worship authorizes Christians to secure a suitable place so as to comply with the command. The command to sing authorizes such incidentals as songbooks, song leaders, and pitch pipes.

God's command to build an ark could not be stretched to cover building a permanent temple. It took another command to do that. The authorization to sing cannot be construed to cover a different kind of music such as the instrumental variety.

Of course, since we are under the New Covenant of Christ, the fact that the Hebrews were authorized to use instruments is of no consequence to us. Their use of instruments is in the same category as their use of animal sacrifices, incense and the Levitical priesthood. All were authorized by a former law not now binding upon us.

Faithful Christians are committed to doing what Christ authorized, in the way he prescribed, and for the reason he gave. That is the meaning of *restoring* New Testament Christianity.—6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

Suicide

We don't think much about suicide, or do we? Does the child of God ever feel like ending it all? Is suicide a way out for those who can't cope with life? These are questions we all need to think about from time to time.

The word "suicide" is a French word (*sui* 'of oneself,' and *cidium* 'a slaying'). Hence the word means to kill oneself. Webster also adds that suicide is "the act of self-destruction by a person sound in mind and capable of measuring his moral responsibility."

Just in America, in 1979, 26,800 people decided to end it all. John Temples states: "Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among teenagers, after accidents" (*Gospel Advocate*, February 3, 1983). Not only are people deciding to end it all, it seems that some "well respected authorities" are helping them. I really imagine that in the years to come we will start seeing euthanasia (death induced as a relief from suffering). A book that has just recently come out in Paris, France, *Suicide Mode D'Emploi*, has 50 recipes for lethal "cocktails" that guarantee a "gentle" death (*Salinas Californian*, September 9, 1982). Jean Pierre Soubrier, one psychiatrist whose 60 publications on suicide have earned him the name "Monsieur Suicide" in France, said, "Nine out of 10 people who try to kill themselves don't want to succeed." And yet the publisher expects this book to make about \$360,000 over the next five years. Staggering, isn't it?

For one who is not a child of God why not end it all? Why not commit suicide? One should always realize life is a gift from God (Acts 17:28); He makes "his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Mt. 5:45). Life is worth liv-

ing. But the one that is outside of Christ better take heed. It will not be long until he meets his final death. Each day God gives the sinner to live should draw him closer to repentance. (II Pet. 3:9; Rom. 2:4). Apart from spiritual things, the sinner needs to think about the stress this puts on his family. One writer for *Newsweek* said "Suicide doesn't end pain. It only lays it on the broken shoulders of those left behind" (February 7, 1983). Mrs. Anne-Grace Sheinin, one that was contemplating suicide, said, "I saw the torment my mother's death caused others: my father, my brother, her neighbors and friends. When I saw their overwhelming grief, I knew I could never do the same thing she had done — force other people to take on the burden of pain I'd leave behind if I died by my own hand."

There were five people in the Bible who committed suicide: King Saul, the first king of Israel (I Sam. 31:4); Saul's armour-bearer (I Sam. 31:5); Ahithophel, close counselor of David (II Sam. 17:23); Zimri, fifth king of Israel, reigned only seven days (I Kings 16:18); Judas Iscariot, an apostle of Christ (Mt. 27:5; Acts 1:18, 25). Some argue Samson committed suicide. It should be remembered from Judges 16:28 that Samson asked Jehovah for the strength to put to death the Philistines. Samson did ask to die in verse 30. But there is a difference between sacrifice and suicide, and this seems to be the case in Samson's life. The only other alternative is that God gave Samson the strength to commit suicide. I don't think anyone wants to attribute that to God.

Let us note some Biblical reasons why suicide is wrong.

1. It destroys our body (I Cor. 6:19,20).
2. It violates the sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:7; Mt. 5:21; 19:18).
3. It is the ultimate sin in selfishness. The one that commits suicide doesn't have the faith to stick it out (Gal. 6:15). He doesn't care about his family, friends, and relatives, and the grief this puts on them.
4. It cancels out eternal life (Gal. 5:21; Jn. 17:12; Rev. 21:8). This reason, and this reason alone, is enough to show that suicide is the "wrong way out" (Victor Knowles).—17691 Pesante Rd, Salinas, CA 93907.



GEORGE REED

Why Paul Was Sent?

Continued From Page 2

those mentioned for fear that they would say he baptized in his own name, lessening the importance of being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). The work of preaching and teaching today is expected of all of us, and whether parttime workers or full-time, we are commanded to "preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2), meaning to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11). Those whom we teach and leave unbaptized, we leave out of Christ, "for as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).—1147 John St. Salinas, CA 93905.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, mad as you think; but speak forth the Words of Truth and Reason."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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NUMBER 32

Nichols Named Editor

BY BOBBY DUNCAN

Flavil H. Nichols, associate editor of WORDS OF TRUTH for the past seven and one-half years, has been selected to succeed the writer as editor of WORDS OF TRUTH and evangelist at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama. Brother Nichols is a son of the late beloved brother Gus Nichols, who began WORDS OF TRUTH in 1963 and served as its editor until his death in 1975.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Brother Nichols will be moving to Jasper from

Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where he has served as evangelist since 1977.

Actually the relationship between brother Nichols and this publication goes back a number of years. Many of the years of his father's editorship, brother Nichols served as assistant editor and circulation manager. During that time he actually edited a number of issues of the paper. Also, when his father became ill in August of 1975, brother Nichols began editing the paper, and served as acting editor until the writer became editor in May of 1976. Since that time his name has been connected with the paper as associate editor.

The years of experience brother Nichols will bring to this publication will enhance its value, and will assure its continued success as a tool for helping mankind and glorifying God.

Those who write for WORDS OF TRUTH should continue to send their articles to the Jasper, Alabama

address. Articles which will be arriving in Jasper before October 1 should be addressed to Bobby Duncan. Articles which will be arriving after October 1 should be addressed to Flavil Nichols. But all articles should continue to come to the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

Although brother Nichols will not be moving to Jasper until the first of December, he will assume his duties as editor of WORDS OF TRUTH the first of October.

A churchman in Florida reports that his minister recently preached on the subject of gossip, followed by the hymn, "I Love to Tell the Story."

Right And Wrong

Our world is filled with great turmoil and confusion. The values that were once upheld and defended are now tossed aside without shame or regret. On every hand there is evidence of a world without moral chart and compass. Someone is murdered in our nation every twenty-four minutes. A woman is raped every seven minutes. Homes are being burglarized at the rate of six per hour. Respect for persons and property has in many quarters all but diminished.



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

In England a book has been published entitled: A GUIDE TO SELF-DELIVERANCE. This book was written as a how-to guide for those who want to

end their own lives. Venereal disease has reached epidemic proportions. Some 800,000 teenagers will get some kind of sexual disease within the next twelve months. Among communicable diseases, herpes, syphilis and gonorrhea are second only to the common cold. Alcoholism is our nation's third largest health problem. There are at least ten-million alcoholics in America. An estimated fifty-percent of all traffic accidents could be eliminated if we could only get drunk-drivers off the road. We could go on and on with the horror's of legalized abortion in which thousands of pain conscious, innocent children are burned, cut, scraped and poisoned, all in the name of "individual liberty." Yes, our world is in the midst of great turmoil and moral confusion.

Many moral questions are being asked; many for the first time in the history of man.

Should abortion be "on demand"?

Should homosexuals be allowed to teach in public schools?

Should 18 year olds be allowed to drink alcoholic beverages?

Should murderer's receive the death penalty?

Should marijuana be sold legally?

Should the practice of surrogate mothering become common-place and acceptable?

Should horse-racing and gambling come to Birmingham?


Should Jr. High School students be furnished birth-control devices without the knowledge and consent of their parents?

Should the mentally retarded and the aged be put to sleep?

Is suicide a legitimate means of escaping life's problems?

These are but a few of the many moral questions that are being asked in our society. Who knows what new moral questions will be asked in the next twenty-years? Many conflicting answers to these important questions come from vastly different sources. The world is crying out to know the difference between right and wrong. Is there some kind of moral standard to which man can turn to find the answers to all his moral questions? We believe, most

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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Attitude And The Bible

DEAN FUGETT

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalms 119:18.)

The eternal destiny of every person depends upon a knowledge of and obedience to the will of God revealed to us — the Bible. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork" (Psalms 19:1), but "the gospel is the power of God to salvation" (Romans 1:16). No one can know the will of God from the heavens or from the firmament. Only by studying and learning the word of God can one come to know God's will.

The Bible is not, as the humanist would depict

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

Does Romans 5:19 Teach Hereditary Total Depravity?

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). Those who teach the doctrine of hereditary total depravity — the doctrine that little babies are born guilty of sin — urge this verse in support of their doctrine. The "one man's disobedience," of course, refers to the sin of Adam. By this disobedience "many" were made sinners. This is understood by those who hold this doctrine to mean that all the human race inherited the guilt of the sin of Adam. Is this what this verse teaches? Let us examine it closely to see.

In the first place, *many* does not necessarily mean *all*. If it does, then this verse would teach the doctrine of universal salvation, for it says that it was by the obedience of one (Christ) many were made righteous. If all were made sinners unconditionally and arbitrarily by the sin of Adam, then all are made righteous unconditionally and arbitrarily by the obedience of Christ. But the person who believes in hereditary total depravity does not believe the doctrine of universal salvation. If this verse proves one, then



BOBBY DUNCAN

why does it not also prove the other?

In what sense were many made sinners by Adam's disobedience? Verse 12 of this same chapter answers this question: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world . . ." (emphasis mine, BD). It was by Adam that sin entered into the world. Now look at the complete verse: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." That sin entered the world through Adam is clearly taught, but all men are made sinners "for that all have sinned." It is obvious that the *death* under consideration here is spiritual death, not physical death. Notice the statement: "and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." If he had been talking of physical death Paul would have said that death passed upon all men because of Adam's sin, but this death came as a result of each man's sins.

One man's disobedience — the sin of Adam — made many sinners in that it brought sin into the world, and men have sinned. The obedience of one man — the perfect life of Christ, and his atonement for our sins — makes many righteous in that it makes salvation available to all who will be obedient to the will of Christ. One does not automatically become righteous by the obedience of Christ, and one does not automatically become a sinner by the disobedience of Adam. Those who choose to obey Christ become righteous, and those who choose to commit sin become sinners.

If the doctrine of hereditary total depravity were true, it would make God responsible for man's lost condition.

Right And Wrong

Continued from page 1

assuredly, that there is. There are, in fact, three POSSIBLE standards for making moral decisions.

1. *The Moral Standard of God Through the Bible.* James 1:25 speaks of the "perfect law of liberty." The Hebrew writer describes this law as being "quick, and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword . . ." (Hebrews 4:12). The 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 Timothy 3:16-17). God has wondrously provided a perfect standard for living. Those who follow this standard live within the confines of moral excellence.

2. *The Moral Standard of Self.* Such slogans as: "Do your own thing," and, "If it feels good, do it," are products of the "Me-Generation." Right and wrong is determined by each individual. Jeremiah expressed the inability of man to establish his own moral code with the words: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Proverbs 14:12 says: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." An individual human-being is incapable of establishing his own moral standard. We are far too limited in knowledge and experience to develop a

perfect moral code.

3. *The Moral Standard of Society.* This "standard" may come by different names in different packages but it is still basically the same. Call it "values clarification," "situation ethics," or any other nice sounding name; it is still based on the idea that there is no absolute standard of right and wrong. Mere men may make laws that apply temporarily and locally, but man has never been able to make any law that applies eternally and universally. Every law on the books that can be rightly applied to all men everywhere has as its origin the word of God. "Thou shalt do no murder" is applicable to all men everywhere. This law is upheld by all civilized governments, and yet it was a part of the "ten commandments" centuries ago. A Riverside, California health ordinance states that "two persons may not kiss without first wiping their lips with carbolized rose water." There may have been good reason to pass such a law in Riverside. There is no good reason to apply this man-made law to all nations for all time. Man is totally incapable of making such laws.

Only God is eternal (Revelation 1:8), omniscient (Matthew 10:30), omnipresent (Hebrews 4:13), omnipotent (Matthew 19:26), impartial (Romans 2:11), love (I John 4:8), and our creator (Genesis 1:1). We should, therefore, follow the standard of

him who made us. We should follow his will in the home (Ephesians 6:1), as it relates to the civil government (Romans 13:1-2), in the social realm (Matthew 7:12), the moral realm (I Corinthians 6:12-13), and, of course, in the religious realm (John 4:24). God knows what is best for us. If we follow him we shall have no trouble in knowing the difference in right and wrong.

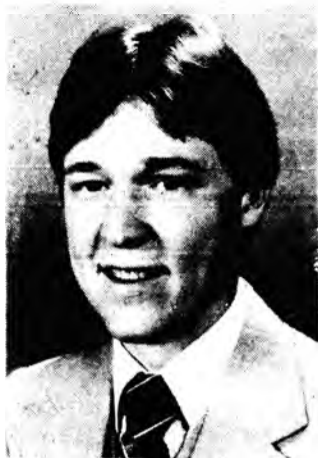
We are not robots. God has given us the power of choice (Matthew 7:13-14, Deuteronomy 30:19, Romans 6:16). It's not a matter, then, of deciding what is right and what is wrong. God has already spoken in his word. For us, it is a matter of deciding whether we will individually accept God's standard or some other standard.

Our world is in great moral turmoil. Many new moral questions are being asked. What is right? What is wrong? How can we in this modern age know the difference? Only by the word of our maker can we get the world on the right track. Perhaps you can lead the way, by following him, who IS the way. — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

If some people preached what they practice,
it would have to be censored.

Quantity Vs. Quality Growth

At the congregation that you attend what type of growth do you see daily? No, I'm not talking about baptisms, though that would be a Biblical concept. I'm talking about the quality growth seen in the lives of the members of the congregation. Many congregations have quantity growth but how many of us are growing in quality?



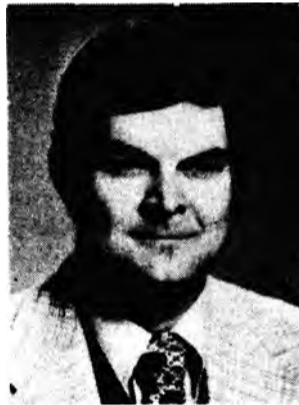
BARRY FIKE

How many congregations expect the man that is paid to preach to do all the preaching, praying, visiting, etc., because he's paid to do the Lord's work and he's better trained? Paul said in Eph. 4:11,12 that each member of the Lord's body has its duty to do. Or maybe you're at a congregation which is nothing but a holy huddle. Just like a football team that would huddle, and huddle, and huddle, but never play, so many congregations huddle but never get out and apply what they have learned. Paul said, "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).

Maybe you're with brethren who talk peace but

Help!

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:1-3).



RAY HAWK

How often do you find yourself in a situation that sends you to your knees crying, "Dear Father in heaven, help me"? Think of the heartache and suffering in Jerusalem. No question that these saints were praying for God's assistance. Wouldn't you? Yet, they were scattered. They went to prison. Some died. Families were split up. Jobs were lost. Times were hard! If ever there was a time for prayer, it was then. These brethren needed help.

How many would be surprised if God's answer to these saints was, "I am helping"? You see, God was helping them. In James 1:1-4 the writer tells saints they are being conditioned for superior hearts and enduring character through "divers temptations." We cannot know what kind of metal we are made of until we are tested.

The apostles surely were discouraged by persecution, but they did not let it stop them. It fitted them for greater service. How many of us when pressures come, conflicts heighten, and life gets complicated, cry out in desperation to God, "help me"? At the same time, God is replying back, through scripture, "I am helping." Perhaps we need to answer back, "Thank you Lord." — 1461 East Chester, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

don't practice it. How can people see the peaceful nature of Christianity if we don't practice it? There is room for disagreement, but with unity (Eph. 4:2-6).

If you know of a congregation like this the main problem is with the quality growth that is within each Christian's capability. The problem is each individual is not growing quality wise. How does one measure such growth? He certainly can't measure it by attendance, contribution, the size of the building or any other physical way. The only way to measure quality growth is to realize that the church is that body of people who must have commitment to Christ, the work, and to each other. Once this is realized, it must be practiced!

This is not to say that growing numerically is wrong. Just the opposite: it is Biblical to grow

just as the Jerusalem church did. But if you will notice, the book of Acts always shows the quality and quantity growth of the Christians in the same context. The only reason numbers were used is to indicate the vital life of the Christian community and show that when growth occurs within the individual it shows by the numerical growth. Look at Acts 2:41 and 2:42; 2:47b and 46,47; 4:4 and 4:13; 5:14 and 5:12,13; 6:7 and 6:1-4; 9:31; 11:21 and 11:29,30. In each of these instances not only does it mention that numerical context but also what made that numerical number grow.

In the book of Acts numbers were used in celebration, not calculation. If we first have quality growth, within ourselves, then the quantity growth will come. — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

Spiritual Destinations

Psalms 141 has ten powerful verses that emphasize the tragedy of spiritual poverty and, conversely, God's ability to preserve us from evil. There is a vivid contrast drawn between salvation, purity, and spirituality versus vanity and degradation. The component parts of this marvelous chapter are these:

1. The Power of Prayer
2. Carefully Guard Our Speech
3. Evil Can Be Appealing
4. Exhortation Can Be A Blessing
5. Keep Your Eyes Upon The Lord
6. Spiritual Poverty Can Be Avoided
7. Wicked People Reap What They Sow

The pivotal passage in this graphic section is 141:8. Notice these powerful words:

"But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in these is my trust: leave not my soul destitute."

Fearful that he might partake of "the dainties of evil men" (verse 4) the Psalmist pleads in these imploring words:

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

There are hundreds of verses in the Bible concerning the danger of improper speech. The use of the tongue is a challenging and sobering point



JOHNNY RAMSEY

in the life of a Christian. Words can gender strife, start a war, and break up marriages. On the other hand the proper expression from our lips can heal wounds, bless the world and cheer the heart.

"Angry words are lightly spoken,
Bitter thoughts are rashly stirred,
Brightest links of life are broken
By a single angry word."

When error enters our earthly sojourn we should welcome the correction righteous folk give us. In fact, Hebrews 3:13 tells Christians to "exhort one another every day lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We should provoke one another unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24). Psalms 141:5 expresses this point beautifully:

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil."

When a spiritual brother comes to us with words of admonition we should listen carefully and rejoice mightily that someone cares for our soul. When we trust in the Lord we know he will never leave us destitute, but will come to our aid. In Psalms 91:15 we rejoice to read the promise of God:

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him, and honour him."

What a wondrous, precious relationship the faithful sustain with the Savior. There will never be spiritual loneliness for those who love the Lord!

"Savior, lead me then at last,
When the storms of life are past,
To the land of endless day,
Where all tears are wiped away."

— Box 235, Rowlett, TX 75088

Attitude And The Bible

Continued From Page 2

it, a man made handbook revealing the arbitrary decisions of a tyrannical despot ruling with jealous rigor over those with enough superstition to submit. It is rather the revelation of an all wise and benevolent, a revelation of eternal principles of life, which if accepted and made the rule of life, will result in happiness here and in the world to come (John 10:10). Rejection of these principles and precepts and failure to apply them, leads to unhappiness and tragedy here and torment in eternity.

If anyone will approach the study of the Bible with the attitude of the Psalmist expressed at the beginning of this article and will apply the same rules of understanding and application which would apply

in any other discipline, he will receive a wondrous blessing from the study of the word.

The casual reader becomes confused and frustrated because he thinks he cannot understand nor live up to the standards, while the careful reader and diligent student of the Bible finds a storehouse of treasures that make life livable and happy and give sure promise of greater things after this life.

Give a measured amount of your time each day to a study of God's Word and you will become so absorbed that you will be constrained to read and study at every opportunity. The "way of man" is still not in himself. — Rt. 2, Harrison, Ar. 72601.

Getwell Church of Christ presents
The Eighth Annual
"SPIRITUAL SWORD LECTURES"

Oct. 16-20, 1983
 1511 GETWELL ROAD, MEMPHIS, TN 38111
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

Lunch Break - 11:45-1:00
 Dinner Break - 3:45-7:00
ATTENDED NURSERY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

9:00 A. CONNALLY
 The CONDITION OF FLESHLY ISRAEL IN THEIR REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL (the universality of the gospel leaves all — both Jew and Gentile — without excuse) (Rom. 9:30-10:21)
 10:00 G. MUSIC
 The CONDITION OF FLESHLY ISRAEL IN THE REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL (God is always merciful to the faithfully obedient) (Rom. 11:1-36)
 11:00 B. SMITH
 A Plea For Dedication To God Which Results In Humility And Obedience To His Will (Rom. 12:1-3)
 1:00 G. COLLEY
 Responsibilities As Members Of The One Body (Rom. 12:4-8)
 2:00 P. SAIN
 Responsibilities To Other Individuals (Rom. 12:9-13)
 3:00 T. HIGHTOWER
 Responsibilities To Those Who Persecute Us (Rom. 12:4-21)
 8:00 V. HALE
 The Duty To Love All Men (Rom. 13:8-10)



Franklin Camp



Curtis Gates

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

9:00 D. CONLEY
 Exhortations To Holiness Of Life Based On The Fact That Eternity Is Constantly Drawing Nearer (Rom. 13:11-14)
 10:00 N. MERIDETH
 Christian Freedom And Brotherly Tolerance In Matters Of Opinion (Rom. 14:1-23)
 11:00 C. PUGH
 Christ's Example Is Further Enforcement Of The Law Of Love Manifested In Self-Denial (Rom. 15:1-13)
 1:00 D. GODDARD
 Paul's Account Of Himself And His Plans (Rom. 15:14-33)
 2:00 D. McCLISH
 Gretings — Along With A Warning — To Those In Home (Rom. 16:1-20)
 3:00 C. BRADLEY
 Gretings From Paul's Fellow-Laborers (Rom. 16:21-24)
 7:00 D. SZTANYO
 Doxology (Rom. 16:25-27)
 8:00 B. JACKSON
 An Intensive Look At The Doctrine Of Christ



Winford Claiborne



Gary Colley

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20

9:00 F. NICHOLS
 An Intensive Look At The Doctrine Of Truth
 10:00 R. DEEVER
 An Intensive Look At The Doctrine Of Salvation
 11:00 F. CAMP
 An Intensive Look At The Doctrine Of The Covenant
 1:00 R. BROWN
 An Intensive Look At The Life Which Christ Would Have Men To Live
 2:00 M. DEEVER
 An Intensive Look At Christian Apologetics
 3:00 P. DAVIS
 An Intensive Look At The Relationship Of Grace, Law, Love, And Works
 7:00 W. WINKLER
 An Intensive Look At Romans Versus The Doctrine Of Premillennialism
 8:00 R. TURNER



Robert Brown



C.W. Bradley



Darrell Conley



Andrew Connally



Phil Davis



Mac Deaver



Roy Deaver



Garland Elkins



Ralph Gilmore



Dan Goddard



Virgil Hale



Alan Highers



Terry Hightower



Andrew Connally



Glenn Jobe



Kenneth Jones



Dub McClish



Noel Merideth



Max Miller



Jerry Moffitt



Gobel Music



Flavil Nichols



Charles Pugh



Paul Sain



Billy Smith



Dick Sztyano



Robert Taylor



Rex Turner



Thomas Warren



Charles Williams



Wendell Winkler



Gary Workman



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, me
the Words of Truth a.

but speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1983

NUMBER 34

Gems Of I Kings

(Part I)

Jeremiah is believed by many to be the author of I and II Kings. There is some disagreement concerning the authors of the different books of the Bible. My attitude has always been that regardless of who the author may be, he was led by the Holy Spirit to write what God wants man to know. Most important is the knowledge that the Bible is God's word. I am not nearly as inter-



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

ested in who the author is as I am in what the author has to say to us. People refer to the 120 years' reign of Saul, David, and Solomon as the United Kingdom, but in I Kings we see the United Kingdom gives over to what is known as the Divided Kingdom. Let us now study some important lessons in this book that we may be edified and made stronger servants of God.

"Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die: and he charged Solomon his son saying, I go the way of all the earth . . ." (I Kings 2:1-2). "So David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David" (I Kings 2:10). David is one of the best known Biblical characters and was called a man after God's own heart in Acts 13:22. If David with all his greatness could not escape physical death, then we today cannot escape death unless Christ comes during our lifetime. We are all definitely going to die, according to Hebrews 9:27. Since we know we are going to die physically we try to make all things ready materially by paying our debts, acquiring burial, hospital, and life insurance. But reader friend, what about your spiritual insurance? Are you ready to go to judgment and meet your maker? (Romans 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:10). Every day we live upon this earth we should be thankful to God for providing us another opportunity to obey him. The day that our spirit is separated from our body and we die, we then

will not have an opportunity to do what is right. Knowing that we cannot have another chance after death, the words of Paul become so meaningful when he said, "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).


"And God said, Ask what I shall give thee . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (I Kings 3:5,9). If we could be asked by God to make a request, what would we want? Would we ask to be rich in material wealth, to have a long and healthy life, to have an earthly mansion or to be the most popular person in town? Solomon wanted wisdom that he could discern between good and bad. Wisdom is a very important Biblical subject. There are two types of wisdom. (1) Worldly: "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:14-15). (2) Godly: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). How can one know when a person has godly or worldly wisdom? The word of God states, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). Many people think because they have wisdom of this world, they are better than the majority of people. Many become conceited and think only of themselves. Paul said, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God . . ." (I Corinthians 3:19). Let us all yearn and desire to have godly wisdom that we may be better servants for God. How is godly wisdom obtained? "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). As we ask God for wisdom it must be by faith. "But let him ask in faith nothing wavering . . ." (James 1:6).

There is a very popular doctrine today that teaches once a person is a child of God, that one will always be saved. In I Kings 9:4-7 we read, "Walk in integrity of heart, and in uprightness and keep my statutes and

my judgments." Verse six is the key verse as follows: "But if ye shall at all turn from following me . . ." It would be useless to offer such instruction if it is impossible to fall. Peter said, "For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10). What things are we to do that we may not fall? Verses five through nine of the first chapter of II Peter contain the answer, and I trust that you will read these verses. If we fail to do as Peter instructs, we can surely fall. Why would a father tell his son not to go near the river if he could not fall? Why then would Peter warn us of the above dangers if we could not fall? In Galatians 5:4 Paul said, "Ye are fallen from grace." How could a person fall from grace if he were not in grace? It is impossible to fall from a place one has not occupied. Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with warnings that it is possible to fall from the grace of God. Revelation 2:5 states, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works . . ." Yes, we can fall; we can have our names blotted out of the book of life (Revelation 3:5), and we must obey Christ as outlined in Matthew 7:21.

I Kings chapter eleven is a sad chapter. Solomon was a great man, but he let women steal his heart. This chapter clearly illustrates that a man can turn from God and serve other gods. "And his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (I Kings 11:3-4). Many good men have turned to other women and their homes have been destroyed. I have known of preachers who have quit preaching because they have left their wives to follow other women. Oh how we need to heed what Jesus taught when he said, "wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). I remember sitting in brother Batsell Barrett Baxter's class of young preachers at David Lipscomb College when he gave this bit of advice: "Young men, never touch a woman above her elbow." What can be done that men will not go after other women?

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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ALABAMA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OF RELIGION 1983 EIGHTH ANNUAL LECTURE PROGRAM NOVEMBER 6-10, 1983

The theme of this lectureship program shall be "Divine Principles." Thirty nine speakers will develop this theme in an excellent fashion. The evening speakers and their subjects are: Sunday: "The Divine Principle of the Family Unit," Hardeman Nichols; Monday: "The Divine Principle of Justice," Thomas Warren; Tuesday: "The Divine Principle of Mercy," Hugo McCord; Wednesday: "The Divine Principle of Sowing and Reaping," Wendell Winkler; Thursday: "The Divine Principle of Free Moral Agency," Franklin Camp. One can see a week of good things in store for those who will attend this lectureship in Montgomery, Alabama, November 6-10, 1983.

Gems Of I Kings

Continued from page 1

The answer is love. If husbands would follow the teaching of Paul we would be very satisfied with the woman to whom we are married. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

Chapter twelve of I Kings teaches about the divided Kingdom. If we have ever needed lessons on unity, it is today; for as children of God we should be leaders in practicing unity. The Bible in no uncertain terms clearly teaches that division is wrong. In John seventeen, Jesus, the Son of God, prays for unity. Jesus is our example, and we should do all that we can to get people to walk according to God's standard, his word. The apostle Paul taught unity in I Corinthians 1:10. A very important question is how can peace be obtained? First, the leadership or elders must stand for truth (Acts 20:28-32). Second, preachers must preach and live by God's word (I Timothy 4:1-6; II Timothy 4:1-4). Third, the members must be willing to follow sound doctrine. Division is very ugly and we must forever follow sound doctrine if we are to have peace. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Peter 4:11). Are you willing to work for unity? — P.O. Box 97, Nettleton, MS 38858.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

McCord To Be Honored

Hugo McCord, outstanding evangelist, author, educator, lecturer, scholar, and Christian gentleman will be honored with an appreciation luncheon on Wednesday of the Fourth Annual Gus Nichols WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship to be held September 25-29 in Jasper, Alabama. Brother McCord is well known throughout the brotherhood for his scholarship and his ability to proclaim the truth. His humble spirit and



BOB DUNCAN

his cordial disposition make him loved and appreciated by faithful brethren. Brother McCord has been invited to participate in each of the three previous Gus Nichols WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureships, but was hindered from participating one year because of a previous commitment. This year he will be speaking on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings on the question, "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?" Sister McCord will speak at the same times each morning to the ladies on the question, "Whose Daughter Art Thou?"

The theme of this year's lectureship is *GREAT BIBLE QUESTIONS*, with each speaker's subject being a question right out of the Bible. Franklin Camp will speak each day on, "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" Bert Thompson will speak each day on, "Where Is Thy God?" Johnny Ramsey will also be a daily speaker, but on a different Bible question each day. The night speakers will be Flavil Nichols, Rex Turner, Sr., W. T. Hamilton, David Meek, and Neale Pryor. In addition to the three sessions conducted by sister McCord, five other speeches will be for ladies only: Joyce Massey will speak on, "Who Told Thee That Thou Wast Naked?" Mary Nichols will speak on, "What Is That In Thine Hand?" Carrie Hamilton will speak on, "Why Is Thy Countenance Sad?" Gracie Young will speak on, "What Have They Seen In Thy House?" Vodie Kerr will speak on, "What Doest Thou Here?"

Other speakers on the program will be Jim Massey, Levi Sides, Lyle Gillis, Eddie Miller, and Don McWhorter. Massey's subject will be, "How Can I Except Some Man Should Guide Me?" Sides will speak on, "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" Gillis will deal with the question: "Are Not Your Ways Unequal?" Miller's subject will be, "What Is Truth?" McWhorter will speak on, "Then Whose Shall Those Things Be?"

Lodging will be furnished out-of-town guests in the homes of Christians in the area, and at no charge. To make a reservation, call (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670.

"Are We Any Better?"

JACK H. WILLIAMS

A recent article in the *Kansas City Times* (July 31, 1983) concerned the sexual assault of a 13 year old girl in St. Louis. You might say, and sadly you are right, that such is not unusual in today's morally decadent society. But there was something a little different about this incident. The assault occurred shortly after 5 p.m. in a public park while approximately ten people stood by doing nothing to help! The attack lasted nearly forty minutes, and the young woman indicated that adults were present but refused to help during this time. This was supported by the police, who stated that when they approached, the onlookers scattered. One officer said, "I don't understand the mentality of people who can just stand there and watch something like that." Truly an understatement!

"Horrible!" you say? "Sickening! Frightful!" I agree wholly. Christians especially are appalled at such a lack of concern on the part of some that would allow such to happen. No doubt this very incident has evoked some heated remarks from the mouths of Christians pertaining to the lack of love and compassion on the part of those who would stand idly by while such occurred. But I ask, ARE WE ANY BETTER THAN THESE "HORRIBLE" PEOPLE?

Are we any better when we allow false teachers to enter the fold unopposed and "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple," failing to

"mark them" and "avoid them," (Rom. 16:17,18). We are horror struck at the thought of one's allowing a sexual assault on an innocent person to go unopposed, but we then allow innocent ones to be spiritually assaulted, without lifting a finger to oppose such travesties.

Are we any better when we see brethren who, "having loved this present world," have slipped back into Satan's clutches, and then fail to attempt to "restore such an one" (Gal. 6:1)? How can we say we love someone (Jn. 13:35; 15:12) and then fail to run to his aid when we see him endangered?

Are we any better when we stand idly by as our children are fed a diet of humanistic (atheistic) teaching that erodes their faith in God and his holy word, all in the name of "public education"? Are we not commanded to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4)? Is it not just as "horrible," if not even worse, to allow someone to destroy their faith as it would be to allow someone to molest them physically?

Are we any better when we look out on a lost and dying world, a world in which the vast majority of people have never obeyed the Gospel, and then

Continued on page 3

"You Meant It For Evil, But God Meant It For Good"

I know of a blacksmith who boasts above his shop-hearth, a sign saying, "The Fire, Lord, Not the Scrap-Heap."

"Well, sir," says the boulder-biceped hulk, "I shove my horse-shoes right in here . . . the hotter the coals, the better. After a while, I pull a shoe out and put it on my anvil. I beat it and hit it to see if the iron in the shoe is hard and tough. If it is, I shove it back in the fire and make it into a finished shoe. If it bends or cracks and ain't tough, I throw it into that scrap heap with the other pieces of junk."

"The fire, Lord, not the scrap heap."

God says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (I Peter 4:12).

God allows trials by fire to make us tough. People without trials are about as useful as scrap on a heap of junk.

God allows problems to make us tough. God allows problems to build us up.

No one enjoys the variety of problems which hit us. There is:

Physical pain

Job loss

No calls for dates

Heartbreak in the home

Betrayal by a friend

Death of a loved one

No one goes looking for problems. But when God allows problems, Christians look for God's overruling providence in those problems.

We know that God allows problems, not to stop us but to start us. God-never-stops-people . . . God only-starts-people. That's the promise of Romans 8:28: "All things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to his purpose."

"All things work together for good . . ."

God wants the best for us.

God wants the best for us.

God wants the best for us.

That is the message of the Grand Old Book from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.

God wants the best for you!!

God is the great Coach.

What does a great coach do?

He sees an athlete whom he believes can break a 3.50 mile or hit .406 or run 100 with football gear in 9:8.

What does the great coach do?

He tells the athlete to "take it easy." He praises him when he lazily shuffles on and off the field. He

"Are We Any Better?"

Continued from page 2

retreat to our air-conditioned buildings only to say, "Somebody ought to do something"? Are we any less "horrible" when we stand idly by, doing nothing as so many die each day without having been taught the truth, all the while fully aware that we are the ones who "ought to do something" (Matt. 28:18-20)?

Maybe it is time that many of us need to pick up the mirror and take a good look at ourselves and ask, "Are we any better?" — 16105 E. 40th St. Independence, Missouri 64055.



NEIL GALLAGHER

smiles when the athlete comes late and leaves early.

Is that what a great coach does?

No! No! No!

He *pushes* that athlete. He allows him trial and pain . . . in order to bring the *best* out of the athlete.

And the athlete, having discovered the champion *in himself* (which the coach saw in the first place) now has a feeling of victory, of dignity, and strength.

God allows trials in our lives so that, conquering those trials with his help, we too will know the victory, dignity, and strength.

Joseph's story is ours:

1. He was *betrayed* by his brothers.

2. He was *lied about* by his boss' wife.

3. He was *rejected* by his boss.

4. He was initially *forgotten* by the butler.

Through it all, Joseph did not give in to bitterness, complaint, or bad attitudes. Through it all, he trusted God. He knew that God wants the best for us.

In the final interview with his brothers, Joseph summarized the believer's attitudes to problems: "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20).

Joseph's brothers wanted to throw him in a scrap heap. God wanted to put him through trials of fire to make him, eventually, a prime minister, a leader, a winner. — 2302 Hickory Dr. Tupelo, MS 38801.

Moses' Troubles



DALTON KEY

Moses, the valiant leader of millions, the man whom God chose to deliver and lead his people out of Egyptian slavery, the revered law-giver, endured a life of rejection and heartache. His troubles began in Egypt and followed him for the whole of his 120 years.

He had just successfully led Israel in their escape from Pharaoh when the Amalekites attacked. It wasn't long before the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Amorites, and Midianites all joined together in an attempt to block Israel's path to Canaan.

Moses' own people were no help to him either. Though God's chosen nation had been awed and sustained by miracle after miracle, they still wallowed in the mire of murmuring. They incessantly grumbled against God and his helper, Moses. They began complaining before they were out of Egypt and kept it up even when the Promised Land was in sight. To make matters worse, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram attempted to overthrow Moses. Marah, the Wilderness of Sin, Rephidim, Taborah, Hazeroth,

Meribah, and Kadesh all found the Children of Israel either complaining or trying to oust poor Moses. At one point the people were all ready to stone him to death!

And his trusted leaders were many times untrustworthy and more of a hindrance than a help. Aaron made the golden calf at the foot of Sinai while Moses was up in the mount receiving the law from the Lord. Miriam and Aaron attempted to usurp the God-given authority of Moses at Hazeroth. And of the twelve spies sent into the land of Canaan, ten led the already rebellious nation in a flat refusal to enter. Yes, Moses had his share of troubles.

And yet through all of the muck of murmuring and insult of insurrection, Moses emerged a better man. Inspiration commends him as "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). He was meek, but by no means weak. He meekly stood his ground in the face of adversity. His life served to prove the yet-to-be-written words of Paul, who wrote, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3,4).

The next time you are tempted to complain about your troubles, think of poor Moses. His troubles made him stronger, better. The same thing can happen to you. — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

Faith But Not Faith Only

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Hugh F. Pyle, a Baptist preacher, makes the following comment on page 12 of his book, *The Truth about the "Church of Christ"*: "In fact, they can rarely, if ever, finish a message without finding their way to one or more of the 5 'water' verses they most frequently use, which (taken out of context) they insist teach salvation by baptism." This statement is untrue and was written by the pen of a prejudiced man who errs not knowing the Scriptures. Mr. Pyle has written this statement as one who believes that salvation is by the simple act of faith and faith "only" on the part of man. He totally rejects baptism in the salvation of man, and says that members of the church of Christ teach that the savior is the baptistry, which is a false assertion. The Bible plainly teaches that faith is necessary to the salvation of the soul, but nowhere can it be found that

faith only ever saved anyone.

The essentiality of faith is stressed time and time again in the pages of the Bible. It is by faith that man's heart is cleansed (Acts 15:9); one is sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18); the just shall live by faith (Romans 1:17); a man is justified by faith (Romans 3:28:52); one walks by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7); one lives by faith (Galatians 2:20); one is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8); Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17); righteousness comes through faith (Philippians 3:9); salvation comes through faith in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:15); it is impossible to be pleasing to God without faith (Hebrews 11:6); the end of our faith

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Faith But Not Faith Only

Continued from page 3

is the salvation of our souls (I Peter 1:9); and "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

The above citations should prove beyond doubt that faith is required and necessary in God's plan. But which passage ever suggests that one is saved by faith only? Not one of them does this! As a matter of fact, there is only one time in the entire Bible the words "faith" and "only" are used together. The passage is found in James 2:24 and annihilates the doctrine of faith only: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY" (emp. mine). There has never been a time in history that a man was justified before God by faith only. If faith only were true then the devils would neces-

sity be just in God's eyes, for in James 2:19 we read: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." If faith alone were true, at best individuals could only have a dead faith. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). If faith only were true, then all other things which the Bible states as necessary in salvation, such as God (I Timothy 2:3), Christ (Luke 19:10), preachers (I Corinthians 1:21), ourselves (Acts 2:40), the word (James 1:21), mercy (Titus 3:5), grace (Romans 3:24), works (James 2:24), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Romans 10:10), baptism (I Peter 3:21), the gospel (Romans 1:16), hope (Romans 8:24), the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28), the name of Christ (Acts

4:12), the death of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4), the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:11), the truth (John 8:32), and obedience (Matthew 7:21-27) would be eliminated from God's plan. If any one of the above things saved alone, the others could not.

The doctrine of faith only is a commandment from men. It makes the commandments of God concerning repentance (Acts 2:38), confession (Romans 10:10), and baptism (Mark 16:16) of none effect. It denies the truth of the Scriptures and must be rejected by all who believe the truth of the Bible. — 600 W. Sadosa #28 Eastland, TX 76448.

The Sabbath Day

"And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth overlaid up for you to be kept until the morning" (Ex. 16:22-23).



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

first through the prophet Jeremiah, and quoted here by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, was fulfilled when Christ died on the Cross.

Paul affirms that the law changed, with the death of Christ on the cross, in his letters of Ephesians and Colossians. He wrote, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:14,15). To the Colossians he wrote, "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). There can be no doubt that the old law was replaced by the new law with the death of Christ on the cross.

With the change of the law, the day of worship was changed from the Sabbath to the first day of the week. Many scriptures show that Sunday, the first day of the week, is now the day of worship. "And upon the first day of the week" "Upon the first day of the week" "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, AL 36609.

Slackness In The Work Of God

DON RUHL

This is the first occurrence of the word "sabbath" in the Bible. Moses did not here command the Jews to continue an observance of the Sabbath. This was a new observance as evidenced by the detailed instructions given in verses 23-26 of this same chapter. This order was apparently given in anticipation of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, including the ten commandments, the fourth of which was: "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy . . ." (Ex. 20:8-11).

The Sabbath law was not given to the Israelites until after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The law containing the observance of the Sabbath was given on Mount Sinai. The Bible says that God came "down also upon Mount Sinai, and spake with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath . . ." (Neh. 9:13,14). Prior to this time, there is no Biblical record of any man on earth's observing the Sabbath for any purpose.

This law was given to the Jews and was not intended for anyone else. They were to "Remember the sabbath" in memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Moses commanded, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).

The old law, including Sabbath day worship, was to pass away and be replaced by a new law, the law of Christ. The Bible says, "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 . . . In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:8,13). This promise, spoken

In John 6:27 Jesus told the multitude that was following him, to work for the food which abides unto eternal life rather than for that which perishes. Realizing the significance of Jesus' statement they asked, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" (verse 28). Like this multitude we must recognize the importance of doing the work of God, for it is emphasized throughout Scripture (Ephesians 2:10). In Jeremiah 48:10 the prophet gives us two thoughts concerning the work of God that we must consider today: Jeremiah said, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently; and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood."

One is cursed for doing the work negligently. The work that God has laid down for us to do is not optional, but rather a necessity (I Corinthians 9:16). Nor is his work to be done only when it is convenient (II Timothy 4:2). Paul taught that Christians are to be "in diligence not slothful; fervant in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). Jesus also taught that we should not be negligent when he said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Let each be diligent and work while the opportunity is open, for there is a blessing in doing so and a curse for not doing so (Matthew 25:14-30). Solomon said, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might . . ." (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Thus if you are a leader, lead; if a teacher, teach; and if a follower, follow (Romans 12:6-8; I Peter 4:7-11).

One is cursed for *keeping back* his sword from blood. In the context of Jeremiah 48 the prophet

is speaking of the impending destruction of Moab. God had a destroyer that would execute this work, but if that destroyer failed to execute God's punishment, then he would be cursed (verses 8,9). Whenever discipline is to be meted out it must be done immediately, otherwise evil will spread as Solomon taught in Ecclesiastes 8:11: "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" (See also I Corinthians 5:6,7). When discipline is carried out promptly and properly there is a blessing waiting from God, as in the case of Phinehas when he killed Zimri, who had taken a Midianitish woman (Numbers 25:6-13). However, God is angry until disciplinary action is taken (Joshua 7). Therefore, brethren, let us be diligent and perform God's work, including discipline. — 1128 E. Artesia Blvd., Long Beach, California 90805.

A nodding congregation may or may not mean assent to what the preacher is saying.

Perhaps you can improve your preacher's preaching by being a better listener.

We need more candid preaching and less candied preaching.

If some of us practiced what we preached, we'd work ourselves to death.

He preaches well who lives well.

It is impossible to preach with one eye on the conscience and the other on the collection.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 69 70)

os Festus: but speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1966

NUMBER 36

The Way To Zion

"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten" (Jeremiah 50:4-5).

Jeremiah's ministry commenced in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, the last righteous king to wield the scepter of Judah. It embraced the reigns of the last four kings of Judah in their entirety and followed a remnant into Egypt for some unspecified time. Thus, for forty years, Jeremiah prophesied of Jerusalem's destruction and Judah's captivity by the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Viewing the nation as a whole, his preaching fell on deaf ears. They responded to God's tender plea to cease their idolatrous ways, declaring, "There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go" (Jeremiah 2:25).

Judah's stubborn persistence in idolatry and all the sins of which it serves as the fountain source, left God with no alternative but to bring to disastrous fulfillment the judgment prophecies of Jeremiah. With Nebuchadnezzar as his servant and the Babylonian army as his sword, God razed Jerusalem with its temple, palaces and walls, and hobbled the people with the chains of captivity.

However, God's use of Babylon did not constitute his stamp of approval upon the nation. The nature of Babylonian religion and life begged for the same judgment that befell Judah. Therefore, having affirmed God's use of Babylon to judge Judah, Habakkuk followed with a description of Babylon's perverse state and the inevitable, judgment awaiting the nation (Habakkuk 1-2). Over a century before Jeremiah, Isaiah foretold the complete overthrow of



FRANK CHESSER

the nation (Isaiah 13:19-22). In view of Babylon's role in God's scheme, their prominent place in Jeremiah's preaching and Israel's need for hope, it is most fitting to witness two entire chapters devoted to judgment against Babylon, interspersed with references to Israel's restoration (Jeremiah 50-51).

It has been approximately four hundred fifty years since the period of the united kingdom. The portrait of the intervening years is not a pretty one. Solomon laid the groundwork for the division of the kingdom by saturating Jerusalem with idols (I Kings 11:1-13). With Solomon as their forerunner, both halves of the nation laid the foundation of their respective kingdoms in the fertile soil of idolatry (I Kings 12-14). Jeroboam's foundation in the north was so well-laid as to last the duration of the kingdom, and prove the means of its undoing (II Kings 17:21-23). Persistence in idolatry beckoned the Assyrian captivity.

Several righteous kings in the south added some one hundred thirty-five years to the national life of Judah. Tragically, the winds of idolatry finally toppled the nation into the outstretched arms of Babylon. Consequently, these four hundred fifty years were largely characterized by idolatry, division, war, death, destruction, and captivity. However, in striking contrast, the period of deliverance and restoration commencing with the fall of Babylon would be a time of:

Godly sorrow — Israel and Judah shall come together "weeping." Their tears embraced their idolatrous past with sorrow, their penitent present with joy, and their bright future with hope.

Seeking after God — They shall "seek the Lord their God." The "Baalim" were buried in the graveyard of captivity. No more would Israel be found "Saying to a stock, thou art my father, and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth" (Jeremiah 2:27).

Determined faithfulness — "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." This was no "help me now and then leave me alone" proposition.

Unity — Israel and Judah shall come "together." Representatives from all twelve tribes departed from captivity as one people and descended upon Zion in a spirit of unsurpassed unity, determined to rebuild the temple and restore

life to their ancient and beloved city. Though perhaps not intentionally, this text beautifully portrays the nature of the gospel age. Consider these four points as outlined in the sermon that gave birth to the glorious system of New Testament Christianity:

Godly sorrow — "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts" (Acts 2:37).

Seeking after God — "Men and brethren, what shall we do" (Acts 2:37).

Determined faithfulness — "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Unity — "And all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44).

This is the way to Zion, God's road map to peace, security, and blessings divine. — Route 5 Thomson, Georgia 30824.

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Ambition never gets anywhere until it forms a partnership with work.


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Words Of Truth

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I am not mad, most noble Pres-
ter, but speak forth the Words of
Truth and soberness
— Acts 26:25

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In Subjection

MARZEE KING TEW

God is. He was. He always will be. He is the Almighty. Everything and everybody is subject to Jehovah, the one and only living God.

We live *in subjection*. There is no such thing as living independent and free. Jesus Christ is subject to God (John 5:30). Every soul is subject to higher powers (Romans 13:1). The church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24), as is man to Christ and woman to man (I Cor. 11:3). We are subject one to another (Eph. 5:21). Members of local congregations are subject to elders (I Peter 5:1-5). Children are subject to parents (Col. 3:20), and wives to husbands (Eph. 5:22-24).

We believe the above, but I find it hard to put into practice. This seems universal for women, and I am one of them.

I have trouble being submissive.

Only through *faith* can I accept my Christian role; it is against my human nature. I was born strong-willed and determined. So except for the grace of God, and the written word, I might be one of the bold, arrogant women who want to change woman's role. However, the written word sets my course.

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor. 11:3). The acceptable chain is:

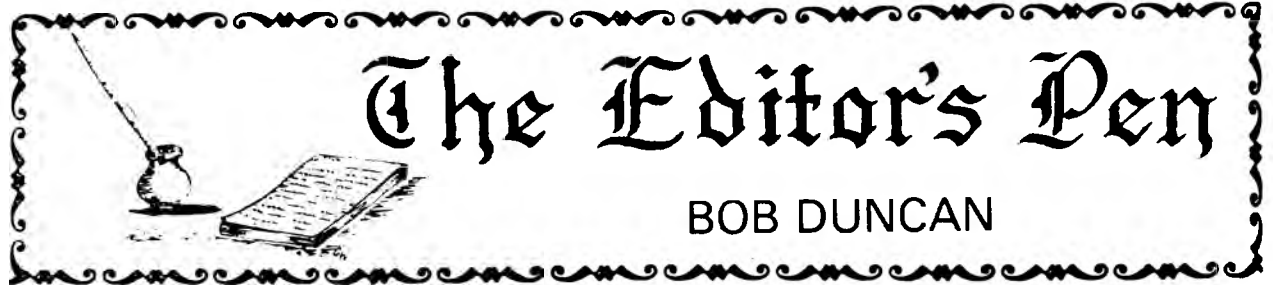
God
Christ
man
woman

How can I misunderstand something so plainly recorded?

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24).

When a Christian girl becomes one flesh with a Christian man, her new status begins. Where she has been looking directly toward Jesus, she now looks through her husband. This gives me trouble as I write. Something in me rebels at the thought of being subject to any human. Modernism will tell

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

Some seem to believe that the word *denomination* is synonymous with the word *church*, but such is not the case in the New Testament. The New Testament has much to say about the church, but not one word does it say about any denomination. It is admitted by all informed people that the New Testament was completed many years before the first denomination ever came into existence.

Sometimes brethren become uncomfortable when the preacher mentions some error of denominationalism. One preacher was told by an eldership not to use the word *denomination* at all in his preaching. Also some seem to have the impression that to take the position that God does not approve of denominationalism is to be possessed of a sectarian spirit.

Is denominationalism really all that bad? What, specifically, is wrong with the denominations?

In the first place, they exist without God's authority. The church which was built by Christ has behind it all the authority of heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18), but there is not a single denomination in the world which has behind it one particle of God's authority. Every one of them exists by the authority of men only. Our Lord was talking about religious institutions which exist without the authority of God when he said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

In the second place, denominations worship in a manner not authorized in the New Testament. The playing of instruments, counting of beads, lighting candles, washing feet, etc., are items God has not authorized in worship. To engage in them is to do that which constitutes an affront to the authority of God. Jesus teaches that our worship must be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Those people worship "in vain" who are "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). If John 9 clearly teaches that those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ do not have God. To do that which is not authorized in the New Testament is to transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ. God has never accepted man's systems of worship; he has always required man to worship according to the instructions divinely given. It should be added that, not only do denominations add items of worship which God has not authorized, but they also leave off things which God has prescribed. I refer particularly to the weekly observance of the Lord's supper. Those who worship in denominations do not have the opportunity of eating the Lord's supper on a weekly basis, as the New Testament teaches (Acts 20:7).

In the third place, denominations are organized in a manner contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Jesus Christ is the head of his church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23). It has no earthly head or



BOBBY DUNCAN

headquarters. The local congregation is the only organization the Lord's church has. Denominations have their earthly heads and headquarters. Their conventions determine their doctrines, which are printed in their creed books, and to which their members are expected to be loyal.

In the fourth place, denominations have a clergy and a laity. A distinction is made between preachers and other members of the organization. "Ordained" preachers are a part of the "clergy." All others are "lay" members. Recently this writer noticed a sign in front of a denominational meeting-house advertizing a "Lay Revival." It was explained that all the sermons during the revival were to be delivered by laymen (those not "ordained" preachers). To make a distinction between those who preach and other members is contrary to the New Testament. In Matthew 25:8-11, Jesus said, "But be not ye called Rabbi And call no man your father Neither be ye called masters But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." How contrary this is to the disposition of denominational preachers to exalt themselves above the level of other church members! Most of them even like to be called "Reverend So-and so." According to Psalms 111:9 the word *reverend* describes the name of God, and not some man — certainly not some man who refuses to be governed by the word of God. Look at Paul's statement in I Corinthians 3:5: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" Peter, though he was an apostle, refused to allow Cornelius to exalt him above the level of a mere man, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:26).

Finally, denominations do not teach what the New Testament teaches men to do to be saved. The New Testament clearly teaches that faith (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Matthew 10:32), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) are essential elements in the conversion of every alien sinner. Denominationalism teaches that faith only will save, notwithstanding the fact the Bible clearly says that justification is "not by faith only" (James 2:24). Denominationalism teaches that salvation by grace excludes obedience to the commands of Christ as a condition of salvation. A simple illustration from the Old Testament will show there is no conflict between grace and obedience. Genesis 6:8 says that Noah found *grace* in the eyes of the Lord. Verse 14 shows that God gave him certain commands to obey in order to be saved from the flood, and then verse 22 says that Noah did all that God commanded him. His salvation was by grace, but he still had to obey God to be saved by grace.

It is really quite strange that, when it comes to what one must do to be saved, denominational preachers insist that baptism is not necessary. But it is impossible to get into their churches without what they consider to be baptism. In other words, it is easier to be saved and get into heaven than it is to get into their churches, according to their own teaching.

It seems that all are ready to admit that one can be saved and go to heaven without belonging to any denomination. But there is no salvation

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Gems Of I Kings (Part II)

In the previous article on I Kings, I mentioned how that Jeremiah is believed by many to be the author of I and II Kings. We also studied the death of David, Solomon's request of God, falling from grace, how that women were the downfall of Solomon, and division. Let us now study some additional lessons from this good book that we may be stronger children of God.



JERRY T. BRAMLETT

Chapter thirteen explains the tragedy of believing a lie. It is my personal feeling that members of the church do not consider telling a lie to be as sinful as drunkenness, gambling, or committing adultery. I have been amazed at the number of times I have heard people who are members of the Lord's church tell an untruth. Telling a lie is a sin, and a very serious one at that. "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone . . ." (Revelation 21:8). People must not be gullible and believe everything they hear. People hear a preacher teach that sprinkling is baptism. This is not true. Baptism is not sprinkling but it is a burial (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12). Another example is, just believe in Christ, and you will be saved. I ask, "but what must I do?" The reply, "there is not anything for you to do but just believe in Christ as your personal Savior and you will be saved." But James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Many people are told that the church is not important, and many believe this to be true. Paul teaches to the contrary: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1:18). We must forever be on guard on what we hear and not believe and obey a lie. The late and great brother N. B. Hardeman preached a sermon entitled, "Believing a Lie," which is recorded in the *Tabernacle of Sermons*, Volume II. May we all come to the realization that lying is a sin.

I Kings chapter eighteen is a wonderful chapter concerning the confrontation that Elijah had on Mount Carmel when presenting to the people the true and living God. We must appreciate and love Elijah for his standing for the truth. "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, the Lord, he is the God: the Lord, he is the God" (I Kings 18:39). There are five lessons that I have learned from this good chapter and will share them with you now: (1) One cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). (2) One cannot be neutral (Matthew 12:30). (3) One must "seek good and not evil that ye may live" (Amos 5:14). (4) One must "hate the evil and love the good . . ." (Amos 5:15). (5) God's thoughts are not the thoughts of man (Isaiah 55:8-9). Please read the entire chapter that you may see the greatness of Elijah and the power of truth.

As a husband and wife trying to put God first, and you are criticized by an unbelieving mate, doesn't it make you feel depressed? As an employee trying to be the best worker that you can, and it seems you must suffer for doing so, doesn't it make you feel very low, when others are giving only partial allegiance to their job, and they seem to come out on top? As a deacon, you have been given an assignment by the elders to do, and you get no cooperation from the members, doesn't this disturb you? As an elder over a congregation where members will not cooperate with the program of work outlined, doesn't this concern you? Preachers, when you pray, study, visit the sick, visit erring members, do personal

work and try to give your best, and are criticized for preaching the truth, doesn't it put a damper on your enthusiasm, at least temporarily? When you teach a Bible class, preach two lessons from God's word and it looks like the members are not interested, doesn't it make you feel like sitting down and crying? As a preacher of the gospel for twenty years there have been a number of occasions when I have preached my heart out and have tried to be the best preacher that I could be, only to have people criticize the truth of God's word. I know that you as a reader have had some low points in your life in being sincere and trying to do what is right. "And he requested for himself that he might die: and said, it is enough now, O Lord, take away my life: for I am not better than my fathers" (I Kings 19:4). Also, read verses ten and fourteen. When I read of Elijah's sitting under a juniper tree and feeling the way he did, then I have had my desire to be rekindled in trying harder to be a better husband, father, and gospel preacher. Yes, we must learn that on occasions sincere people of God sometime suffer depression, but let us remember that the kingdom or church of Jesus Christ will stand forever and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18). From I Kings 19:4, 10 and 14 may we learn from Elijah that one can become depressed, but may we never throw up our hands and quit. May we always keep in mind that a quitter never wins, and a winner never quits.

"And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah,

by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so . . . And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spoke unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (I Kings 22:8, 13-14). The statement, "I hate him: for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil," reminds me of people who are living in sin, and love the world more than God, and will not repent of their sins. Because the preacher will not preach a fifteen minute "sermonette" to soothe their conscience, they hate the preacher. It is a shame to hate the truth and criticize the one preaching the truth when one has sinned. When the messenger said, "Speak that which is good," it reminds me of a member who tells the preacher, "We have some visitors in the audience; don't say anything that might upset them." Oh, how we need more Micaiahs today in the pulpits who will speak what the Lord said in his word. One way to measure a person's spirituality is by what he wants preached. You cannot have a strong church with weak preaching being preached by sinful men, but a strong church is one which wants all of God's word preached in all seasons. This is a lesson we all need to learn as we seek to develop a more spiritual backbone in our war against Satan and sin. — P.O. Box 97 Nettleton, MS 38858.

In Subjection

Continued From Page 2

you husband and wife stand side by side. That's not what scripture says. God, Christ, man, woman. It takes all of my strong self-will to accept this; and only with Christ's help am I able to put it into practice. Just as Christ is head of his church (of which I am a member), my husband is the head of his family (of which I am also a member). I cannot be in obedience to Christ without being in subjection to my own husband in everything.

In my Christian growth, there came a time when I could safely say, "I don't steal, cheat, lie, smoke, drink, nor curse." However, I was still living in sin, because I was not making any effort to be in subjection to my husband. I was trying to take the leadership role. Overcoming one sin does not clear us of all those we still practice. Sin is sin, and each new fault discovered needs correcting.

The verb *subject* means "to make oneself amenable to the discipline and control of a superior." *Submit* means "to defer to the opinion or authority of another." It is hard for me to defer to the opinion of my husband, and to submit to his authority.

Daily, my stubborn selfish will struggles within me. I have to remind myself constantly I have surrendered my personal will *deliberately* and *methodically*, on purpose, because the Bible tells me to. Because of my basic human nature, I can do this *only* through 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" (Heb. 11:11). "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).

Just as Sara obeyed, I must obey. And, oh, the joy

when I do! Being an obedient woman makes me no less a person, but *more*. I can do all things through faith in Christ, and I can do them better and more joyfully than the woman who continues to live in sin.

I realize the complexities that develop within a marriage, especially when one is a Christian and the other is not. However, no matter how complex the situation, God's Holy word does not change. A denominational preacher told me he thought if Jesus had come in our time, he would have called six male and six female apostles. Not so! Jesus Christ does not follow the trend. He sets the pace!

Therefore, wherever you find yourself today, you must read the Bible for direction. If you aren't the Christian woman the Bible tells you to be, *you must change*. But how?

Rule number one is *honesty*. It took me a long time to realize I must talk *everything* over with my husband. Remember, he is the head, and decisions come from him.

The second rule is to *ask*, instead of *tell*. Most husbands are willing to delegate authority, but the wise wife asks instead of usurping.

Thirdly, work at being *one*. This does not happen automatically. You are his helper, so you stay busy helping him realize his potential. You are on his team, not in opposition. A retired lady sat in my house the other day demeaning her husband. If she has been doing this forty years, how can she expect him to be the man she wanted him to be?

Finally, learn to wait on the Lord. God knows the best role for woman. Like Sara, we obey, judging God faithful to keep his promises. The Christian woman's life is more joyful, more peaceful, and more effective. She lives a richer, fuller life. — Route 1, Box 47-T, Titus, AL 36080.

What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

Continued From Page 2

outside the church we read about in the New Testament. It was purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28), Christ is its Savior (Ephesians 5:25), and all the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47). How utterly foolish it is for men to trade off

the heaven-bound church of the Lord, which is essential to our salvation, for a man-made denomination which they admit is not essential, and can go with them only to the cemetery.

Fourth Annual
Gus Nichols WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship
September 25-29, 1983
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue
Jasper, Alabama 35501
Theme: GREAT BIBLE QUESTIONS

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 7:30 - 8:30 P. M. "Where Art Thou?" Flavil Nichols

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

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 "Who Told Thee That Thou Wast Naked?" Joyce Massey
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 "What Have They Seen In Thy House?" Gracie Young
 11:30 - 1:30 P.M. Hugh McCord Appreciation Luncheon
 1:30 - 2:00 P.M. "What is Truth?" Eddie Miller
 2:10 - 2:50 P.M. "What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be?" Johnny Ramsey
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Lodging for out of town guests will be provided free of charge in the homes of Christians. To make a reservation, call: (205) 384-6446 or (205) 387-1670.

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 68)

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VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1983

NUMBER 37

“The Fellowship Of Kindred Minds...”

SCOTTY HARRIS

Someone has observed, “You can tell what a man’s relations with God are, by looking at his relations with his fellow man.” That observation is strictly applicable to those within the church of Christ.

How marvelous is the privilege of Christian fellowship and, yet, how unappreciated by far too many!

Fellowship, from the Greek *koinonia*, is defined as “joint interest, or having one common stock.” Mr. Webster defines fellowship as a “partnership; association, or companionship.” Perhaps these formal definitions are not quite as practical as the definition given by the country preacher who remarked, “Fellowship is fellows in the same ship!” That’s the idea.

Allow me to submit for your careful consideration some observations regarding the priceless privilege of Christian fellowship.

First, fellowship is *comforting*. Paul and Barnabas were comforted when they received “the right hand of fellowship” from brethren in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9). Paul, in writing to Christians in Rome, was “comforted . . . by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Romans 1:12).

William Morris said, “Fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death.” Indeed, Christian fellowship is comforting!

Second, fellowship is *captivating*. There is something charmingly powerful about “the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning hath been hid in God” (Ephesians 3:9). How captivating is the beauty of Christians who “rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15).

What Christian with a sensitive heart has not thrilled to the charming words, “Blest be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.”

Third, fellowship is *compulsory* for Christian living. We all need each other as brethren. “None of

us liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself” (Romans 14:7) are words which are certainly understood by all Christians who long for fellowship with other Christians.

How difficult it would be to serve Christ faithfully without brethren to encourage us along the way. For this reason, the Hebrew writer admonishes: “But exhort one another daily . . . lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

Fourth, fellowship is *costly*. Philippians 3:10 speaks of “the fellowship of his [Christ’s] suffer-

ings.” Ephesians 2:13-17 affirms that the fellowship of Jew and Gentile together in “one body” would have been impossible apart from the “blood of Christ” (verse 13). Anything which cost the blood and necessitated the sufferings of Christ is of unspeakable value! How privileged we are indeed, to have Christian fellowship; and how costly that privilege!

Regardless of race, gender, social status, or level of income, may *all* be included and none excluded from receiving “the right hand of fellowship” among those with “kindred minds.” — 301 Cahill Road, Albertville, AL 35950.

“I Have Learned”



W. A. HOLLEY

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care for me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:9-11).

In the very next verse, Paul states his philosophy of every day living: “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Verse 12).

In order for us fully to appreciate the Philippian


letter, we should take cognizance of the fact Paul was then in a Roman jail. It should be noted that Roman jails were not places of pleasure. In Roman jails the prisoners were chained to the guards who watched them, by one or both hands, and sometimes their feet were made fast in the stocks.

Paul didn’t allow hardships and disappointments to embitter his outlook upon life. In any and all circumstances of life (no matter how distressing any one might be or how comprehensive the sum of them all) Paul had learned the secret of facing both lack and abundance. What a wonderful lesson for today’s human beings to learn. Instead of grumbling, complaining, and finding fault with life in general, it is far better to lift our eyes from the mud and look at the stars. Verily, life’s experiences should teach us something!

What are some of the things “I have learned”?

(1) I have learned to live life one day at a time. The past is gone, the future lies ahead. Some philosopher declared: “Yesterday is a canceled check; tomorrow is a promissory note; today is ready cash. Spend it wisely.” There is no need to borrow from the

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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ALABAMA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OF RELIGION 1983 EIGHTH ANNUAL LECTURE PROGRAM NOVEMBER 6-10, 1983

The theme of this lectureship program shall be "Divine Principles." Thirty nine speakers will develop this theme in an excellent fashion. The evening speakers and their subjects are: Sunday: "The Divine Principle of the Family Unit," Hardeman Nichols; Monday: "The Divine Principle of Justice," Thomas Warren; Tuesday: "The Divine Principle of Mercy," Hugo McCord; Wednesday: "The Divine Principle of Sowing and Reaping," Wendell Winkler; Thursday: "The Divine Principle of Free Moral Agency," Franklin Camp. One can see a week of good things in store for those who will attend this lectureship in Montgomery, Alabama, November 6-10, 1983.

Train Up A Child

EARLENE ROSE

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. — Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go;
These words have meaning so deep--
Much more than merely pointing the way;
They mean a vigil to keep.

Training is gradual, minute by minute,
Constantly there by his side,
Paving the path that he will be traveling,
While you walk ahead as his guide.

Loving and learning, then loving some more,
Training each step of the way;
Planning the pattern that he is to follow,
Then living it day after day.

When training and teaching are constant and true,
Produced by a kind loving heart,
Life is fulfilling, for this is the training
From which he will never depart. — 1701 20th Ave.
Northport, AL 35476.



The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

"Seek Ye First"

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). These words of the Lord have to do with the matter of priorities. They let us know what God expects of us. It is not enough that we seek the Lord; we must seek him "first," i.e., ahead of everything else.

Another statement of our Lord points up the difference between seeking the Lord and seeking him "first." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). The word *strive* is here translated from the Greek word from which comes our English word *agonize*, and a contrast is here drawn between *striving* and merely



BOB DUNCAN

seeking. Many are seeking to enter heaven, but only a few are really striving.

The truthfulness of this may be clearly seen in nearly every local congregation on any given Sunday morning. When the Bible classes begin, only about half as many are present as will be present one hour later when the regular worship hour begins. Then on Sunday night the same ones fail to make it back for the evening service who missed the Bible class that morning. They also fail to show up on Wednesday night for Bible study. Are these people seeking the kingdom of God? Yes. After all, they were there on Sunday morning, weren't they? Are they seeking "first" the kingdom of God? Oh, no! If they were, they would be in attendance at the gatherings of the church other than on Sunday morning for the worship hour. Are they "striving" to enter Heaven, or just "seeking"? Why, just seeking, of course. Will they enter Heaven? No, because Jesus says they "shall not be able."

Friend, you do not obey Matthew 6:33 by seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness. You obey Matthew 6:33 by seeking *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

"I Have Learned"

Continued from page 1

past or from the future (Philippians 3:13-14).

(2) I have learned I cannot solve all problems of life through my own efforts. Peter declared: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:6-7). The Hebrew writer, said: "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

(3) I have learned that I live in the real world, not in the ideal world. The real world is filled with the good and the bad, sickness and health, good and evil. Try as I might I cannot change this world into a paradise.

(4) I have learned that I cannot hide from nor insulate myself from all evil. If, therefore, I would protect myself to the fullest possible extent, I must associate with other Christians. "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). The Lord's day assembly is especially designed to provide an element of fellowship for members of the church (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25). Peter sinned when he warmed by Satan's fire!

(5) I have learned that some good people are not interested in pleasing God and living a Christian life. Some have made a career of rejecting the demands of the gospel. Others spend their efforts trying to find a way to eliminate the church, or baptism, or the Lord's supper from the demands of the gospel (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 16:16; I Corinthians 11:23-34).

(6) I have learned that there are those who will go further, work harder, sacrifice more, and be far more steadfast in their efforts to support sin and immorality than they will in defending and upholding the sacred truth of Almighty God. Roman Catholicism

and denominationalism are classic examples. Think of those who uphold homosexual and lesbian rights(?); think of those who clamor for abortion privileges, and those who fight so tenaciously for the consumption of drugs and alcoholic beverages.

In many instances, where brethren have come to the parting of the way, those in error will strive even harder to sustain their division than they ever did strive for peace and harmony (Romans 12:19; 14:19; Ephesians 4:3).

(7) I have learned that there are good people in the world in which we live. But try as we might, we cannot be saved upon the basis of our moral goodness. Salvation cannot be earned! Salvation is a conditional gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). If we wish to go to heaven, we must obey Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21; Revelation 22:14).

What are the conditions of salvation? They are: Faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Matthew 10:32-33), and baptism in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38). Following our primary obedience to the demands of the gospel, we must worship God and live faithfully unto the end of life's journey (Jno. 4:23-24; Revelation 2:10).

(8) I have learned that I shall live until I die, and that I cannot get out of this world alive (Hebrews 9:27). Earthly wealth and fleeting pleasures must be left behind when I slip into eternity (I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19). There seems to be a voice calling from life's other side beckoning me, with irresistible force, to come and join the uncounted millions who have gone on before.

To paraphrase a statement from John Wesley, I want to do all the good I can, by all the means I can, in all the ways I can, in all the places I can, at all the times I can, to all the people I can, as long as ever I can. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Lost By Faith Only?

ROGER JACKSON

The Bible teaches us in Matthew 28:18, 19 that a person is saved from his past or alien sins by obedience to all that Jesus teaches us to observe. This is the same as the doctrine of Christ mentioned in II John 9-11. It involves faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and all things pertaining to the Christian life (Heb. 11:1; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:9, 10; II Pet. 1:5-10). A person who does not do all of these things cannot be a Christian (Heb. 5:8, 9). Neither is one saved at the point of faith without any further acts of obedience. Jesus said to observe *all* he has commanded and faith is a part, but not *all*. If a person believes the opposite he cannot be baptized for the remission of his sins, because he comes to baptism believing he has no sins and even having confessed as much. In later years these souls might come to believe they were baptized for the remission of their sins. What the preacher meant by "for the remission of sins" when they were baptized is that they were immersed because their sins had already been remitted (according to them). It is denominational jargon that causes the misunderstanding and serves as one more reason why we should call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. Souls thus baptized must be re-immersed in every case. For the benefit of those who might be otherwise persuaded still we offer the following quotation from a man who ought to know, Dr. G. Archer Weniger, writing in the Baptist paper *The Sword of the Lord*: "Two common misconceptions exist at the point of baptism which must be cleared up once again before the world, and one is that Baptists believe that baptism is essential to salvation. This we repudiate with all our being. It has never been so believed and is not now." This should settle the matter. No one baptized with Baptist baptism was baptized for the remission of his sins. If the candidate believed it at the time, he did so in opposition to what he was taught. One refusing to be re-immersed in order to be saved should be rejected (Acts 2:47).

Modernists teach that what a person believes and/or practices after his obedience (?) will not condemn him unless that false belief and/or practice causes him to lose his faith (as sectarians see faith). This is true to the modernist because he affirms that all false doctrine and/or false practice leads to the loss of one's faith. I Timothy 1:19 is supposed to teach all of this, but it does not. While one may certainly be lost by losing his faith I propose that one might have sectarian faith, which is faith only, that is as deep as the ocean and still be lost because of the belief and/or practice of false doctrine. Argue otherwise and every Pharisee condemned in Matthew 23 will be saved. They lived and died with as much faith as any sectarian alive. And what about II Thessalonians 2:11? "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Unrighteousness is doing something in opposition to or substitution for what God has said (Rom. 10:1-3). It might not involve what sectarians call faith or the loss of it at all. No sectarian practice is of faith (Bible faith) since that faith comes from the word (Rom. 10:17). The "faith" that says we will do what God says in the way he says as long as we agree that that is how it ought to be done, is not true faith at all. In this sense no person coming to God intending to be a sectarian all the time can ever be said to have Bible faith.

In the past we have had to deal with salvation by faith only and now we must take issue with the doctrine of damnation by only losing our faith — even if it never was of any other kind but that taught by sectarianism. And how are we to know if a

person has faith to start with so that we can judge when and if he loses it? Will we accept his word apart from acts of obedience, as we must do to fellowship those immersed by sectarian practice? James said, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (Jas. 2:18b). Do not tell me I must fellowship

men who have not done the works commanded of them in order for them to be saved. I cannot know that they have any faith at all unless they have done exactly what God says, in the way God says, and for the reason God says. — 940 Old Wood Rd. Oxford, AL 36203.

An Apostolic Job Analysis

Preachers commonly receive requests for job recommendations. The personnel director often asks a battery of questions to determine the quality of work one would be expected to do. In Acts 20:17-38 we have information that gives us a work analysis of Paul the apostle. A study of his work record will help us measure our own progress.

What was his attitude toward his job? He "served the Lord with all

lowliness of mind and tears . . ." (20:19a). Paul practiced what he preached (Eph. 4:2). The ability to count others better than oneself is of special value in the work of an evangelist (Phil. 2:3).

Did he tend to stir up opposition? He freely confessed that trials befell him by the plots of the Jews (20:19b). While in the secular realm employers may shrink from the man who stirs up the competition, in the Christian realm all who live godly "shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). If Satan sought to destroy our Lord he will do no less for us (John 15:20).

How did he face responsibilities? "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable . . ." (20:20a). This is really the acid test for most preachers. It is no test to preach lessons which folks want to hear; the challenge is to be urgent in reproving, rebuking, and exhorting when it is out of season to do so (II Timothy 4:2).

What was the methodology in his work? He taught both publicly and from house to house (20:20b). Many a preacher can present an eloquent oration from the pulpit, but has no inclination to go into people's homes with his message. The Lord's way is to make maximum use of both methods. We cannot afford to neglect either!

What was his attitude toward other racial groups? Paul wrote that he "testified to the Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (20:21). With him there was no respect of persons (Acts 10:34-35). He had but one message for all men (Eph. 4:4-5), and so must we.

What was his attitude toward difficult challenges? "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" (20:22-23). Determination is the one word that best describes Paul. He never shunned the tough assignments; rather he pursued them to completion and won. He viewed his role as a bond-servant of Jesus (Rom. 1:1), or like a soldier sworn to serve a king (II Tim. 2:3-4).

How would you describe his loyalty to his em-



JOHN WADDEY

ployer? "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" (20:24). Unswerving loyalty, devoted service, and dedicated discipleship were hallmarks of his career.

What of his ability to complete a job? "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (20:26). When facing death as an old man, Paul could write, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7). He was not like the church in Sardis who had perfected none of their works before God (Rev. 3:2).

Was he able to relinquish authority to developing leaders? He exhorted the Ephesian elders to "take heed to [themselves] and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit [had] made [them] overseers" (Footnote, Acts 20:28). It was now their job to feed the church. Many a preacher, elder and missionary finds it difficult to allow his converts and disciples to grow into leadership roles. The problem is called "paternalism." Paul had no problem in this area, and that was a vital ingredient in his success.

What concern did he exhibit for his fellow workers? He was careful to warn those elders to take heed to themselves, and that grievous wolves would threaten their flock (20:28-30). He urged them to watch and remember what they had been taught. He ceased not to admonish, and he commended them to God and the word of his grace (20:31-32). In the factory, the store, or the church, mutual concern and respect is a must among workers.

What about his integrity in financial matters? He could say without hesitation, "I coveted no man's silver, or gold or apparel." He had actually taken a secular job to provide his needs and those of his co-workers (20:33-34). This he did even though he could have expected the converts to support him (I Cor. 9:11-15). He left us all a beautiful example that we ought gladly to help the weak and remember Jesus' words that "It is more blessed to give than receive" (20:35). The need for such integrity and example has not yet vanished.

What was the level of his spiritual activity? Luke tells us, "He kneeled down and prayed with them all" (20:36). He was not ashamed of his faith (Rom. 1:16), and he did not blush to call publicly upon God for help. Likely this is one of the most commonly neglected areas of modern preacher's lives.

What did his co-workers think of him? When they learned he was leaving they embraced him; they wept sore; they sorrowed; they kissed him; they brought him on his way (20:37-38). Truly they loved this man who had served in their midst. May we so serve, that fellow Christians will have similar emotions for us.

When someone inquires of our work record may it be that the report will reflect the qualities of this great man of God. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37921.

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9:30 - 10:20 A.M. "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?" Hugo McCord
 "Whose Daughters Art Thou?" Lois McCord
 10:30 - 11:20 A.M. "By What Authority Dost Thou These Things?" Franklin Camp
 "What Is That In Thine Hand?" Vodie Kerr
 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M. Lunch Break
 1:30 - 2:00 P.M. "Then Whose Shall These Things Be?" Don McWhorter
 2:10 - 2:50 P.M. "What Is Your Life?" Johnny Ramsey
 3:00 - 3:40 P.M. "Where Is Thy God?" Bert Thompson
 3:50 - 7:00 P.M. Supper Break
 7:00 - 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
 7:30 - 8:30 P.M. "If God Be For Us, Who Can Be Against Us?" Neale Pryor

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Words Of



(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1983

NUMBER 38

"What Part Does Love Play In Unity?"

PART I

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article, which will be presented in two parts, constitutes the text of a lecture delivered on Wednesday morning, May 18, 1983 during the Fourth Annual Greater Visalia Lecture-ship conducted in Visalia, California. I had the privilege of being present to hear the speech, and felt the things brother Winkler said needed to be published in WORDS OF TRUTH.



WENDELL WINKLER

This article is much longer than the ones we usually publish, but I hope you will read every word of it carefully. I like to think this fine lecture summarizes what we have tried to accomplish on the pages of this paper during the past seven and one-half years.

We are grateful to brother Winkler for his permission and his assistance in publishing this lecture.)

I confess to you this morning that I am frustrated by the subject that has been announced, for so little time to develop one, in my judgment, of such magnitude and of such great, great need. Brethren, I want to be again just scrupulously honest with you. I now hold meetings full time, and I seldom ever go to an area to hold a meeting that churches are not having problems. And that is sad! It should not be that way. Now, we can just rationalize all we want to rationalize. But I want to affirm to you that if we believe the Bible we'll have to say that's not the way it ought to be. God wants his people to be one; God wants his people to be united. And we need to pray a lot about that. And I seldom anymore ever hear anybody pray for unity. I hear brethren pray, "Give us our daily bread," and I hear brethren saying, "Bless the sick and afflicted and all those whom we should pray for." But I never hear a brother get up anymore, and pour out his heart and say, "Lord, oh, Lord, help us to be one." And that is part

of our problem. We really need to take a look at this matter of being united more seriously than we have been, in my judgment.

So we're talking about a subject today of staggering magnitude. Whether we're dealing with it locally or whether we're looking at it from the standpoint of the situation of our wonderful — and I do mean wonderful — wonderful brotherhood. I'm somewhat like the fellow that said, "You know, when I think about the other world, I've got a problem." He said, "My problem is, I've been wondering how in the world I'm going to get my coat on over my wings." Somebody said, "That's not your problem. Your problem is how you're going to get your hat on over your horns." So anyway, he had a real problem. He had some frustrations. And that's kind of the way I feel today. I feel a little frustrated with this topic and trying really to handle it in this length of time.

Unity and how love is related to it is the challenge of the hour. I would like to use as our text I Peter 2:17 wherein the Bible says, "Love the brotherhood." There are four pungent statements therein. It begins simply saying, "Honor all men." Then it says, "Love the brotherhood." Then it says, "Fear God." And then it ends by saying, "Honor the king." Love and unity are indeed inseparable. Don't you recall over in the book of John 13, where we read, "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." But then in chapter 17 you read a whole chapter dedicated to a prayer he prayed in their behalf. Love and unity are joined because the burden of that prayer was that they may be one. And as we have previously observed in this series of studies, the church in Corinth was plagued with disunity. They were divided over men in chapter 1. So much so, that they were going to law with brother in chapter 6. Divided over spiritual gifts in chapters 12, 13, and 14. Even had some problems over the matter of the fundamentals of the resurrection in chapter 15. On and on. So the undergirding problem of the church at Corinth was this matter of getting along, this matter of being united. And yet it's in that book that Paul said in chapter 13, "The greatest of all is love." So you can see that love and unity are


inseparable in the Bible.

Now in our study of "Love the brotherhood," and how such is related to unity, I really want to do three things today. First of all, I would like to analyze the theme, "Love the brotherhood." Then I would like to make an application of the theme. And thirdly, I would like to close with an appeal.

First of all an analysis of the theme, "Love the brotherhood." Love — some clarifications. Love is a misused word. We talk about men's loving hunting dogs, and women's loving parakeets, and children's loving candy. That's a misuse of the word. Not only is the word misused, but it is also a misunderstood word. Brethren, it's a sad day in the church when a preacher is counted soft or unsound if he preaches or writes on love. That's a sad commentary! On the other hand, if we consider Biblical love as some weak, sentimental emotion that engulfs error, castigates sound doctrinal preaching as being loveless, and that the only way to be loving is to whisper when you talk and to tip-toe when you walk, then again we have a misunderstanding of love. I believe that love is also misunderstood when we equate it with a public display of affection with indiscriminate handling of the sexes. And that goes on sometimes among members of the body of God. In the first place, that's unnatural. In the second place it could be dangerous. I had an elder to tell me recently he knew two families in the congregation, where he served ever so long as an elder, that had very serious marital problems, even to the point of divorce, that started by such a process. Love — some clarifications. It's a misused word. It's a misunderstood word.

Love — a definition and analysis. It's not the design of this lesson in any way to be detailish with I Cor. 13. But that is the Biblical definition or analysis of love. And if I want to test the sincerity, the depth, and the genuineness of my love, then that's where I need to camp. And as we have so often done, if we will remember that the Bible says God is love, and then if we'll substitute the word *God* where *love* appears in the text, the text will read with meaning. For example, love suffereth long, God suffereth long. But Jesus said, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." We just put Jesus in the

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— Acts 26:25

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It is a mistake to trust a man with an honest face. After all, that may be the only honest part of him



Maintaining Balance



BOBBY DUNCAN

As most of our readers know, at the end of this month I will pass the editorial pen to the hand of another, and will assume the duties of evangelist with the people of God at Adamsville, Alabama. While we are excited about the prospects of our new work (In one sense it is an old work; we worked with that church nearly eighteen years before coming to Jasper.), there is a tinge of sadness as we realize we are writing our last editorials for this great publication. It

was the opportunity to serve as editor of *Words of Truth* that, more than anything else, influenced my decision to move to Jasper about seven and a half years ago. I believed then as I believe now, that this paper was wielding and could continue to wield an influence for good in our great brotherhood. I am not at all hesitant to say that I believe the paper has indeed continued to wield an influence for good. I am thankful to have had a part in whatever good has been accomplished during the past seven and one-half years.

What would you write if you were writing your next-to-last editorial for a publication such as this one? What would you want more than anything else to say to our brotherhood? I decided what I want to say at this juncture is this: *Maintain a balance*. Allow me to elaborate:

A few years ago the church was divided asunder over the orphans home and cooperation questions. Some demanded that the rest of us be governed by their own personal scruples with reference to such things as caring for orphan children, churches cooperating in evangelism, eating in the meeting-house, etc. Those who were what some of us would refer to as being of the *anti* persuasion referred to those of us who differed with them as being *liberal* or *digressive*. We were not liberal or digressive, but that is what they called us.

It is said that one extreme begets another. This seems to be what took place. Some, in their determination not to make the same mistake those of the *anti* persuasion had made, found themselves in the position of endorsing everything and opposing nothing. These like to think of themselves as being more tolerant, or more loving than others. Through them, a spirit of permissiveness permeated our brotherhood. There was a moving toward sectarian practices, a tendency to water down the gospel, a neglect of fundamental Bible teaching. Some even declared their belief that the church of Christ is itself a denomination. Those associated with this particular drift in direction were labeled — and rightly so — as liberalists. They are not liberalists in the classical sense. That is, they do not, as a rule, declare outright that we are not restricted by the word of God. But from a practical standpoint, they are characterized by liberalism.

The church is indebted to those who have been and are perceptive enough to recognize this kind of liberalism, and courageous enough to speak out against it from pulpits and in religious periodicals. This error, like any other error, must be opposed by the faithful. It is safe to say also that those who stood in the thick of the battle against anti-ism are the ones who have and are standing in the thick of the battle against liberalism.

But remember: extremes beget extremes. We have observed some who, in their zeal against liberalism, seem to have a disposition to brand as liberal any and all who may differ with them over the smallest matter of judgment, or even over the exact meaning of some difficult passage. These possess a negative, critical attitude that causes them to consider their own opinions as being the standard, and those who differ with their opinions as being unsound and unworthy of the confidence of loyal brethren. One preacher is reported to have said that he could

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place, and it will read, “Jesus suffereth long.” But you see, a Christian is to be a personification of Christ (Phil. 2:5), so just insert the word *Christian*, and Christians suffer long, and so on. But I claim to be a Christian. So just put the personal pronoun to the text and read it, and see if you tell the truth. *I am patient, I am kind, I envy not*. So when we read it that way it becomes, of course, very definitely personal. But at the same time we really get a concrete idea as to how a person will live and how he will behave if, indeed, love genuinely exists in his heart.

And then I'd like for us to see also concerning love today, what about its importance? Again, it's not the design of this lesson in any way at all to be detailish with that. But let us be impressed with the fact that when we read I Cor. 13 and see the prominence given to it, the permanence that is attached to it, and then we observe the preeminence that is assigned to it, we can begin to see something about the importance — the intrinsic importance — of love. Then when we read Col. 3:14 as well as I Pet. 4:8, that love is the “above all” virtue. “And above all these . . .” He just cataloged in the Colossian epistle a number of holy virtues, but he says, “Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves,” because it would cover a multitude of sins (I Pet. 4:8). We begin to see something about the importance of this marvelous, this marvelous matter of love.

Love — its nature. I Pet. 1:22,23 probably is the most composite text upon that particular thrust. Therein the apostle says, “Seeing you purified your souls, in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love.” The nature of Biblical love is to be unfeigned. The word *unfeigned* there means it is to be genuine, it is to be pure, it is to be unadulterated. Then the text says, “See that ye love one another with a pure heart.” Now watch it, this unfeigned love is to generate from a pure heart. That is a heart from which all impurities of malice, and guile, and all sorts of heart maladies as that have been removed. Then the text says that we are to love one another with an unfeigned love that is fervent. And the word *fervent* means white — hot like a blacksmith with a horse-

shoe. And it has been defined as intense, and earnest, and assiduous. When I came across that word *assiduous* in the word study I decided to do a little more study with it. And the dictionary says the word *assiduous* means, “performed with constant diligence or attention.” It is to be persistent, devoted, attentive, and unremitting. Now you put all of that together, and involved in that word *fervent* alone are these ideas and concepts. There is the idea of intensity, and earnestness, and that that is assiduous. Therefore, that that is performed with constant diligence and with attention. That that is persistent, that that is devoted, that that is attentive, and that that is unremitting. That's the nature of my love that I should possess toward my brethren. Show me a church that practices that, and I'll show you a church that gets along. Now, brother we'll show you one that gets along. The nature of love!

Now, having seen something about love — Love, some clarifications; Love, a definition and an analysis; Love, its importance; Love, its nature — let's leave that word and now take a look at the word *brotherhood*. The word brotherhood appears in the Bible only one time rendered thus, and that's in our text, I Pet. 2:17. The word appears only one other time in the Greek text, and that's I Pet. 5:9, where it's translated “brethren.” Now, what about the brotherhood? In a spiritual sense there is no such thing as the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man — in the spiritual sense. That just does not exist. The Bible says there are only two families. I John 3:10: “In this is manifest the children of God and the children of the devil.” That simply means that there is no gray, in-between area. I'm either a child in one family or in the other. And the only way to be a child in the family of God is by the process of the new birth (John 3:3-5). And all who have been born of water and of the Spirit — and I mean all that is involved in that — have become children of God. Now admittedly there are those who are children of God in an apostate state, and who while existing therein indeed are lost. But all who have been born again of water and of the Spirit

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constitute the family of God.

Now, a failure to understand that to which we have just addressed ourselves — that the family of God is composed of those and only those who have been born of water and of the Spirit — has brought about several situations over the past several years. For example, because of a failure to understand that, we have been fed a diet of, “The unimmersed are my brethren.” Carl Ketcherside has espoused the theory that even the unimmersed can be my brethren. He says if he’s a believer in Christ he is my brother, if in no other sense, at least in prospect. Well that’s false doctrine. False doctrine to the core. You can’t be a brother unless you’re in the same family. You can’t be in the family unless you’re born again. There’s no way for a man to be born again and to remain unimmersed.

In the second place, because of a failure to understand this matter, such a matter that I’m about to relate to you occurred in the state which I love so much and where Bobby lives, and he no doubt knows of the very example to which I make reference. But in one of the larger cities of that wonderful state there was a problem existing in one of the congregations, and one of the sound men of the area called up the preacher over there and he said, “I want to discuss very kindly some matters with you,” and the brother was very open in so doing. And he said, “On this matter of who you will accept, who you will fellowship, and all that,” he said, “suppose a man comes to you and he wants to be sprinkled for baptism, what would you do? Would you fellowship such a person as that? Would you sprinkle him?”

He said, “No, I wouldn’t sprinkle him, I’d send him to a Methodist preacher, and let him do it.”

He said, “Well, then, suppose he came back to you?”

He said, “Yes, I’d fellowship him.” It’s that type of thing that has come about. That may be ever so far out. I believe it is. I don’t think that is any way at all a picture of what’s existing among us. But even one case of it is too much. And that has come about because of a failure to understand these matters. I think that a failure to understand the fact that the family of God is composed of those and only those who have been born of water and of the Spirit has caused many members of the church of God to call the Catholic nun sister and to call the priest father. I don’t believe that’s the way Christians ought to do it. And sometimes even denominational preachers are called brother, and then facetiously he who does it will laugh and say, “Well, if I miss him in Christ, I’ll meet him in Adam.” I think that’s a cover-up for something that’s wrong. And so we need to understand who composes the family of God.

And then some time ago on one of the Christian college campuses there was a brother, now who has totally apostatized from the faith, and is no longer part of the Restoration Movement, that made a speech on that Christian college campus in which he made this statement: “I predict in the decade to come that there will be a gradual crossing of denominational lines.” The president of the college, whom I love so deeply and so dearly, and one of our very finest of men, in my judgment, wrote him a letter, a copy of which I have in my files, and said: “You made the most controversial speech ever made on this campus.” He made the statement, what? “That there will be a gradual crossing of denominational lines.” Well, everybody thought, “How tragic! How tragic!” But brother we have lived to see that happen. He wasn’t the son of a prophet, nor was he a prophet, but he said the truth. And because of that, what do we have? We’ve got today cooperation and abetting denominationalists in workshops and in “how to” seminars. And that could be because of our concept of the Lord’s church and family, the brotherhood. Even denominations among us. I don’t believe that a moment. And when we talk of “Love the brother-

hood,” we talk about those who have thus been born. Brotherhood!

You know we have brotherhood in II Cor. 8:1-5 when Paul talked about the Macedonians. Though poverty stricken, reduced to penury, they were still saying, “We’re going to dig as deep as we can, and then still by God’s grace, we’re going to dig even a little deeper.” Why? “We’ve got some brethren in Judea that need.” They were removed by miles. What caused that? Brotherhood. Brotherhood. What caused the saints in Antioch to hear about the need of their brethren down in Judea, and send relief to them by the hands of Barnabas and Saul in the book of Acts, chapter 11:27? What caused that? It was this principle of brotherhood. Why could Paul say, “I’m writing to the churches of Galatia,” in Galatians 1? It was because of brotherhood. Why would Paul write to the Colossians, and say, “See that the Laodiceans read this epistle, and you read the epistle from Laodicea”? Why all of that? It’s because of the principle of brotherhood. My friends, the Lord’s church is autonomous in government and in organization (I Pet. 5:1,2). But even though that’s the case, there is a tie that binds, and there is a mutuality of love, interest, concern, and affinity of devotion that exists whenever that that should exist obtains. And thus in that marvelous song that you led us in the other day brother Haire, let us sing and mean: “Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.” That’s in one I believe we sang just a moment ago. But then in the song, “How sweet, how heavenly,” you led the other day, that same thought is presented.

And then having analyzed the theme, “Love” (1), “Love the brotherhood” (2), I’d now like to study an application of the theme, “Love the brotherhood.” How is love related to the subject of unity? I’d like to suggest that if we love the brotherhood there are several things that will come to obtain and exist in our lives, that will characterize us. And when these matters characterize us we will have made a distinct contribution toward unity in our wonderful brotherhood, both on the local basis and by way of even reaching out beyond that.

Number one: If we love the brotherhood, we will pray for the brotherhood. We’ve already mentioned that, so we will not in any way at all spend much time with it. But remember Jesus loved his disciples (John 13). And he prayed for them that they might be one (John 17). You do remember that Israel was told by Samuel, “God forbid that I may sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (I Samuel 12:23). We need to pray for our brethren.

Number two: If we love the brotherhood we’ll not be mote hunters (Matt. 7:1-5). The Bible says in I Pet. 4:8, “Above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love covers a multitude of sins.” I’ll see imperfection in your children that I’ll never see in mine, and vice versa, and that’s all because of this principle of love. We need to remember that the faults of others will appear thick, if our love for them is thin. Brother G. C. Brewer used to say, “The greatest fault of all faults is the fault of fault finding.” And he was exactly correct. Fault finding is one talent that ought to be buried in the grave and forgotten. Now I’m not in any way at all talking about sanctioning and overlooking error. But, brethren, I’m talking about the inconsequential. I’m talking about the minor. And then sometimes we major on that, and even to the cleavage of the body of God. I can’t imagine looking at the world we tried to describe last night, compressed into 100 people, and therein there is not even one total Christian, and then to look at how we splintered over inconsequential matters. That’s an utterly sad commentary on people claiming to be children of God. And we ought to hang our heads in shame. I don’t take any pride in division, brother.

The need of our day has emphasized unity among the people of God.

Number three: Whenever we love the brotherhood, we will hurt. My wife just recently had surgery, and she hurt. And when she hurt, I hurt. Our youngest little grandson recently had some serious surgery in the kidney region. The doctor said, “He will experience the greatest trauma of pain in his life. One of the greatest pain factors we know anything about is in the surgery he will experience.” And I tell you, when that little fellow pled for help, and I was in that hospital, I could not stand it. I left. I couldn’t, I couldn’t stay there. Boy, I hurt all over. Why do we hurt under these circumstances. It’s because we genuinely love. I’ll tell you, friends, when we see a brotherhood that’s wounded, and bleeding, and hurting, and we don’t hurt, there’s something wrong with our hearts. We need to hurt when the church of God exists as it does today. Love and unity! Why, the Bible even says, “Rejoice not with thine enemy when he falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth” (Prov. 24:17). What should be our attitude toward our brethren?

Next, when we love the brotherhood, then we’re going to help, and care, and give, and share, and cooperate. Thanks be to God for these two churches that have cooperated this week. I want to commend you brethren. I really do. I want sincerely to commend you. That’s the attitude we ought to have in every city in the kingdom of God. Churches ought really to join forces together. I have recently thrilled to see what has occurred in our marvelous brotherhood in helping our brethren in the country of Poland. I think that was remarkable. And it thrills me to see what happened, for example, in Knoxville, TN, when our entire brotherhood rallied together to help that congregation in Knoxville to arrange that booth, and we did some great good with that up there. That’s brotherhood. Sure, autonomy was maintained. But we came, and we shared, and we helped, and we cooperated; thus it needs to be.

And then whenever we love, we’ll not be bitter. We’ll not be bitter. The Bible says in Col. 3:19, “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” There you’ve got two antithetical statements. If you love, you’re not bitter; if you’re bitter, you don’t love. And so whenever we’re bitter toward our brethren, we have a problem of love in our hearts.

And then when we love, we’ll be willing to die. The Bible says that Christ so loved the church, that what happened? “That he gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). If we don’t love, instead of being willing to be a martyr, and to be willing to be sacrificed for our brethren, we will assume the role of the executioner. We need to get a hold of this love problem. Love and unity are really attached. (To be continued.) — 340 Mayfair Drive Hurst, TX 76053.

Maintaining Balance

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count on his fingers all the faithful gospel preachers he knows. Now, that is being exclusive. Would you call that the Elijah complex? (I Kings 19:10).

Let us maintain a balance. We must proclaim the truth and refute error; and we must do it with all our might (II Timothy 4:2). We must root out, and pull down, and destroy, and throw down; but we must also build and plant (Jeremiah 1:10). We must be set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17), but we must also be ready unto every good work (Titus 3:1). It is this we have tried to do during our tenure as editor of this great publication. We are confident the new editor will strive also in this direction.

Fourth Annual
Gus Nichols WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship
September 25-29, 1983
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST
1501 Sixth Avenue
Jasper, Alabama 35501
Theme: GREAT BIBLE QUESTIONS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

7:00 - 7:25 P. M. Singing Different Directors
 7:30 - 8:30 P. M. "Where Art Thou?" Flavil Nichols

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

9:30 - 10:20 A. "How Can I Except Some Man Should Guide Me?" Jim Massey
 "Who Told Thee That Thou Wast Naked?" Joyce Massey
 10:30 - 11:20 A.M. "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" Franklin Camp
 "What Is That In Thine Hand?" Mary Nichols
 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M. Lunch Break
 1:30 - 2:00 P. M. "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" Levi Sides
 2:10 - 2:50 P.M. "Shall Not The Judge Of All The Earth Do Right?" Johnny Ramsey
 3:00 - 3:40 P.M. "Where Is Thy God?" Bert Thompson
 3:50 - 7:00 P.M. Supper Break
 7:00 - 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
 7:30 - 8:30 P.M. "How Canst Thou Contend With Horses?" Rex Turner, Sr.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

9:30 - 10:20 A.M. "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?" Hugo McCord
 "Whose Daughter Art Thou?" Lois McCord
 10:30 - 11:20 A.M. "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" Franklin Camp
 "Why Is Thine Countenance Sad?" Carrie Hamilton
 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M. Lunch Break
 1:30 - 2:00 P.M. "Are Not Your Ways Unequal?" Lyle Gillis
 2:10 - 2:50 P.M. "What Shall It Profit A Man...?" Johnny Ramsey
 3:00 - 3:40 P.M. "Where Is Thy God?" Bert Thompson
 3:50 - 7:00 P.M. Supper Break
 7:00 - 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
 7:30 - 8:30 P.M. "If The Lord Be With Us, Why...?" W. T. Hamilton

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

9:30 - 10:20 A.M. "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?" Hugo McCord
 "Whose Daughter Art Thou?" Lois McCord
 10:30 - 11:20 A.M. "By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?" Franklin Camp
 "What Have They Seen In Thy House?" Gracie Young
 11:30 - 1:30 P.M. Hugo McCord Appreciation Luncheon
 1:30 - 2:00 P.M. "What is Truth?" Eddie Miller
 2:10 - 2:50 P.M. "What Manner Of Persons Ought Ye To Be?" Johnny Ramsey
 3:00 - 3:40 P.M. "Where Is Thy God?" Bert Thompson
 3:50 - 7:00 P.M. Supper Break
 7:00 - 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
 7:30 - 8:30 P.M. "If A Man Die, Shall He Live Again?" David Meek

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 7:00 - 7:25 P.M. Singing Different Directors
 7:30 - 8:30 P.M. "If God Be For Us, Who Can Be Against Us?" Neale Pryor

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

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"What Part Does Love Play In Unity?"

(Part II)

(Editor's note: This is the second and final part of a lecture delivered by brother Winkler at the Fourth Annual Greater Visalia Lectureship conducted last May in Visalia, CA. See part I in the issue of Sept. 23.)

Next, whenever we love the brotherhood, we are not going to be partial. We are not going to be inconsistent. One of the great sermons that we can all preach is to locate the times in the New Testament where the term, "love thy neighbor," appears, and preach the context. In the book of James chapter 2, such an occurrence is there found. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," watch that love, "love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons." What's he saying? You're partial. "Ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." What's he saying? If you love, you'll not be partial. If you really love the brotherhood, you'll not be inconsistent. And brothers and sisters in Christ, I'm going to have to be scrupulously honest with you. We're not consistent. We will castigate one brother because of his position on translations and tag him as unsound. And you know we do it. We can have another brother that is on the faculty of one of our preaching schools that says, "The only thing that I'm committed to is the original autographs as being inspired," and we'll exonerate him to the core, but he will not align himself to one translation. And we will stand by one and castigate the other. That is ungodly. Now let's be honest today. I mean scrupulously honest. When we love the brotherhood we're going to be impartial. And when we're guilty of that kind of practice I believe we stand indicted. We're being loyal to personality, and not to principle. And that's what's dividing our brotherhood. I'm



WENDELL WINKLER


firmly convinced of that. We are being loyal to personality, and not to principle. And I'm so thankful to Bro. Duncan for that tremendous lesson the other day when he preached about the matter of unity, and how we need to put the blinders on our eyes, and rivet in on the Bible, and deal with the principles, and not with personalities. And then when we will castigate one editor of a religious periodical, and he exonerates his fellow editor, and we castigate one and exonerate the other, I say that is inconsistent. That's ungodly. Love is not partial, says James 2. What has divided this brotherhood? What has caused us to have some of our problems. I believe we're dealing with some basics this morning. How is love related to unity? Well, love is impartial. That's one thing about it.

And then add to that in a more detailed way, love will not divide us. And I'm talking about here from the proper standpoint. I know from the standpoint that there are times whenever error enters into the picture of such magnitude — for example, the cleavage of the church back in the 1900's, and all that. I'm not in any way at all referring to that. I'm saying in the context of which we're presently speaking that love will not divide us. The Bible says in Prov. 10:12, "Hatred stirreth up strifes." That's what causes strife. There's an antithesis to that, that love does not stir up strife. It's a sad day when we preach on, and we advocate, and we work for unity, and such matters are equated with being liberal. That's sad! When good men and sound men — *sound men* — exhort, that we try to the best of our abilities to work for unity among the people of God, and such an one is looked upon as a compromiser, that again is a sad day.

I think one of the saddest chapters, and yet one of the most beautiful chapters, found in the entire Bible is Joshua 22. They've conquered the land, and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the one-half tribe of Manasseh were going home. When they got to the river Jordan they took time to build a great altar. Well the other people, the other remaining tribes, heard about the altar they were building, and said, "Oh my, they're building an altar to rival the one back in Jerusalem." And if you'll turn to read that given chapter you're going to find on two different occasions a very significant statement. For example,

down in verse 11: "And the children of Israel," the ones back in the homeland, "*heard* say, Behold the children of Reuben" Then down in verse 12: "And when the children of Israel *heard* of it" See, they were basing their concept on rumor. They heard about what these brethren were doing, and so they went down and they talked to them about what they were doing, and these brethren said, "Oh, we're not building an altar to rival with the one at Jerusalem, but we're afraid when generations yet unborn come on the scene, and they're on the other side of Jordan, and that your generations yet unborn are going to say to our generations yet unborn, 'You don't have any right over here in this country,' and so we're going to build this altar to secure the fact that our generations yet unborn can cross over and come on down to Jerusalem. This is going to be a monument to that desire." Now what had happened? There at that juncture was a time of disunity and discrepancy among the people of God, number one, based upon heresy, and, number two, here was a tragedy of a war without a cause. Does that have any 20th Century applications? War without a cause? Dividing the body of God! Can you even imagine dividing the body of God over whether or not you can take fifty cents out of the church treasury to buy a loaf of bread for a starving orphan? I can't get a hold of that; to save my life, I can't get a hold of it! But we've got brethren who sign propositions for debate, that if you do it you're going to Hell. That's the way the proposition was worded. Dividing the church when we don't even have one of one hundred people who are members of the church of God! We are part of a world going to Hell. And here we are saying if we feed an orphan out of the church treasury we're going to Hell. Dividing the church over how to care for helpless, homeless victims — little children!

Dividing the church over a located preacher! I held a meeting several years ago in one of the larger cities of our nation and on the same street, same street, three miles apart were meeting houses — Church of Christ over both doors — and they were divided over whether or not to have a man in the pulpit to whom they gave a stipulated salary. There was a huge city of lost folks, and the church was divided over a located



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“What Part Does Love Play In Unity?”

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preacher. Dividing the body of God, and that without a cause. God is going to hold us accountable for that. And I tell you folks, that causes me to fear and tremble!

And when we talk about this matter of unity among the people of God, I really wanted to deal with how important it was. Let me just simply say this about that and then I'll close with, "How can we bring unity to be among the people of God?" Let me just say relative to the importance of unity, that our Lord died for it (Eph. 2:13-16). He prayed for it in John 17:20,21. He pled for it through the apostle Paul in Cor. 1:10. And in that prayer which he prayed for unity he said, "I pray that they may be one that the world may believe thou hast sent me."

I know that the founder of the YMCA did not have the New Testament church in mind, but the principle that he set forth, if applied to New Testament Christianity, is true. The founder of the YMCA, whose name is John Mott, said, "The price that has been paid for a divided Christendom is an unbelieving world." I know he didn't have the right perspective. But I can use those terms and you can use those terms because we understand what the Bible teaches about the singularity of the church and the errors of denominationalism. And I'm saying that the price we're paying for a divided brotherhood is an unbelieving world. We need to be united among the people of God. I know this great and fine group of people understand that.

So let me close by simply saying that here are some things that we need to practice in order to bring about unity in the brotherhood, and even on a local congregational basis. Number one: We've got to want it. Do you really want unity? I don't mean let it be a passing fancy. I'm saying do you want it? I mean want it? In Acts 6:1, when a discrepancy arose, what happened? They were so anxious to get together that whenever a suggestion was made, the Bible says, "The same pleased the whole multitude." I'd love to have been in that business meeting. I have heard suggestions, and then: "Well, why don't we do that . . . I'm not for . . ." That's how we conduct them today. And then when they had selected

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The Editor's Pen

BOB DUNCAN

“Finally, My Brethren...”

As we sit down to write our last editorial for WORDS OF TRUTH, it is with a degree of sadness. We love the paper, and will continue to write occasionally, as time permits, and as the new editor, brother Flavil Nichols, finds our offerings suitable. We certainly beg your continued support and encouragement of the new editor, even as you have supported and encouraged me during the past seven and one-half years.



BOB DUNCAN

We owe a debt of gratitude which we shall never be able to repay to so many, who have made it possible for the paper to be published as it has been every single week during our tenure as editor. We are grateful to the eldership of the Sixth Avenue church for its support of this effort. They know that editing this paper is extremely time consuming. Consequently, they have not demanded that I spend a great deal of time doing a number of things preachers are sometimes expected to do. Had they expected me to do all some preachers do in addition to editing the paper, my job would have been impossible. I want to thank them also for giving me a free hand in editing the paper. They allowed me to use my own judgment in publishing articles, the only restriction being that I consider the article as teaching the truth. I appreciate their not requiring (or allowing) me to publish "both sides" of any question. If this publication has taught error or failed to teach the truth, it is my fault, not theirs. They have given me a free hand. For that I am grateful.

I am grateful to the membership of the Sixth Avenue church for their great support and encouragement of our work, not only as editor of WORDS OF TRUTH, but of our work in general. Many have been the kind words spoken, and many have been the things done to show their interest and concern about us and our work. It is not easy to move away from people like that. We have come to love many of them as our own family, and expect them to be our friends for life. Our lives have become so intertwined that it will be impossible to leave without sadness.

I am grateful to our publisher, THE NORTHWEST ALABAMIAN, for their cooperation and help. They take charge of all publishing and mailing responsibilities, even to the matter of sending bills and collecting subscriptions. They have been most cooperative. I especially thank Mrs. Betty Morgan who is in charge of those who set the type for the paper. She has been most kind and patient with me in trying to get things just exactly as I wanted them. I commend her for her patient disposition and her conscientious diligence.

I am thankful to those who have written articles for publication. We have tried to select each article on its own merits, and not on the basis of who wrote it. While we have published articles from the pens of some of the best known men in our

brotherhood, we have also published articles written by those virtually unknown. Some have written on a fairly regular basis, while some have written only an article or two. In either case we are grateful for your help. Some very fine articles we have received have not been published for one reason or another. These will be passed on to brother Nichols for his consideration. I am sure he would want me to invite all who have written articles for the paper to continue to submit articles for his consideration.

A word of thanks is certainly in order for those who have written letters of comment with reference to WORDS OF TRUTH. Many of those letters have been extremely complimentary, and we have been encouraged by them. Many of them also have been severely critical, and there is no doubt we have profited by them. In either case, we are grateful for those who have been interested enough to write.

Certainly we are grateful for all our readers. Some are casual, occasional readers, but some are avid readers. Without those who read the paper, there could be no paper. You are our most important asset, and we are extremely grateful. In this connection, we dare not forget to mention our gratitude to elderships across the country who have deemed it wise to send the paper into each home in the congregation. This kind of subscription makes up a major portion of our circulation. Needless to say, we believe such a practice on the part of elderships is a wise practice, and one that will pay great dividends in increased spirituality, souls saved, and even financially through increased contributions.

Thanks also to brother Flavil Nichols who, as associate editor, stepped in on two different occasions for two weeks each, and edited the paper for me.

Finally, thanks to the members of my family, who have been so patient and understanding while I have been tied up week after week, meeting deadlines, and working for the cause which they love as much as I do. Without their patience, cooperation, and support, I could not have done it.

We solicit the prayers of the faithful in our behalf as we leave Jasper to return to a challenging and exciting work with the great Adamsville, Alabama church. The address of the church there is 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, Alabama 35005. Our home address will be 2809 Madison Street, Adamsville, Alabama 35005.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

The Dynamite Of All Emotions

W. NEIL GALLAGHER

Customers sometimes blast into Hamburger Heaven, Friendly Clothing Store, or Joe's Auto Repair and explode in anger, complaining about the food or service.

These same customers usually come back the

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the men to take care of the problem, those who know the language tell us that the men who were selected were selected from the opposition, so that under the sweet mettle of charity these who were thus being divided said, "We want to be united, and we want to be together. And we're just going to pull seven men from among you, and whatever you all work out to settle this is going to be fine." Oh, that's loving the brotherhood. That's loving your brethren. What happened? They got together. Why? They wanted to be united.

Number two: If we're going to have unity, we're going to have to work at the job. The Bible says in Eph. 4:3, "Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Phil 1:27: "Strive together for the faith of the gospel," and so on, and walk in the same mind. Romans 14:19 says, "follow" (See that matter of effort?) "after things that make for peace."

Number three: In order to have unity we've got to avoid making personal disagreements congregational in nature. There have been churches divided because of personal disagreements being magnified to a congregational level. I sincerely believe that at times we have had brotherhood cleavages precipitated by personality clashes between brethren. And I want to tell you again, I don't want to overwork a word, but that is utterly ungodly.

Next: In order to be united we've got to be committed to the fact that we'll not violate the restoration plea. In matters of faith unity, in matters of opinion liberty, and in all things love. Now the "Anti's" have, of course, made matters of opinion, faith. The liberals have made matters of faith matters of opinion. And many times both have violated the principles of love, and as a result we have cleavages. If we're going to have unity we've got to be committed to the plea. We've got to work a better game than we talk, is what I'm trying to say.

Next: If we are going to have unity we have got to believe it to be possible. Jesus thought it was possible, and he prayed for it (John 17:20-21). Do we believe, and do we preach, and do we really work at the job as if we did believe that I Cor. 1:10 is possible? That we all speak the same thing, and we all be of the same mind and of the same judgment?

Next: If we are to have unity among us, we have got to be committed to loyalty to principle, and not to personality. When we castigate a school and not a periodical for identical practices, we're playing politics. And we don't need brotherhood politics! And we will castigate a school for having a given man on its lecture program and one of the soundest periodicals among us can regularly publish articles of the head of that Bible department where such a practice is going on and we'll say nothing about that periodical, subscribe to it, and promote it, and have it in our congregations. I want to tell you again brethren, I don't relate to that type of practice. Now let's just be honest. I'll say that again. That's wrong! We play politics. And I don't have any sympathy with that at all. We're loyal to personality and not to principle at times. And I wonder where our loyalties really, really are.

Then if we're going to be united we're going to have to go to Calvary. I'm impressed with the First Corinthian letter, chapter one, when Paul set the stage for that whole book talking about how they were divided. In that very chapter what did he do? He took them to the cross, preaching of the cross. He talked about it, and how people react to it in various ways. He took them to the cross, and so must we today. I wish we had a blackboard. But since I don't, may I improvise? Let that circle represent the church of the Lord. Let that X represent Jesus. And now let those dots represent various members of the church. Do you see anything just immediately? Oh, I know you do. What is it? That

the dots that are closer to the X are closer one to the other. And the closer we get to the Christ, the closer we get to Calvary, the more we imbibe of his spirit, stand there in utter amazement, and awe, and sorrow, and say, "You mean he did that for me? Do you mean he died for me? Did he experience that excruciating pain for me? Did he do all that that we may be one?" And then divide the body? Brother Brewer again used to say, "If you're having problems with Sunday night attendance preach on the cross." Do you know what he was saying? That's our remedy. That's our remedy. The cross will cure a lot of problems.

And then if we are going to be united today let me suggest that we've got to realize that unity is a heaven and a hell proposition (Gal. 5:19-21). If we're going to be united today we have got to accept the Bible as the only all-sufficient, complete, authoritative revelation of the will of God.

Next, if we're going to be united we've got to engage in very serious study and application of the principles of Biblical hermeneutics.

Next, if we're going to be united today we who preach are going to have to start doing a better job practicing what Paul wrote to the young preacher in the book of II Timothy 2, and therein you will recall he began that paragraph by saying this: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." It's been my experience that when cleavages have happened among the people of God much of the blame can be laid at the feet of us who preach and those who are in the eldership. We need to take very seriously what God says to us here. I think it would help us to be united.

If we're going to be united we're going to have to do what Alexander Campbell said to his father. Alexander and Thomas Campbell were talking about a very divisive issue back in the Restoration Movement. Alexander said to his father, "Daddy, I believe the only way we can approach this study is on our knees." We need to do a lot of praying.

We need, next, to magnify our agreements.

Next, we need to cease reading the Bible through

the lenses of certain schools, and certain professors, and certain periodicals. We've got serious problems when we have to wait and see on what side a certain preacher, or a certain editor, or a certain school, or a certain paper will face before we take a position. It's been said innumerable times — and may easily be said again and again, for it's true — if you want to divide the people of God you need three things: an issue, a paper, and a school.

Next we need to realize that there are some areas of tolerance that we can live with. Now we all believe that. I know we may want to deny it, but we believe it. For years we have worshipped with brethren who thought otherwise in some areas. For example, how about posture in prayer? I held a meeting years ago, and there was a brother that they hired to lead the singing in that meeting, and he conscientiously believed that the only posture one could assume when he prayed was to kneel. And we knelt every time we prayed. I didn't have any objection to it. In fact, I wish we would get back to it, to tell you the truth. But he thought you had to, or you sinned. Well, I'd have no problem worshipping with a brother like that, as long as he didn't say you're a second rate Christian, going to hell, if you don't. Make a law where God didn't make one. Then he'd violate another principle. That makes it two principles. You'd have to deal with that. We've got some areas of tolerance that we have practiced for years that will help us to be united.

And then if we're going to be united we have got to crucify self. Now I want to close in about sixty seconds here with an appeal. We have analyzed, we have sought to apply, now I want to make an appeal. **One: As a brotherhood, we must have a mutual goal. What is it? World evangelism (John 17:20,21).** **Number two: As a brotherhood, we've got to have a mutual commitment. What is it? That the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, final, and our authoritative standard.** **Number three: We've got to have a mutual desire. What is it? Oneness in Christ.** **Number four: We've got to have a mutual pledge. What's the pledge? In matters of faith unity, in matters of opinion liberty, and in all things love. — 340 Mayfair Drive Hurst, TX 76053.**

Spiritual Growth



JOHNNY RAMSEY

Unless we constantly seek things above we regress (Col. 3:1-3) into a spiritual decline that will result in spiritual stupor. Going forward will be a joyous journey for the child of God as we seek to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5), as we "put on the new man which, after God, is created in true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). We dare not remain in the doldrums of immature thinking (Heb. 5:12), or within the confines of worldiness (II Peter 2:21). Advancement in the divine realm is food for the soul that draws us near to the heart of God.

"There is a place of full release
Near to the heart of God
A place where all is joy and peace
Near to the heart of God."

In urging casual brethren on to a nobler plateau of service Paul commanded in I Cor. 14:20:

"In malice be babes but in understanding be men."

When Christ is formed in us (Gal. 4:19) we keep ourselves in his love (Jude 21) and grow in his grace and knowledge (II Peter 3:18). We rejoice to obey the Father's will and regret past errors. Both thoughts propel us into deeper service and more loyal devotion. The language of Psalms 71:14 is appropriate: "But I will hope continually and will yet praise thee more and more." In that same Psalm the writer refers to Jehovah as his rock, fortress, trust, strong refuge and habitation. All babes in Christ understand the value of such a relationship to bolster and strengthen their walk in the Lord.

There are many areas of the life of a Christian wherein we need to make progress. Are we more proficient in divine matters than we used to be? Let us examine our hearts and explore these areas now:

1. Do I worship more sincerely and ardently than when first I became a Christian?
2. Do I care for the lost souls about me as strongly as in days past and gone?
3. Do I study my Bible as energetically as during those moments when I first left the

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Spiritual Growth

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- world of sin and shame?
4. Has my love for the brethren deepened?
 5. Do old prejudices and hatreds still occupy my thinking? Is it still difficult to obey the Lord who taught me to love my enemies?
 6. Have I truly overcome bad habits and attitudes or do I still maintain weaknesses that should have long ago been defeated?
 7. Do I sincerely long for Heaven, or is the

world still too much with me?
 God will help us to grow spiritually — but do we really want to? Study of the scriptures, fervent prayer, and willingness to share what we learn will be giant steps in the direction of glory. But we must desire to do his will (John 7:17) if spiritual advancement ever comes to our life. No one else can grow spiritually for us. It is totally a personal matter. If we want it badly enough we will go forward

to the richest experience of life. Paul said in I Cor. 11:1: "Follow me, as I follow Christ."
 Let us truly press on to higher ground!
 "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, TX 75088.

The Dynamite Of All Emotions

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next day or next week, head bowed and voice low, giving an apology.

We feel ashamed when we unleash anger on others.

Anger.

What is it?

Dynamite . . . that's all it is . . . just dynamite waiting to be used.

People use dynamite for constructive reasons, blowing up dirty, rat-infested buildings to make room for new, job-producing buildings where there will be laughter and life.

People use dynamite for destructive reasons, blowing up banks and planes.

Dynamite, by itself, is neither good nor bad. It depends how you use it.

Anger is neither good nor bad, it depends how you use it.

Anger is good when it motivates us to help others who are being hurt.

Jesus was angry when he cleaned out the temple. He was angry because the greedy religious leaders

of that time abused God's house and God's people. Loving God and loving people, Jesus planted the dynamite in the right place, right time, and in the right way. He blew away the God-haters and people-abusers.

Anger is bad when it motivates us to hurt people — to get back or get even. Tragically, "getting even" seems to be "in" today. It is supposed to be a sign of toughness. Like the bumper sticker says: "I don't get mad, I just get even."

All of us feel "bad anger" at times.

We don't like it when the clerk in front takes too long.

We don't like it when the guy in back blasts his horn — and the light is still red!

We don't like it when the newspaper boy throws our paper in a hole of mud.

We don't like it when a customer, for three weeks straight, tells us, "Well, I put the check in the mail yesterday."

How do we deal with anger?

We explode the dynamite in a safe, constructive

solution-producing way.

1. Channel anger to deal with the problem, kindly and accurately. Don't call him to "let him have it." Confront the customer and report the problem, kindly and accurately. Don't force him into a corner to chew him out.

Direct the energy of anger to solve the problem, not to shout about how upset you are.

2. If there's nothing you can do about the problem directly at the moment, blow off the dynamite in other constructive ways. Clean out the garage, run around the block, bang in loose shingles, mow grass, pull weeds, take your kids to the park. If nothing else, just walk and walk and walk.

3. Talk to God about your anger. God gives power to turn anger into solutions.

"Be angry, but sin not; commune with your own hearts . . . Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord" (Psalms 4:5,6). — 2302 Hickory Tupelo, MS 38801.

Am I Sure It Was God?

MARTEL PACE

There are whole groups teaching today that you will get back \$100 for every \$50 you give to God. Does the Bible really teach anything like that? Doesn't it just teach that God blesses us for whatever service we render, and that the blessings may come in different ways? And if you suddenly got \$100 after giving \$50, could you be certain it was God's action?

One person has a feeling that "God told me" to invest in a certain stock and it turned out well. It often sounds much like the fellow who had just driven through Las Vegas. He heard a voice telling him to go back. He turned around. The voice told him to enter a certain gambling casino. He entered, and the voice told him to go to the roulette table and bet all he had on 13 black. He did so and the wheel turned, only to stop at 26 red. The voice then said, "Well, what do you know about that?"

If I believed God was running my business for me I might become a little slack in my business procedures, thinking he would make all well in spite of my carelessness. Would he? Churches and parachurch organizations make repeated calls for help citing their good deeds as proof of God's blessing them. If he is blessing them so much why do they need my money?

Many an atheist will speak of his good luck in an investment or business and will give no credit to God. Which one is right — the luck-atheist or the miracle-theist?

Too often our interest in God is based on dollar signs and we judge our success as a church or individ-

ual on how much we have been blessed materially. This is not a scriptural basis for determining whether we are on God's side. I'm sure the vast amount of money Hal Lindsey has made from his books convinces him he is right in arguing for an imminent return of the Lord. But if the Lord is coming so soon, he must feel a little guilty in collecting all those royalties.

So many claim the Spirit's guidance when they are merely being presumptuous or perhaps boastful. It is difficult to keep self out of the picture when we are telling what great things "the Lord has done for me!" Or a group through its leader says, "We spent hours praying about this and we feel the Spirit of God has directed us to this course of action." How can anyone argue with that without appear-

ing to be arguing with God? He may have prayed and feel differently about it. Haven't we made God a draftee on our side without giving the other side a chance? How can we be sure it was from God?

The great question of the ages is: Where does knowledge of God's will really begin? It starts and ends with the word as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. Beyond that I must be careful in claiming anything specific is the will of God. Beyond the revelation of Scripture we must be careful in dogmatically claiming we have the answer. Let us maintain Christian humility and we will naturally have more integrity. Between some brethren and Oral Roberts who claims a direct pipeline from heaven there is little difference. — 3414 Elaine Montgomery, Alabama 36109.

Ambition

We rate ability in men by what they finish, not by what they attempt

Some fellows dream of worthy accomplishments, while others stay awake and do them

Every accomplishment, great or small, starts with the right decision. "I'll Try."

Don't just stand there — do something!

Don't sit back and take what comes. Go after what you want.

The fellow who has an abundance of push gets along very well without pull.

Honesty

Our country was in better condition when there were more whittlers and fewer chisellers.

The best way for any business to keep on the upgrade is to stay on the level.

A well-rounded character is square in all his dealings.

There's no limit to the height a man can attain by remaining on the level.

Always trust a fat man. He'll never stoop to anything low.



Words Of

(USPS 6)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1983

NUMBER 40

Scriptural Advise To Preachers

(1) *In the New Testament there are three books written for the special benefit of preachers:*

First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus. Those preachers who desire to fulfill their ministry in such a manner as to win the approval of Almighty God should read these books at least once each month. This is especially true for those young preachers who wish to make certain that they know and understand what is required of them.



W. A. HOLLEY

(2) *Preachers, study the book, the Holy Scriptures.* No preacher can preach what he doesn't know! Timothy was urged to, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (handling aright) the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). If you wish to be an expert in any thing, become an expert in the Sacred Scriptures! Paul said, "I determined not to know any thing . . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:1-5). Resolve never to step into the pulpit unprepared! Remember, you must account to God for every word you speak (Matthew 12:36-37). In sermons, "sound words," "sound doctrine," "sound speech," are of great importance (II Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9; 2:8).

(3) *Preachers, "Preach the word" in spite of all suggestions and temptations to compromise the truth of God.* Many members of the church (sometimes elders and other prominent members) are far more interested in popularity than they are in standing foursquare for the faith of the gospel (Galatians 1:6-10). The moment one becomes a servant of men, he ceases to be a servant of God (I Thessalonians 2:4; James 4:4).

It is necessary for gospel preachers to use common sense in their declaration of truth. Never get 'hung up' on some special point and never know when to shut up. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). It would be foolish for a

preacher to discuss Mark 16:16 Lord's day after Lord's day. Verily, success is not measured by one's popularity: but God is pleased when His preachers preach the word. Preachers must not preach their educational attainments nor discuss personal opinions, nor the world economy, nor other political problems. Instead of discussing the life of Abraham Lincoln, a preacher should preach "the word."

(4) *It is the preacher's duty to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"* (II Timothy 4:1-5). Some brethren (and sisters, too) often suggest that such preaching is too negative; but this is what Paul, an inspired apostle, wrote. Was he wrong?? On occasion I have been accused of being too narrow in my preaching, but I try to be true to God, to Christ, to the Bible, and to the souls of lost men. I ask you to read Moses' record of the Ten Commandments and count the number of the times "Thou shalt not" is recorded (Exodus 20:1-17).

(5) *Preachers, follow Jesus' methods of teaching if you would be successful.* He used parables, everyday events, the Holy Scriptures, object lessons, teaching as He walked along the way, or as He sat in a small boat, to impart His message to others. No one had a greater confidence in the Scriptures than He. His mission in life was not to violate the law, but to fulfill it. He understood that every iota and jot of the Scriptures is important. Jesus quoted Scripture, expressing His confidence in the Bible account of creation, Noah and the ark, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, and Jonah and the whale, and much more. If one reads John 8:56-58, one learns that Jesus proclaimed His pre-fleshly-existent nature and His identity with Deity in the mere expression of the tense of a verb. All gospel preachers, like Jesus Christ, must have an extremely high respect for the Scriptures and regard them as an accurate expression of God's will to mankind.

Many years ago, when I was but a young preacher, a young man who came to me for advice, saying, "What shall I do? I don't know whether I believe the Bible or not." My answer was: "Lay your Bible down; don't preach another sermon until you find out." Verily, we do not need any unbelievers in the pulpit!!

(6) *Set the finest example:* "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example to them that

believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith in purity. Till I come give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching . . . Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt have both thyself and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:12-13,15,16, ASV.)


"Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1). It was Jesus "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). If we follow Jesus, we keep ourselves pure; we follow the honest and upright course through life. We do not become too familiar with girls and women; we know that the eyes of others are ever upon us, and so, we wish to avoid as much unnecessary unfavorable criticism as possible. In short, we must strive to be honest, pay our debts, and be Christians in word and in deed. Preachers have a difficult time at best, why should they make things worse?

(7) Preachers must constantly work on their attitude. Never become depressed. Work hard against becoming discouraged. Results may seem slow; but, remember, Paul planted, Apollos watered, but it was God who gave the increase (Cf. I Corinthians 3:6). Never carry a chip on your shoulder; never show your temper; learn to control yourself; work hard, but do not try to do every thing. It is impossible to force others to do the right thing. The book of Philippians is a *must* for preachers because it reveals how one can be filled with joy, and optimism, and a bright outlook upon life, even though one finds himself in hard and difficult circumstances, as did Paul. Preachers, read this marvelous book each week!

Thus, learn to endure hardships with courage, conviction, and certainty. Never follow after fables or myths, "But thou be sober in all things, suffer hardships, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:5-6). If one is persecuted because of one's steadfastness to the truth of God, so be it. The gospel must be preached at any risk, and is thoroughly deserving of the greatest sacrifice. It is necessary for the faithful gospel preacher to develop skin as tough as an elephant's hide!

(8) *Preachers, in your efforts in the pulpit do*

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Editorial

I count it a distinct honor to take up the Editorial duties for Words of Truth, while at the same time I approach these responsibilities with fear and trembling. It shall be my intention to maintain the same purposes and aims which prompted the establishment of this journal almost twenty years ago.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

No Editor (nor any other individual) should imagine that he is a 'Brotherhood Regulator.' It would be a misuse of any journal to suppose that through it all questions are to be settled. This is also true of the oral preaching or teaching of those who may also write for the paper. No congregation has any authority to 'legislate' or issue 'edicts'

for others. No preacher, no editor, and no staff of writers, nor any other group, may bind on earth what Christ has not already bound in heaven (Matt. 16:18; 18:18). Neither dare we "pervert" the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-10) — orally or in writing!

As in oral teaching, so in writing, our constant appeal must be to the authority of Christ and his gospel (Matt. 28:18-20). He is the "head" over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Our responsibility is to learn, and to teach others, what "the will of the Lord" (Eph. 5:17). To a young preacher, the Holy Spirit directed: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Tit. 2:15). Having learned God's will, we ourselves must obey it, and must encourage others to do likewise.

Let us maintain God's high standard of faith, hope and charity (or love) (I Cor. 13:13), while we teach, without compromise, God's revealed will for mankind. There must be no substitute for "the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

Strong Families Make Strong Christians

To produce strong disciples for Jesus, help is needed from several quarters. The individual himself must *want* to grow strong and be willing to apply himself to that end. The local congregation should provide a proper diet and program of training to aid the person's growth. The home will play a significant role in his spiritual development, either for good or ill. In this lesson we will consider ways



JOHN WADDEY

the home can aid in growing strong Christians. Of course, we have in mind a *Christian home*. In such a home, wives will be in subjection to their husbands, husbands will love their wives and not be bitter against them; children will obey their parents in all things (Colossians 3:18-21).

I. The home is more important than the church in the growth and development of character. At best, the church has some four hours per week with a child. Even after school, a child has 77 waking hours at home. Basic values are learned at home by the time a child is six years old. They may be reinforced or modified by Bible School or sermons, but no other individual has the opportunities for influence as the mother at home. Remember, life's values are "absorbed," as well as taught. What you *do* before your children is even more important than your *instructions*.

II. For adolescents and adults, home should be a quiet haven, free from the strains and clamor of the world. There we can be renewed morally and spiritually. In the home, the moral and spiritual atmosphere can be controlled. This is not always the

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Things In The Bible Which Great Men Have Failed To See

WINFREY HENNESSEE

In these modern times, as we learn more and more about the scriptures, many things keep turning up which makes one wonder why someone had not already noticed it.

We read in Genesis 19 where God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. We know why he did this, and rightly so - - - we thought! But now we learn that homosexuality is not a sin - - just different. Why have others not noticed this sooner? Did God destroy these people just because they were different?

We read in the Bible that drinking strong drink is wrong. We are also told to abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22). But then, some argue that it is good to have retail liquor stores in order that the city and county might benefit from the taxes. This makes it all right. Drunkenness

is not a sin - - it's a "sickness." Why had someone not noticed this before?

According to the New Testament, we are to pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17). However, our "prayer partner" must be present if God is to hear us. It also makes a big difference to God what our "prayer partner" thinks of us. A few years ago we did not know this, but now we do.

Are there now, three (or more) reasons for divorce? Some say, yes. Is Jesus coming back to rein for one thousand years upon this earth? Some read (?) this in the Bible. Can we kneel down in front of our TV and be miraculously saved from our sins? If these things be so, then brother Marshall Keeble, brother Guy N. Woods, brother Gus Nichols, and many other great ones must have been dead wrong all these years. — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

Scriptural Advise To Preachers

Continued from page 1

not try to be an entertainer; do not seek to do all the work that needs to be done; personal work is important, but do not spend too much time visiting. Remember this fact: The church does not belong to you; Hence, never be dictatorial (III John 9-12); never allow others to use you in order to get their "dirty" work done. Avoid at all cost being involved in factionalism (I Corinthians 1:10-13).

In a nutshell, what is the work of a gospel preacher? To "preach the word" is the preacher's obligation. The preacher should live and preach so as to help people live better lives. Be a part of the construction crew, not a part of the wrecking crew!

May Almighty God ever bless and keep His preachers through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Strong Families Make Strong Christians

Continued from page 2

case on the job or at school. At home, love will provide acceptance, understanding and a sympathetic willingness to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

III. Some Ways The Home Can Help Us Grow Up In Christ:

It is imperative that the home *truly be Christian*. Christ must be exalted as Lord of the home (Romans 10:9). We should consider him always an unseen guest and be aware of his presence among us. Our home should operate by Christian principles, i.e., be governed by the will of Christ (Colossians 3:17). As a family, we should openly espouse Christian virtues and values. Really, Christ's system is the only one that works (John 6:68). We are forbidden to ever try another for our family.

We must put the old leaven of sin out of our home (I Corinthians 5:7). Hospitals help folks get well by providing a clean, healthful environment. A filthy, contaminated hospital would do more harm than good. So we must put away the corrupting influence of sensual T.V., music, books, and magazines. Let such never be named among us (Ephesians 5:3-4). Strong drink and gambling must be rejected as an evil tree that bears corrupt fruit (Matthew 7:16). We must let no corrupt speech proceed from our mouths (Ephesians 4:29).

We must have a systematic program to teach God's precepts diligently to our children (Deuteronomy 6:7-8). This will necessitate daily Bible reading because one can't live by bread alone (Matthew 4:4). In addition to that, we need instruction and application that will apply divine truth to the ordinary activities of life. We can fortify our teaching by providing wholesome Christian literature such as religious books and magazines.

Our children will be strengthened by watching as we demonstrate our faith (Deuteronomy 32:7). They learn by observation long before they learn by commandment and instruction. Remember God expects each of us to be a proper example (I Timothy 4:12). By my works I reflect my faith (James 2:18). Godly behavior is like leaven, or salt, to our family members: it permeates and influences their lives for good (Matthew 5:13).

My children have the right to see me putting God's kingdom in first place in my life (Matthew 6:33). A youngster will grow up always aware of the primacy of God and the church in life. He will learn that he must attend every service and function of the church as a matter of fact. He will learn to generously support the Lord's cause.

I must train up my child in the way he should go spiritually (Proverbs 22:6). A wise parent will provide his youngster with every opportunity to grow spiritually. Numerous opportunities are available for your children such as Vacation Bible School, Christian Camps and Christian Education. These blessings benefit only those who participate in them. It is the duty of parents to encourage their offspring to take advantage of them.

Our children must be trained to accept their social and civic responsibilities, as well as their spiritual ones. The church grows stronger in influence in proportion to its members' influence in the community. Thus we must teach our sons and daughters how to salt the earth for Christ (Matthew 5:13). Too long, God's children have abandoned the leadership of the community to the ungodly. Today we are reaping a sad harvest for that mistake.

The home is the best place to teach children to highly esteem elders and gospel preachers (I Thessalonians 5:12-13). Such attitudes are essential to produce strong congregations.

A Christian home can help others grow spiritually by showing hospitality without murmuring (I Peter 4:9). A strong family can help new disciples grow

by having them in their homes for fellowship. Young folks especially can be blest by activities provided by Christian families in their homes such as Bible studies, devotionals and social get-togethers.

IV. Sadly, some homes weaken their members by an unholy environment. A carnal or backsliding mate can drag his or her partner down (I Corinthians 15:33). Children can learn bad habits from careless parents. A child reared in a family where alcoholic beverages are used, is far more likely to indulge himself. Zealous workers for God can be discouraged and hindered by selfish mates. Turmoil

and strife in the home can rob one of his spirituality. Good lessons learned at the Lord's assembly can be neutralized by contrary conduct at home. Family members may learn bad attitudes toward the church, her leaders and other brethren from a murmuring family member.

Surely no other single influence in life has the impact for good as a strong Christian home. May ours be Christian, and dedicated to strengthening all who enter its doors. Should God's prophet ask, "What have they seen in your house?" (Isaiah 39:4), what answer would you give? — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Karns, TN 37921.

Paul Speaks To The Singles' Class

Well, not exactly. But, the apostle Paul did say some specific things to those individuals who had never married and to those who had married and had lost their mates by death. In I Corinthians 7, Paul encouraged the unmarried to remain unmarried, if possible. However, if those single persons could not control their desires, Paul instructed them to marry. The apostle also urged the "unmarried" and the



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

"widows" to remain as they were because of a great distress coming upon the church of the Lord. The apostle knew that it would be better to be single in such a situation. The widows were also instructed to marry "only in the Lord" should they decide to re-marry. Also, Paul later instructed brethren not to enroll "younger widows" because of the danger that they might reject "their first pledge." He desired that the "younger widows" marry again (I Timothy 5:9-16). Come to think of it, Paul himself was a "single person." So, we could suppose that he was an "expert" in his understanding of the problems facing the unmarried.

In recent years, we have seen the birth of the "Children's Church" and/or the "Junior Church" among various congregations. Several months ago, we read an advertisement in a brotherhood paper regarding the "First Annual National Confident Christian Singles Conference" which took place in a western state. Such great themes as "Single again — Reaching out to Divorced People," "Sexuality and the Single Person," "How to Grow a Singles' Ministry," etc., were presented. We were informed that this conference was designed for the "never married, formerly married and widowed singles." One could attend the conference and "learn the basics of ministry to single adults and share what your church is doing in this ministry." Should we pity poor Paul because such a conference was never conducted in his day? It was with interest that we read recently the announcement that brethren in our capital city were beginning a fellowship for single Christians. Great stress was given that "Singles often don't fit in" with couples for activities. One sheet of instructions depicted, by stick figures with captions, groups within a congregation such as "Children," "Family groups," "High School groups," etc., with the question following: "Where do you fit in?" Strange that these brethren never had heard of the "Young Adult" or "College Age" classes being conducted in most

congregations.

An area of concern in this matter is the emphasis given, not to those who have never married or those who have lost their marriage partners because of death, but, to those who "were formerly married." Now, that covers a great deal of territory. There are members of the church who are in this condition who have no right to re-marry as per the word of God. There are others whose status as being "formerly married" raises too many questions to encourage other persons to become involved with them. Can we not see in this matter the brotherhood's relaxed attitude toward the problem of divorce?

Another thing, are we not making every effort to form a caste system within the church of the Lord? Most brethren frowned upon the liberal trends of the sixties when we were informed that there was a "generation gap" existing between the young people and adults. There were many folk, both young and old, who didn't know there was a "gap" existing; but, one developed because somebody wanted one. Now, we are not saying that there are not individual needs among our membership. That's not the question. One beautiful aspect of the Bible is that it meets the needs of all people, no matter their station in life.

Several years ago, we knew a dear elderly sister who worshiped with the congregation where we labored. This Christian lady had never married. However, she attended faithfully a series of lessons presented by a visiting evangelist during the morning services in a gospel meeting. One morning, this brother asked of her, calling her by a name given to her because of her disposition: "Sweet, why do you attend these periods of study on marriage and the home?" She replied something like this: "Because I love God's word and I want to learn more about this subject in order to help others." As far as we know, this kind unmarried lady never felt "left out" of the fellowship of the local congregation, nor, did she feel different from other members.

While we should not endeavor to destroy any good work among us, there is the constant need to point out certain trends and dangers that confront the church daily. Paul's attitude is best stated in II Corinthians 11:28 when he wrote: "Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." Should we not be equally concerned with the spiritual welfare of the church of our Lord? — 115 Shields Blvd. Prattville, AL 36067.

An honest man alters his ideas to fit the truth, and a dishonest man alters the truth to fit his ideas.

Honesty is one business policy that will never have to be changed to keep up with the times.

“Caleb – Mr. Greatheart Of The Old Testament”

Caleb influenced his contemporaries to possess the heart of a lion. Even today the mention of his name is an encouragement to dream bigger, work harder, and do better. He is correctly termed “Mr. Greatheart of the Old Testament” because he was:

I. *Immovable In Mid-Life* (Num. 13,14).

Much is being said about “Mid-Life Crisis.” Some middle-aged people tire of the status

quo successes, become bored with the same friends, family, routines, etc., and feel like life is passing them by. As a result, decisions and changes are devastating the lives of many.

Caleb passed through this critical stage as one who “wholly followed Jehovah” (Num. 14:20-25). Israel tempted [tried the patience of] God ten times (Num. 14:22). They blamed Moses for their excessive burden of no straw (Ex. 5); wished to return to Egypt when cramped by the Red Sea and Pharaoh’s army (Ex. 14); murmured over the bitter waters of Marah (Ex. 16); murmured over hunger in the wilderness of sin (Ex. 16); murmured over thirst at Rehidim (Ex. 17); constructed the golden calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Ex. 32); spoke evil in the ears of God (Num. 11); murmured [Aaron and Miriam did] over Moses’ Cushite wife (Num. 12); wept over the spies’ defeatist report of Canaan (Num. 14); and sought a captain to return to Egypt in light of this report (Num. 14). However, Caleb followed the Lord in the face of it all. His secret?

(1) *Caleb thought against the grain of the majority* (Num. 14:24). It does not take much of a man to follow suit; but true character is required to march out of step with the majority when the majority marches out of step with God. Such a man was Caleb. He recanted the pessimistic wail, “We are not able to go up against the people,” with the challenge, “Let us go up at once.” Caleb had a different spirit. He marched to the beat of a different drummer!

The Christian should think against the majority when it comes to: (a) values [When others place crops over Christ, livestock over the living Savior, farms over the Father, stocks and bonds over the souls of man, or community projects and club activities over the church . . . think against the grain (Matt. 6:33)]; (b) the future [When others cry, “We can’t” or “We’ll never,” . . . think against the grain (Phil. 4:13)]; (c) marriage [When others seek divorce as an answer to their problems . . . think against the grain (Matt. 19:6)]; and (d) the purpose of life [When others seek the desires of the flesh and mind . . . think against the grain (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:1-3)].

(2) *Caleb looked through eyes of faith* (Num. 14:4-8). Israel wept, murmured, and sought for a captain to return to Egypt. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all. Only Caleb, accompanied with Joshua, spoke up believing in: (a) The promise of God [“The land which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land”]; (b) the precepts of God [“If Jehovah delight in us . . .”]; (c) the presence of God [“ . . . then he will bring us into the land . . .”]; (d) and the providence of God [“ . . . and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey”].

Equally important, the Christian is challenged with the words of Jesus, “Have faith in God” (Mk. 11:22). In setting out and meeting a church budget; in putting imaginations into motion and dreaming dreams of future work for the church; or in planning the



DAN WINKLE

work and working the plan . . . “Have faith in God!” II. *Adventurous And Aggressive In Age* (Josh. 14,15)

Today’s society emphasizes youth. Miracle creams are to make the age spots go away. Certain products will comb the grey right out of one’s hair. Some glasses offer bifocals without lines for . . . who needs more lines! In the midst of this youth culture, the elderly feel neglected and useless. Someone has well said: “Old age is when you have all the answers and no one asks you the questions!”

Caleb refused to quit or even be retired (Josh. 14:6-12). He did not speak of failing health, but of strength for war. He did not adorn the slippers of ease, but shod his feet with iron. He did not meander to the rocking chair of apathy, but took to the mountains with a zest for life flowing through his veins and a quest for victory burning in his eyes. His life agreed with the words of Browning: “Grow old with me; the best is yet to be.” His secret?

(1) *Caleb’s heart beat with a trust in God* (Josh. 14:6-10). Though forty-five years had passed since the promise God made, his trust in God’s keeping his word never weakened. Then too, he requested the mountains where the Amalekites lived. Such a request was a slap in the face of history. Forty-five years earlier he claimed they could take the Amalekites - - and his brethren threatened his life! Now, though eighty-five, he set out to prove his word and his God. That he did! He successfully

drove all Canaanites from his land, though his brethren failed to do the same in claiming their inheritance (Josh. 15:14, 63; 16:10; 17:12).

The words of Isaiah admonish every Christian in regard to this same trait, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust in Jehovah for ever; for in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is an everlasting rock” (Isa. 26:3,4).

(2) *Caleb used the past as a stepping-stone for the present* (Josh. 14:11,12; 15:14). He never stopped growing. His was not an, “I remember when I could . . .,” but a, “You remember when it was said, now I am going to . . .”

In like manner, the Christian should never hang up the armor of God. Many are the battles to be fought, even in old age. Like the plum tree, God’s people should “still bring forth fruit in old age . . . to show that Jehovah is upright” (Ps. 92:13,14).

Conclusion

Whatever the age, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:10,11). In the words of Frost:

“The woods are lovely, dark, and deep;
But I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep.”

Rt. 2 Box 240 Woodbury, TN 37190.

One Eye Closed:

Can’t See With The Other

This is a humorous expression which describes a person who refuses to see what is obvious reality. The word “blind” has a physical and spiritual meaning. Physically, “blind” means that one is sightless. Spiritually, “blind” means that one is unwilling to discern, perceive, or judge what the Word of God teaches, indicating complete insensibility.

Physical blindness is a tragic and unfortunate condition for numerous people. Even more regrettable is the fact that millions are spiritually blind. From a Biblical viewpoint spiritual blindness is far worse than physical blindness because spiritual blindness will lead a person to hell.

Jesus condemned the Scribes and Pharisees because of their ignorance. He rebuked them strongly and said they were “blind.” The fact that they professed to be religious leaders made the situation worse. Jesus called them “blind guides,” “fools and blind,” and “blind Pharisee” (Matthew 23:16,17,19,24,26).

The New Testament mentions others who were spiritually blind. Paul describes the self-confident and boastful Jews who felt qualified to teach the “blind” Gentiles (Romans 2:19). In II Corinthians 4:4 Paul indicates that some did not receive the gospel because Satan, “the god of this world,” had blinded the minds of those who were lost. In I John 2:11 John



JIMMY EDWARDS

mentions three conditions of the person who hates his brother: (1) he is “in the darkness,” (2) he “walks in darkness,” and (3) he “does not know where he goes” because “the darkness has blinded his eyes.” The Christians at Laodicea were “blind” because they could not see the reality of their spiritual condition (Revelation 3:17).

What causes people to be spiritually blind? Basically, spiritual blindness is caused by Satan. He does this by: (1) direct and indirect influence on the minds of human beings, (2) false philosophies and teachings, (3) prejudice, and (4) traditions. Of course he has many other means of blinding people, but these are some of the most widespread.

God does not want us to be spiritually blind. In fact, Jesus came “to open the blind eyes” (Isaiah 42:7). Paul was called by Christ through a “heavenly vision” to the ministry to “open the eyes” of the Gentiles “to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God” (Acts 26:18). In Ephesians 1:18 the desire of Paul for the Ephesians was that the “eyes of their understanding be enlightened.”

No person should allow Satan to blind him from seeing the truth of the gospel. Only the gospel can enable people to live the Christian life on earth and save them eternally. How sad that millions have the gospel all around them, but are blind to it.

The prayer of every Christian should be: “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Psalm 119:18). Do not ever be caught with one eye closed and not being able to see with the other, especially when studying God’s Word.

512 Gardendale Drive Montgomery, AL 36110.



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"I am not man
the Words of"

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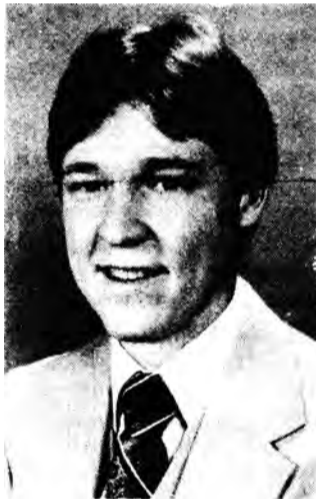
Non-Denominational Christianity

When you talk about religion to people it is hard to keep the concept of denominationalism out, isn't it? Many speak of the church of Christ as simply a denomination. Perhaps this misunderstanding has come about because of certain terminology that is used by members of the Lord's church. To talk of a 'church of Christ school,' or of a 'church of Christ preacher' is just as denominational as saying he is a preacher or that is a school of this particular denomination.

To teach the world about the blood-bought body of Christ, we must use the Bible, and let it speak about the one true church. When Christ came into the world he entered a religiously-divided people who thought about their own particular doctrines more than the commandments of God. In fact, they actually gloated in the things that made them different. Christ knew then that if people loved their parties and doctrines more than they loved him, they were doomed. Therefore he taught about a united body that had only one Lord, one doctrine, one faith (Eph. 4:4).

What do we mean by non-denominational? Simply that the very nature of Christianity, set forth in the Bible, holds no ties to any particular man or man-made religion. Let us look at the nature of Christianity further and explain.

Christ was non-denominational! Which denomination claims that Jesus Christ belonged to their particular thought? The fact that Christ was non-denominational ought to tell us something! In fact he prayed for unity among his believers that they might be ONE! (Jn. 17:20,21) Paul calls the church the fulness of God's body (Eph. 3:18,19), the one body (Eph. 4:4). He further states that Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23). Doesn't it make sense that the church ought to be as non-denomi-



BARRY FIKE

national as the Christ who established it? Have you ever been asked which Christ you belong to? Why do people believe in one Christ and yet his body, the church, is splintered into many, many beliefs? How can *Christ* be non-denominational and *his body* a denomination?

The gospel is also non-denominational. In Luke 8:11 Christ said that the seed (of the parable of the sower) is the word of God. How can a seed produce anything else than what it is? When you plant a corn seed do you expect tomatoes? or corn? When the seed of the gospel is planted what, out of necessity, must it produce? It takes teaching to produce anything; so if something is denominational we know that it did not come from the word of God since that seed only produces the one church!

The requirements of the gospel are non-denominational. What the gospel requires of me to become a Christian, it requires of ALL MEN! In Acts 8 the Ethiopian Eunuch was required by the gospel of Christ to do certain things to be saved. He went on his way rejoicing because he had found Jesus Christ. Will it be any different today? Something is wrong with non-denominational doctrine and denominational churches.

The word Christian is a non-denominational name. In Acts 11:26 it is recorded that the brethren were called Christians FIRST at Antioch. What denomination was that? Have you ever been asked what kind of Christian are you? What kind of Christians were they at Antioch? The Bible only mentions Christians - - followers of Christ.

The blood of Christ is non-denominational. "... feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The church is the product of the blood. Should it not be as non-denominational as the blood. Which blood were you saved by? If what puts one into the church is non-denominational how can it produce denominational Christians?

The church is non-denominational. "... even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Shouldn't the church be as non-denominational as its Savior?

Many people ask, "What church are you a member of?" This is simply because of the religious division and denominationalism in the world. But I've never heard anyone ask, "What kingdom do you

belong to?" Isn't it interesting that people understand the concept of one kingdom under Christ, and yet they can't understand (?) that there is only one body, the church. One has only to read Col. 1:13, 18-24 to understand that there is no difference between the Kingdom and the church. Both existed in the first century because they are the same thing!

Let us try to understand this simple concept of unity and oneness that Christ prayed for so that we may indeed be united under one God with one faith; the faith of the New Testament that Christ set forth for all of mankind. - Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.

We Seek A Moratorium


WINFREY HENNESSEE

During the great depression years of the thirties, the United States government declared a bank moratorium in order that America's financial system might be saved. In this type of arrangement, the debtor is not set free, but legal action is delayed for a time to allow more time for payment.

This word has become quite common throughout the last fifty years, and many of us use a means similar to this almost every day. We do so everytime we fail to fulfill our obligations as we go about our daily lives in and out of the business world; and some even ask the Lord for a delay as we go about the task which has been assigned us. "Lord, I will follow you, but suffer me first to go and bury my father (Matt. 8:21)."

When Governor Felix reasoned in his heart about the judgment to come of which Paul had spoken, was he not asking God for a moratorium until he had a convenient season (Acts 24:25)? As we think upon this subject, we are reminded that the love of money played an important part in Felix's decision, since he had hoped that Paul would pay him to be re-

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— Acts 26:25

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We Seek A Moratorium

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leased; but we also know he trembled at the word of God. We have all seen those who tremble when the invitation song is being sung, but many times instead of going forward, the sinner's attorney, the devil, will advise him to seek a moratorium!

Various reasons have been given which cause one to put off becoming a Christian; but the most common cause seems to be that we do not like the rules and regulations which God has given us through the Bible.

We ask for a moratorium because we need more time, we expect an alternative because the present qualifications are not to our liking. But what we receive from God is an ultimatum, (a final condition-unchanged since the first day it was offered): do it God's way, or suffer the consequences! (2 Thess. 1:6-10). — P.O. Box 185 McMinnville, TN 37110.

Building An Evangelistic Church

NOBLE L. McKNIGHT

Evangelism "is the activity of the church in telling the gospel to sinners with intent to bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ" (Personal Evangelism by J. C. Macaulay & Robert W. Belton)

Notice the emphasis in the New Testament on evangelism. Jesus said to his apostles "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). Paul said that Jesus appeared unto him to make him "a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16). This same apostle wrote to Timothy and said "And 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

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Know Ye Not...?"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The apostle Paul sometimes challenged his readers by asking, "Know ye not . . .?" Here is an example: "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). Does it not just stand to reason that one is the "servant" of whomever he obeys! Therefore one cannot be the "servant" of Jesus Christ without OBEYING Christ.

Do you want Jesus to say to you in the Judgment: "Well done, thou good and faithful SERVANT . . ."? Do you want him to call you his "servant"? If so, you must obey him. Because he saves only the obedient (Hebrews 5:9), I plead with you to delay no longer — obey him today! Those who "obey" him are his "servants" and no others are. The "surrendered life" is one which has been turned over to Christ, who has been "set apart in your heart . . . as Lord" (1 Peter 3:15).

The apostle Paul also asked, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). He had just described these people, who (like himself) were "dead to sin" (verse 2). This is true, because in *repentance*, one dies to the love and intentional practice of sin. Thayer says "repentance" is "a change of mind for the better, heartily to amend, with abhorrence of one's past sins." Thus we see that at the point of *repentance*, one breaks off the practice of sins, while *baptism* is the point at which Christ's blood washes away the guilt of past sins (Acts 22:16; Mark 16:16).

Many confuse "repentance" with *salvation*. It is dramatic for one to change his mind, with the consequent change in his behavior. For a habitual, willful sinner this constitutes a revolutionary change. Repentance, which results in so drastic a change in conduct, is often equated by many as being "salvation"! Be aware, however, that forgiveness (or pardon) takes place in the mind of God, who has stipulated the conditions upon which he will forgive (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The way a man "feels" (or, does not feel) is absolutely NO EVIDENCE that God has saved him! His good "feelings" are the result or consequence of his faith — regardless of whether that faith is based upon the Bible, or not. "Feelings" are no proof at all that one has, or has not, obeyed the terms of salvation. They are no evidence that (1) man knows the conditions upon which God has predicated pardon for the sinner; and (2) neither are "feelings" any evidence that a guilty, lost, soul has complied with those conditions in order to be pardoned.

Furthermore, "feelings" are deceptive: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Do you not recall that for more than twenty years Jacob

sincerely "felt" that Joseph (the firstborn son of his beloved Rachel!) was DEAD — yet Joseph all the while was alive in Egypt, and was exalted next to Pharaoh! Jacob's honesty, his sincerity, his genuine "feelings" did not constitute any valid proof at all! Actually, they were contrary to the facts!

Saul of Tarsus is another example of how one can sincerely and honestly "feel" that he should persecute the church, yet be wrong all the time! (Acts 9:1-2; 23:1; 26:9).

So today, one may be ever so sincere and honest, and may "feel" like he is saved — yet be honestly and sincerely *wrong*! We must conclude, therefore, that for one to imagine he is saved simply because of the great change in his life-style at the time of his *repentance*, is simply a confusing of REPENTANCE for SALVATION!

Repentance is a change of mind, which results in a change of life. It is a "dying" to sin, with the resolution never again to live in it. But, when one "dies," we BURY him! Likewise Paul said those who are "dead to sin" (verse 2), are to be "buried with him in baptism" (Romans 6:3-6). It is this "buried" DEAD man of whom he speaks in verse seven: "But he that is DEAD is freed from sin." Let me illustrate: When I say that my own father has been dead for almost eight years, no one imagines that he is "un-buried"! All understand that after he *died*, he was *buried*. So also we should understand that Paul refers to those only who have been "buried" in baptism, for these were the "dead" ones under consideration.

As Christ (1) "died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), so the sinner DIES to the love and practice of sin. (2) As Christ was *buried*, so the sinner is *buried* in baptism. And (3) as Christ was *raised* from the dead, so in conversion one is *raised* from baptism to walk in newness of life.

Have you, kind reader, obeyed that "form of doctrine" (Romans 6:16-18)? If not, notice what you are missing: "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine . . . being *then made free from sin*, ye became the servants of righteousness." This is the surrendered life which we hold before our readers, urging each to obey from the heart that same form of doctrine in obedience to Christ.

Obedient Children

VICTOR M. ESKEW

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not harken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (Deut. 21:18-21). The above passage of scripture emphasizes the disdain and displeasure God has when children are disobedient to their parents. It was such a serious crime that it demanded serious

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Obedient Children

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consequences. The sin of insubordination on the part of children toward their parents brought death to the Jewish child as commanded by God. The reason for this was twofold. First, that the evil might be put away from among the chosen people of God. God desired his children to be holy and an infraction as this would not allow them to develop into such. Second, that all Israel would hear of the action taken, and would fear. This type of judgment would be an example unto others who might be ruminating revolt and rebellion against their mother and father.

Disobedience on the part of children has been a problem which has plagued all ages. The reasons for disobedience are many. But one primary reason is that parents do not restrain their children. This was the definite cause in the case of the disobedience of Eli's sons. And Eli's failure brought the judgment of God upon him. "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:11-13).

It is a disgrace and dishonor to God, to his word, to parents, to the community, to the nation and to the world when parents will not use the proper methods in the disciplining of their children. The idea that soft speaking and rather rigid reasoning can replace the rod of correction is foreign to the plain teaching of the Bible. The wise man of old wrote: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). And again: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). The wisdom of ages past also says that discipline will deliver the child's soul from hell. "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13,14). It is

only when the rod is left in the closet and the child left to himself that misery results. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame . . . Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29:15,17).

Even though immediate punishment is not brought about on rebellious children as was the case under the Mosaic law, disobedience still displeases God. Obedience, on the other hand, brings a child into favor with God. "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:20). Not only should children obey their parents to please the Lord, they should also do it because it is right. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). If for no other reason than its being right submission to their parents' rule should be the child's attitude. Another reason children should obey their parents is in order that they not be a disappointment to them. "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother"

(Proverbs 10:1). An increase in wisdom will also result in a child's being obedient to his mother and father. "A wise son heareth his father's instruction, but a scorner heareth not a rebuke" (Proverbs 13:1). And finally, Paul said that obedience and honor given to parents would increase a child's days on this earth. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

"Disobedient to parents" was one of the characteristics of those caught in the great falling away (II Timothy 3:2). It is not surprising because the home is the basis of all other learning. If a child is not obedient at home, it is usually true that the child will rebel against all authority whether it be at school, in society, or from God Almighty. Parents, let us learn to teach our children obedience. Children, strive at all times to be in submission to mother and father. — 600 W. Sadosa #28 Eastland, TX 76448.

Is There A Baptismal Formula?

When Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19,20 saying, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," did he lay down a pattern for baptism to be used till the end of time? I think not! Jesus told us what to do, not what to say, and there is a big difference.

When one examines the book of Acts, he does not find an apostle or an inspired preacher using any set formula. They did use at least three different expressions concerning baptism. Let us note these examples:

"In [EPI] the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

"Only they had been baptized into [eis] the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16; cf. 19:5).

"And he commanded them to be baptized in [en] the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:48).

Jesus told the apostles to baptize into the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus used the singular for *name*, not the plural. If I baptized a person into the name of the Father, the person would be baptized into the name of the Son and Holy Spirit also. Roy Lanier, Sr., pointed out: "To think one can be baptized into Christ without being baptized into the Father and the Holy Spirit forces one to say there are three separate Beings in the Godhead, which is the doctrine of Tritheism."

Thayer in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* gives us this valuable bit of information concerning prepositions:

With prepositions: . . . *eis onoma timos*, to profess the name of one whose follower we become, Mt. 28:19 . . . *eis hen soma*, to unite together into one body by baptism, I Cor. 12:13 . . . *eis Christon*, eis

ton thanaton autou, to bring by baptism into fellowship with Christ, into fellowship in his death, by which fellowship we have died to sin, Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3 . . . *en onomati tou kuriou*, by the authority of the Lord, Acts 10:48 . . . *epi too onomati lesou Christou*, relying on the name of Jesus Christ, i.e., reposing one's hope on him, Acts 2:38 (p. 94).

With references to the name in Matthew 28:19, Arndt and Gingrich say the following when used with the preposition: "Through baptism *eis* on the one who is baptized becomes the possession of and comes under the protection of the one whose name he bears; he is under the control of the effective power of the name and the One who bears the name, i.e., he is dedicated to them" (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 575). Marvin Vincent in his *Word Studies in the New Testament* agrees with the above quote. *The Pulpit commentary* says, "The 'unto' shows the end and aim of the consecration of baptism. The 'Name' of God is that by which he is known to us — that which connotes his being and his attributes, that by which there exists a conscious connection between God and ourselves" (Matthew, p. 645).

To baptize someone in the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to baptize a person by the authority of Jesus (Col. 3:17). When a person is saved by the *name* of Christ (Acts 4:12), he is saved in the person (II Tim. 2:10). The apostles suffered dishonor for the *name* (Acts 5:41), and Paul was "to bear my *name* before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). We see from scripture to baptize into the name is to baptize into the person.

Did the apostles obey the command of Jesus when they baptized people in (*epi*) the name of Jesus; into (*eis*) the name of the Lord Jesus, and in (*en*) the name of Jesus Christ? If they didn't do it right, why did not someone rebuke them?

Jesus did not give his apostles a verbal word-formula to use at baptism. Jesus told them what to do, and not what to say. Whether one is baptized into the *name* of Jesus or the Father it is one and the same thing. Remember, Jesus told his disciples by what authority they were going into the world, and not what to say during a baptism. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Rebuilding The Rural Church

Recently this writer came to know a ninety year old brother in Christ who lives in a rural community where the church was once just as strong as anywhere in our nation. A few years ago the congregation ceased to meet because its number had been reduced to two Christians. A good meeting-house still stands. This faithful brother keeps the building and grounds in perfect repair. This elder Christian was asked the number of families in the community that were unchurched (do not attend church anywhere). His reply was "more than two-thirds."

One of the most shocking problems within our brotherhood is the decline and death of many of our rural congregations. During the generations of such men as Sewell, Lipscomb, Campbell, Farmer,

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MIKE BARRETT



GEORGE REED

Rebuilding The Rural Church

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Smith, and others, the rural congregations of our land had their beginnings. By implementing the word of God, these pioneer preachers carried the gospel into the remote and isolated communities of the South and beyond.

The rural congregations became the centers of the communities in which they were established. Many interpersonal Christian relationships developed. Christian love and compassion led our ancestors to go into a sick neighbor's fields, plant, cultivate, harvest, and even market his crops during his illness. Visiting and caring for the sick was the norm. The Christian and his congregation in the days of the restoration movement let their lights shine and helped God to be glorified by their good works.

As time passed however, our nation saw a migration from the farm to the city. The Great Depression of the 1930's accelerated this urban migration. This trend continued until the 1950's. But, the years of depletion of human and financial resources of the country church has had a devastating effect. The doors of many of the country congregations were closed for the last time. This writer has personal knowledge of five such congregations. And, almost a dozen within a 50 mile radius of his home congregation are in danger of demise!

The question is often asked: "Should they be saved or allowed to close?" In order to give an intelligent answer one must have a knowledge of the value of the local, rural congregation. There is definitely an advantage in the existence of a local congregation in a community. Contacts in personal work are easier and more personable. The knowledge of benevolent needs is more visible. It is easier to persuade visitors to attend at a nearby location where friends and acquaintances worship. Other reasons could be cited; but, one can see that the rural congregation is of great value in helping convert lost souls to Christ.

Another example might help to evaluate the value of the country church. In a recent brotherhood publication one writer stated, "A few years ago, while teaching a class of approximately thirty professional and business men in a large urban church, I asked how many were products of the rural or country congregation. Of some thirty men present all but two were from the country or small village congregations." There seems to be little doubt that the rapid growth and progress of city congregations can in part be attributed to the human and spiritual resources furnished by their rural, sister congregations.

Of a truth the decline and death of the rural, country congregations of Christ must be halted. The solution proposed in this article is neither novel nor new. It is as old as the Bible itself. During the first century the gospel was proclaimed both publicly and privately by faithful men (Acts 2:46; 5:42). Any plan of restoration or rebuilding must rest upon this foundation!

The pattern of growth that so characterized our brotherhood during the Restoration movement and beyond was based upon this principle. As early as 1906 saw the planting and building of rural congregations by other sister congregations. Several churches in Nashville reported sending different preachers throughout the state for a summer of preaching in tents with the result of some 500 baptisms. Later a report was given of two men who had established some twenty-eight churches over the years of their ministry.

The basic need to halt the decline and death of the rural congregation is twofold. First, there is the need for human resources. Many congregations of only a dozen or so meet in communities of close to a thousand inhabitants. The limitations of time and sheer geographical distance preclude the effectiveness of many personal work efforts. Often, as much as two hours daily are spent travelling to and from

places of employment by Christians. The demands upon one's time is apparent. Therefore, a full time worker is truly needed. The work of a regular full time evangelist would be invaluable to many struggling and perishing congregations.

The second greatest need within the rural congregations is financial. This writer has observed many country congregations that were so small in number that it was a hardship to continue making the utility payments. There is, many times, insufficient funds to purchase tracts, study materials, etc.

It is possible for both these needs to be met by help from larger, stronger congregations. It is suggested that each congregation that is able to do so align itself to aid in the rebuilding, replant-

Building An Evangelistic Church

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also" (II Tim. 2:2).

This charge of evangelism belongs to the church today. But we have not taken it very seriously. Our efforts at growth and expansion have been far less than adequate. Most congregations content themselves with keeping house. Whatever growth is taking place comes from pocket changing. About 75 percent of the growth of the average congregation is by transfer. And that really should not be called growth. Most congregations have tried every program imaginable, and nothing seems to work. What then can we do to develop an evangelistic church? I would like to suggest three things.

First, elders must understand what their prime responsibility is. Their prime responsibility is to lead the flock of God in seeking and saving the lost. Elders must be totally committed to total evangelism.

One of the greatest problems facing elders today is keeping their priorities straight. Too long now elders have followed the example of those gone before who saddled themselves with secular responsibilities. Elders must change their direction before the church will change its direction. They cannot continue to make the same mistakes and expect the church to have a productive future.

The life and force of the church is dependent upon its leadership. Leadership, or the lack of it, affects the character and direction of the church. Without soul-winning elders you cannot have a soul-winning church. Elders must not stand on the street corner and direct traffic, they must lead the parade. To motivate and mobilize the church for evangelism, elders must take soul-winning out of the apathy zone and let it become the center of their own personal concern. Elders must never forget that congregations are motivated by example.

Second, the preacher is important in building an evangelistic church. He must evangelize and motivate. Therefore, elders should not just hire a preacher. They should determine the needs of the congregation and then look for a man qualified to meet those needs.

When a preacher is hired, he should be hired for life. He should be allowed to purchase his own house. He should be rewarded for a job well done. This would include an adequate salary, regular raises, gifts, time off, etc. Above all, he should be allowed to place membership with the congregation. Many congregations never allow this you know. They keep their preacher on a permanent temporary status. Then when problems arise they can easily solve them by dismissing the temporary personnel. They fire the preacher. Elders, you will never be able to build an evangelistic church on this kind of instability. Hire your preacher for life and never become ungrateful to him nor take him for granted.

ing, and restoration of one or more rural congregations. Just as surely as missionary preachers planted the word of God in isolated communities during the Restoration Era, mission-minded brethren in today's congregations can rebuild and restore these once strong churches in the rural areas.

Congregations that are able to fund tent meetings, etc., can help make their sister congregations in the rural areas strong and vibrant once more. Likewise, some congregations might be able to place a full time evangelist in certain areas for several months or even a few years! Brethren, we know what we should do. Are we going to do it? God will not reward us if we fail to do what we know is right (James 4:17). — 1205 Wenlon Drive, Murfreesboro, Tenn-

The preacher must be a modeling servant. Someone has well said that "he cannot teach what he does not know and he cannot lead where he does not go." I make it a rule in my ministry not to ask people to do that which I am unwilling to do. People will fight a dictator, but they will follow a leader.

The proclamation of the preacher is very important. I am not here thinking about what he preaches. That was settled long ago when Paul declared, "Preach the word . . ." (II Tim. 4:2). I have in mind how he preaches what he preaches. Paul wrote, "But speaking the truth in love . . ." (Eph. 4:15). The Bible says that Paul and Barnabas "so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed" (Acts 14:1). The emphasis here seems to be on how they spake. The preacher needs to be careful, lest he nag and brow-beat all the time.

The philosophy of his ministry should be transformational, not promotional. Paul urged: "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). The preacher should spend his time transforming people, not promoting programs.

Third, to build an evangelistic church every Christian must be sharing his faith. "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (II Cor. 4:13-14). It is contrary to common sense to think a Christian, saved by God's grace, would not want to share this grace with others.

The congregation must desire to share in the work of evangelism. "The expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing its total membership in continuous propagation of its beliefs" (Kenneth Strachan). People must be devoted to evangelism and expectant of conversions or we cannot grow.

The church must receive the kind of edification which results in multiplication. The Jerusalem church received such (Acts 9:31). What they were being taught caused the church to win the lost. Our approach to Bible study has for the most part de-emphasized reaching the lost. We would probably have had only 3 to 5 percent less soul winners if we had studied American history in our classes. The goal of every Christian leading others to Christ begins with teaching. "And 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). — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.



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 19

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1983

NUMBER 42

The Man Born Blind

John's record of Christ's life focuses on his interviews and episodes with people. Each of the seven great miracles recorded demonstrates something of the Lordship of Jesus. In the healing of the man born blind, we see Christ as master over misfortune. (See John 9:1-41).

The Cast of Characters

We see *the Lord* concerned with the unfortunate, taking time for one insignificant man. He willingly incurred the wrath of the Jewish hierarchy in so doing. In this event, he taught his disciples a vital lesson about his new order.

We see *the poor beggar* under the crushing affliction of blindness (9:1,8). He had never seen the light of a new day, his mother's smile, or the beauty of a spring flower. There were no schools for the blind, nor Braille by which to read. There were no seeing-eye dogs, nor medical treatments; just the blackness of darkness.

The beggar was the innocent victim of cruel religious controversy. He was caught up in a whirlwind of hostility that set him down on holy ground. He knew little of Jesus at first, only his compassion and power.

We see *the beggar's parents* (9:18-23). They were unwillingly drawn into the controversy. Fearing their religious leaders, they refused to get tangled in the problem. How tragic it is when folks fear those they really should love.

We see *the Pharisees*, the religious leaders of conservative, orthodox Judaism. Their approach to God's law was legalistic. They were ever the opponents of and antagonists of everyone not of their sect. They bitterly resented Jesus. They were ruthless in their treatment of the common people. The Pharisees effectively controlled the synagogues. They were the keepers of orthodoxy and the watch-



JOHN WADDEY

dogs of men's souls.

The Healing Event

Seeing the man born blind, the disciples asked Jesus "who sinned, this man or his parents" (9:2)? The ancient folks generally thought that all suffering was a punishment for sin. The law spoke of parents' sins being visited upon their children (Exodus 20:5). Being born with his affliction, the disciples could not see what he may have done to deserve such punishment.

Christ's answer was simple and direct. "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents" (9:3). His affliction was not a punishment for specific sin. All suffering does flow from Adam's transgression in Eden (Romans 5:12), but not always from personal sin. His suffering was an opportunity for God's work of healing love to be demonstrated (9:3).

The anointing: "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (9:6-7). Though disgusting to us, the use of spittle was common in the ancient world. Pliny, the Roman author, devoted an entire chapter to the medicinal use of spittle. It was thought to cure snake bite, epilepsy, eye problems and especially to thwart the evil eye. Certainly the Lord did not use spittle for such superstitious purposes. He had at least two motives in mind. The charge to go wash away the clay was a test of the man's faith. Most importantly, however, it constituted a challenge of the Jew's sabbath traditions.

He was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam (9:7). Siloam was an open air pool, 20 x 30 ft. in size. It was a landmark in Jerusalem. It was fed by a tunnel from the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley. The tunnel was carved through 583 yards of rock.

The miracle is seen in 9:8. "He went and washed." He "came seeing."

The Investigation of the Crime

"It was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes" (9:14). Christ broke their law (not God's) on two counts: He made clay on the sabbath, and he anointed the man's eyes and healed them.

The Pharisee's traditions said you may not fill your lamp with oil on the sabbath or snuff your lamp


to save oil and wicks. You may not trim your fingernails or pull a hair from your head or beard on that day. Medical treatment was limited to life-saving procedures on the sabbath. A dislocated joint could not be set on the sabbath. A toothache could not be treated. They specifically forbade putting spittle on the eyes on the sabbath. Of course, such ridiculous rules were never God's intention in giving the sabbath ordinance. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). The sinful attitude of those Pharisees is yet with us, and is an on-going plague to God's church and people.

The interrogation was thorough and determined. The blind man's neighbors were confused by the event. They found it hard to believe he was healed (9:8-12). They took him to the Pharisees (9:13). The man himself was questioned by the Pharisees. How could this Jesus be from God and yet break their law (9:16)? On the other hand, how could a sinner have divine power to heal? The man replied, "He is a prophet."

They then interviewed his parents (9:13-23). The leaders did not believe the man's story. The parents really knew nothing about the event save that their son was healed! They feared they would "be put out of the synagogue." The Jews had two kinds of excommunication. There was a temporary ban of a month or so. The ban or *cherem* banned a person from the synagogue for life. To be cut off also meant a loss of school privileges for one's children and many social advantages. This threat kept many folks in line with the Pharisees even though they believed in Jesus (John 12:42).

They called the beggar a second time (9:24-34). They sought to place him under oath, "Give God the glory" (Compare Joshua 7:19). His response was simple: I was blind from birth but now I see. Only the power of God could account for such. Therefore, Jesus must be from God! The man seemed to enjoy prodding his accusers: "Would ye also become his disciples?" he jibbed (9:27). "Why, herein is the marvel," he said, "that you know not whence

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

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

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The Man Born Blind

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he is (where he came from) and he opened mine eyes" (9:30). With faces flushed and unable to answer him, the Jews resorted to insult and threats; "They reviled" him (9:28). "Thou was altogether born in sins" they snarled. "We know that God heareth not sinners," he retorted (9:31). He referred to a common Old Testament teaching (Psalms 66:18). His point was, God does not hear sinners; but he does hear Jesus; therefore Jesus is no sinner! Stunned by his words, "they cast him out" (9:34).

From Faith Unto Faith

The Jews cast him out, but the Lord found him. He confronted him with a penetrating, personal question: "Do you believe on the Son of God?" The man responded, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" (9:35-36). Remember that he had never seen Jesus prior to this moment with his new sight. It is impressive that this notable miracle was done without personal faith on the recipient's part. This is so different from modern "faith healers."

The record traces his progress of faith. First he called Jesus "a man" (9:11). Later he called him "a prophet" (9:17). Finally he confessed him as the son of God and worshipped him (9:35-37). The more we know of Jesus, the greater he is to us. Conversely, the more we know men, the more of their weaknesses we see.

The Moral of the Lesson

"And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world" (9:39). When a person confronts Jesus, he immediately passes judgment upon himself for good or bad. Christ came that the blind may see (9:39). For a few that meant physical sight would be given. For millions more the eyes of their hearts will see great spiritual truths. Those who see will become blind (9:39). The proud Pharisees thought they knew everything. Their pride left them in darkness, error and sin. Their claim to know God's will left them indefensible for rejecting Jesus (9:41).

Christ waits to open the blind eyes of your heart today, but you must be willing to obey him as the blind man did. Go wash in the waters of baptism and your soul will be healed of sin's blight (Acts 22:16). 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Karns, TN 37921



"Let Brotherly Love Continue"

(Hebrews 13:1)

Serious Bible readers should know that all who by faith (Hebrews 11:6) in Jesus Christ, that he is the "only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10), have repented at his command (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31), and have been baptized in his name (Acts 2:38) into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, A.S.V.), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16)

— I say, ALL who have done this from their hearts (Romans 6:16-18) have been "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). They were "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3) where ("in Christ") they became "children of God" by faith (Galatians 3:26-28). Being "children of God" constitutes them brothers and sisters to all others who comprise God's family.

One who has been born into God's family may later become unfaithful in matters of morals, or in worship, or in doctrine. However, he remains a child of God — else to be saved he would have to be "born again." God has a second law of pardon for erring children in his family, as revealed in Acts 8:12-24. An erring child who dies while out of the Father's favor will be disinherited! James (5:19) acknowledges that some of our "brethren" have "erred from the truth" — yet they nonetheless are still our



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"brethren."

Our Lord told of a man who had two sons who became "lost." One of them became a "prodigal" by leaving home and "wasted his substance in riotous living" (Luke 15:13). One who goes astray from the Father's blessings should come back in genuine repentance, as did the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24), confident that God (represented by the loving father) will receive him eagerly!

The 'Elder son' was just as sadly "lost" because of his sins of the spirit (verses 25-32)! He boasted of his own 'goodness,' and was filled with self-pity. Arrogance and boastfulness are not becoming to God's children. He scorned and cast reflections on his penitent brother. We must ever keep in mind that when a brother repents and wishes to be restored, *he* can be saved whether we forgive him or not — but *we* can't! We must forgive him for *our* salvation — not his! (Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 6:37) .

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). In perhaps every community there are those who need to be restored. May those who are faithful realize a responsibility to actively seek to gain them back for Christ. Let all who are faithful then extend loving forgiveness, as did the father in the story Jesus told. Let every child of God truly rejoice at the return of any brother or sister who is restored! Each has an individual responsibility to welcome back every straying (or, erring) child of God who repents and comes 'home!' He must repent, confess his faults, and pray for pardon (James 5:16; Acts 8:22-24; I John 1:7-10). "Let us cleanse ourselves from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. . ." (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Forgiveness Before Baptism?

GEORGE REED

A question was put to nine well-known evangelical groups about baptism being essential to one's salvation. Here are two of their answers:

Harold Lindsell, Ph.D., Editor — emeritus, *Christianity Today* — "If I read you aright, the real question you are asking is whether water baptism is essential to the salvatory process . . . my answer is NO."

Dr. Victor B. Nelson, Executive Assistant (answering for Billy Graham, Minneapolis, MN) — "Dr. Billy Graham believes the Bible to be the infallible Word of God. Ephesians 2:8,9 and Titus 3:5,6 make very clear the fact that we can do nothing to attain our salvation except believe and accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour."

Denominations, such as the Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and many Pentecostal groups, teach one is saved before he is baptized. They 'read' their "faith only" doctrine into(?) such passages as Acts

2:22; 16:31; and Rom. 10:13. What they fail to do is to take all the passages together see the harmony that exists. Robert Palmer writes: "Each passage must be interpreted in harmony with all other passages. This is the normal law of consistency in truth — truth must harmonize with truth. God's Word is truth, and any one portion of it must coincide with everything else He says. God never contradicts himself" (*How to Understand The Bible*, pp. 51-52). Mr. Palmer also states: "For a full understanding of the Bible all passages on any given subject must be studied. Each passage though true, does not always give all the truth" (p. 53). One wonders why the false teachers of our day do not wake up and take a look at ALL the evidence? One is not saved until he is baptized for the remission of his sins, and I challenge any one to

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Forgiveness Before Baptism?

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show me otherwise.

To the law and to the testimony (Isa. 8:20). Let's notice what the Bible teaches on baptism:

Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." If a businessman were to make this offer: He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a new car, would anyone have any trouble seeing that the one who would receive the new car is the one who had believed and was baptized? I think not.

But someone objects by saying, "Jesus didn't say 'he that disbelieveth and is not baptized shall be condemned.' So it is evident that one does not have to be baptized to be saved."

Let us look at the fallacy of this "argument." Let us compare this statement with Mark 16:16: He that eateth and digesteth shall live, but he that eateth not shall die. Note: (1) two conditions are necessary to life (eating and digesting, just as two conditions are necessary for spiritual life in Mark 16:16), but (2) there is only one condition stated as being necessary to death (not eating). But one cannot digest if he does not eat; and one cannot be scripturally baptized if he does not believe. Therefore, one is

not in a saved condition until he is baptized.

Acts 2:38: "And Peter said unto them Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The word translated "unto" comes from the Greek preposition *eis*. Many times in the Bible it is translated "for" and "into" (cf. I Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). The word "unto" means inclination, for, tendency, in respect of, any unreached object. Thus, the Pentecostians had not yet obtained the remission of their sins! The next word I want to look at in Acts 2:38 is the word "and." "And" is said to be a copulative conjunction meaning the one wanting forgiveness of sins must do two things: (1) repent and, (2) be baptized. It is not difficult to see the Pentecostians had to repent and be baptized in order to receive the remission of their sins.

I Peter 3:21: "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, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." According to this verse, what saves a person? Baptism. One must only guess why so

many "preachers" teach one is saved without baptism. The Bible says one is saved by baptism. The doctrines of men teach one is not saved by baptism. Which are you going to believe, the Bible or the doctrines of men?

Denominations that teach the *faith only* doctrine have a real problem with the Bible. Look at their dilemma:

1. They have a person "saved" outside of Christ (Gal. 3:27).
2. They have a person "saved" outside the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13).
3. They have a person "saved" in his sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

My friend, what are you going to believe about baptism? Since the Bible is going to be used to judge us on the last day (Jn. 12:48), and we are not to go beyond the things that are written (I Cor. 4:6), don't you think we ought to learn a lesson from what the Bible says about baptism and not the teachings of men?

17691 Pensante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907

God Hears! God Knows! God Delivers!

JOHN W. ROBERTSON

This lesson is built around three important truths: God Hears! God Knows! God Delivers!

FIRST — GOD HEARS! Our soul is the health-control center; it controls our spiritual being. Just as the body dies when the lungs do not get breath any longer, so the soul cannot live without prayer. Therefore it is imperative that we pray to God. Prayer is (1) the greatest communication the Christian has! It is communicating with deity. (2) The Master wants to hear from the servant (James 1:5-7). (3) The servant desires to hear from the master (I John 2:1). "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2).

"The Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is his ear so dull that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1).

"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalms 66:18). What is it then? God hears and answers depending upon the conditions of one's heart!

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). God hears! God hears prayers prayed privately. There is something beautiful about praying to God privately! I'm not talking about following along privately as someone is praying publicly. I am speaking about praying in secret!

When was the last time you prayed to God in this manner? God hears! Take advantage of this fact! Pray in the morning — noontime — evening. Make a habit of praying in private, Jesus teaches we should pray in secret, and God who hears in secret will reward openly (Matthew 6:6). One great proof of sincere religion is praying in secret. "A little religion if sincere, is better than mountains of pretence!"

Someone has said this "Praying will make you leave off sinning — or sinning will make you leave off praying." This I know: God hears!

SECOND — GOD KNOWS!

David found this out. It was a bitter and costly experience. It involved tragedy, shame, and disgrace. Two people plunged into an awful sin. A nation staggered under its impact. A little baby lay dying!

David's plans to cover his desire for Bathsheba

were to no avail. It all came out into the open. Recall what God said: "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

The preacher brought him God's message. Oh, yes David was quick to judge another man's life; but then the shock — "Thou art the man." What an eye-opener! God knew: What David and Bathsheba knew, God knows!

The resurrection of a man's sin is often enough to bring him to God. The sacred record reports: "and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Because God knows, I think of worship through "Public Prayer." Here are four (4) good rules of public prayer:

(1) Be careful not to use the same phrases that we have heard others utter. Of course this is all right and acceptable, if we have the understanding. I am saying, the prayer should be in words of our own choosing. "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also —" (I Cor. 14:15).

(2) Avoid wording your prayers for the ears of man — Prayers are for the ears of God. When addressing deity in prayers use words that have always been reverent toward deity, like Thou, they, thine, and thee. Should the Christian not talk to God in the most reverent words at his command?

(3) Don't beat around the bush: get down to the matters at hand! I do not believe that God is impressed with our vocabulary or our sentence construction.

(4) Be open; talk with God as you would your own father (with the exception of course, keeping

in mind the highest regard for reverence toward deity).

Yes! God knows when we are standing in need of prayer. When we know this, we will pray to God! God hears! God knows!

THIRD, GOD DELIVERS

"And the prayers of the faithful shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5:15). "Then he will pray to God and he will accept him" (Job 33:26). Printed on my cards, because it is my favorite verse is: "And you shall seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). God delivers — He said so!

What can prayer do? It opened the iron gates of prison — and closed the mouths of lions! It quenched the violence of the furnace of fire! It stopped the sun in its course, and gave Joshua the victory! It raised the dead — and on and on we could give examples of prayers in the Bible, showing it is powerful. Let it suffice to say, God delivers!

Prayer is a very vital and meaningful part of a Christian's private and public life — in or out of worship. Do you pray?

Plead with all of us, as Christians, to pray more often to our Heavenly Father. This is a proof of our sincerity, love, and dependence upon God, and of our reverence in our hearts for God.

Oh Yes! God Hears! God Knows! God Delivers!
1751 Damon Street. Tarrant, Alabama 35217

Honesty

A policy of absolute honesty can make a man's character and ruin his golf game

Nobody ever got hurt on the corners of a square deal.

Most men would be willing to earn their money honestly if it didn't take so long

Common honesty should be more common

When you sell yourself, be sure that you don't misrepresent the goods.

To be honest with the world, one must give it at least the equivalent of what he receives from it.

Isn't It Good To Know...

In the first chapter of Genesis it is stated that what God created was "good" and "very good" (Genesis 1:4,10, 12,18,21,25,31). Thus, we should understand that God does good things for us, and that He expects us to do good things for Him.



W. A. HOLLE

What are some of the good things we should know and appreciate? We shall note . . .

(1) Isn't it good to know that God loved this old sinful world and that He gave His only begotten Son to die upon the cruel cross for every man? (John 3:16-17; Hebrews 2:9).

(2) Isn't it good to know that we have the exalted privilege of becoming the children of God? Sinners are without God and without hope in the world (Ephesians 2:12). Sinners are lost and the only way God has provided for their salvation is through obedience to Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; Hebrews 5:8-9). What are the steps of obedience? (1) *Faith*, Hebrews 11:1,6; Romans 16:26; (2) *repentance*, Acts 2:38; 17:30; (3) *confession* of Jesus' name, Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; and (4) *baptism* in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16. One is saved, not by one of these acts alone, but by all of them combined into obedience.

(3) Isn't it good that one can become a Christian, and live faithfully the Christian life, even unto death (Revelation 2:10). Satan, as powerful as he is, cannot force one from righteousness nor to embrace wickedness. If one will resist the devil, he will flee from one devoted to the service of Christ (James 4:7). One becomes a backslider when he yields to temptation. There is a way of escape if one will but take advantage of the avenues the Holy Scriptures open to us (I Corinthians 10:13). "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15). If man is a sinner it is because he has willingly enter into sinful activity.

(4) Isn't it good to know God is always with those who are always with him? II Chronicles 15:2 reads: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." Here is another passage which has some bearing on the subject: "Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you" (II Chronicles 24:20). Thus, the doctrine of once in grace, always in grace, is a false doctrine (Galatians 5:4; I Corinthians 9:27; II Peter 2:20-22). The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is conditional - - to those out of the church, and to those in the church. [Actually, the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is the doctrine of universalism narrowed down to the saved in the church!] Thus, if you want the Lord to be with you, you must be with the Lord! God's Holy presence, his blessings, his constant blessings and care, are conditional. God does not save and protect anyone who devotes his life to the service of devil!

(5) Isn't it good to know that God hears and answers the prayers of his children. It is true that in a sense God is the Father of all men; but in a very special sense, God is the Father of his children only - - those who have been born again, born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3,5; I Corinthians

4:15; II Corinthians 5:17). God is not the spiritual Father of Satan's children. Satan is their father. God is the Father of those who obey his commands and his commands only. We strongly suggest that the honest reader read, Romans 6:16; John 8:44; I John 3:10. God does not hear the prayers of anyone who deliberately lives in rebellion to his will (John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9; I John 5:14). Again, as stated by the apostle Peter: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:12). It is the prayer of the "righteous man" that avails (James 5:16).

(6) Isn't it good to know that we can know that we are the children of God? "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John

2:3-4). We know if we have believed and if we have obeyed the truth of God; and we know if we have not obeyed God. If you believe, you know it; if you have repented, you know it; if you have confessed Jesus' name, you know it; if you have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, you know it. Bible truth and Bible testimony will stand the test in the Day of Judgment far better than our dreams, experiences, and feelings.

(7) Isn't it good to know that when life is over, there is a heaven to which we can go and spend an eternity there, if we have been faithful unto death? (Revelation 2:10). Heaven, that sweet home of the soul! Where there is no sorrow, no tears, no pain, no death, throughout one long eternal day! Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Are you ready??

P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Word Search Puzzle

JOHN HUDSON TINER

TITLE: Simon Sees The Saviour

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 2:22-35

WORDS:

JERUSALEM	SACRIFICE	TURTLEDOVE
PIGEONS	SIMEON	JUST
DEVOUT	TEMPLE	EYES
SEEN	SALVATION	LIGHT
GLORY	BLESSED	

WORD SEARCH: (Words may be backward, forward, across, up, down or diagonal.)

N	S	N	O	E	G	I	P	D	J
S	O	D	T	F	J	E	Y	E	S
I	P	I	E	U	L	U	R	M	A
M	T	G	T	S	O	U	S	M	C
E	B	H	E	A	S	V	P	T	R
O	F	E	G	A	V	E	E	U	I
N	N	Q	L	I	B	L	L	D	F
R	T	E	M	P	L	E	A	B	I
S	M	G	L	O	R	Y	B	S	C
T	U	R	T	L	E	D	O	V	E

- P. O. Box 38, House Springs, Mo. 63051

Word Search Puzzle

JOHN HUDSON TINER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 2:8-18

TITLE: Shepherds Hear About Jesus

WORDS:

SHEPHERDS	WATCH	FLOCK
NIGHT	ANGEL	GOOD
TIDINGS	GREAT	JOY
SAVIOUR	CHRIST	GLORY
PEACE	EARTH	

WORD SEARCH: (Words may be backward, forward, across, up, down, or diagonal.)

V	N	T	T	A	E	R	G	B	S
X	Q	S	I	F	N	Y	J	E	H
G	E	C	L	D	R	G	A	L	E
N	O	O	H	O	I	R	E	B	P
D	C	O	L	R	T	N	M	L	H
K	M	G	D	H	I	J	G	Z	E
E	C	A	E	P	O	S	M	S	R
R	U	O	I	V	A	S	T	J	D
R	A	D	W	A	T	C	H	O	S
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- P. O. Box 38 House Springs, Mo. 63051



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most of you have become drunk with the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1983

NUMBER 43

"Call Her Blessed"

W. DON FIKE

Belle Evans Fike Taylor was born April 27, 1895, and passed from this life August 24, 1983.

Her childhood days were spent in the Liberty Hill Community south of Oakman, Alabama, where she obeyed the gospel under the preaching of such men as G. C. Brewer and John T. Lewis.

For 38 years she was married to Walter H. Fike who preceded her in death in 1951. They were pillars in the little Ripley congregation in Walker County, where brother Fike served as an elder of the church. In 1954 she was married to brother Hubert Taylor, an elder at the McCollum church, who passed from this life in 1969.

Among her attributes as a Christian was hospitality. This was especially true toward preachers and their families. Even before the days of indoor plumbing and electricity, preachers often stayed at her house during gospel meetings. Such names as Cannon, Ballard, Hester, McClesky, Calloway, Haney, Hollingsworth, Pounds, Camp, Duncan, Nichols, etc., ate at her table through the years. This was a contributing factor to the fact that her only son, W. Don Fike, is a gospel preacher. He preaches for the Belvedere congregation in Jackson, Mississippi. Four grandsons are also preachers of the gospel. These include Neil Myers, North Pickens Church, Gordo, Alabama; Barry Fike, West Hickory congregation, Hickory, North Carolina; Paul Fike and Byron Fike who work with congregations in Memphis, Tennessee, as well as continue their education at Harding Graduate School of Religion. Two great-grandsons who preach are Don Jackson from Kosciusko, Mississippi, and Greg Myers, a student at Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee.

Although she was a great lover of flowers and often furnished them for decorations, funerals, and shared them with those who appreciated them, Momma Taylor felt it was not good stewardship to put much money into flowers that soon wilted and died at the cemetery while preachers needed to be trained, orphan children cared for, etc. Because of this spirit, the family requested memorial contributions be made to the Fike-Cropper Scholar-

ship Fund, Harding Graduate School, 1000 Cherry Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38117.

The funeral service was conducted August 26, 1983, at Jasper by members of the family. W. Don Fike opened the service with her favorite scripture verses and brief remarks. Paul Fike directed congregational singing. Byron Fike read Proverbs 31 and shared remembrances. Don Jackson led the assembled group in prayer, and Neil Myers gave the sermon. At the grave Greg Myers read the scriptures and Don McLeod, another grandson, closed the

service with a prayer.

The body was borne to its final resting place at the Pleasant Hill Cemetery near Townley to await the great resurrection.

Her surviving children, Mrs. Arnold Odom and Don Fike along with nine grandchildren, sixteen great-grandchildren and nine great-great-grandchildren rise up and "call her blessed."

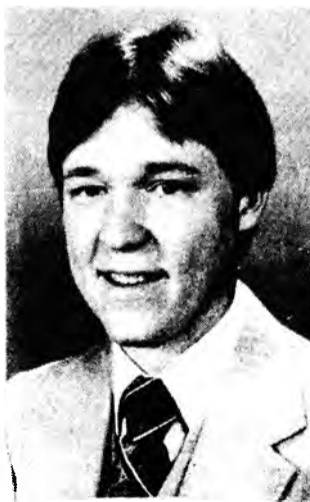
Belvedere Church, 2650 Belvedere Drive, Jackson, MS 39212

Detestable Worship

Isn't it a wonderful thing to be gathered with the Lord's people at a worship service and praise and glorify God for what he has done for us? Unfortunately Isaiah had to plead with the Israelites, in Isaiah 1:10-20, to return to pure and undefiled worship instead of giving ritualistic, formal worship.

Isaiah describes the rulers of Israel as rulers of Sodom: meaning that they were the ones chiefly responsible for the corruption of the worship of God. "We're not that bad. We give outward satisfaction to the law," they claimed. They felt that combining corrupt practice with what was commanded would be accepted by God because they were doing what he commanded. But in Amos 5:21-27 we find that God had rejected even their correct attempts to worship him which otherwise would have been accepted.

Looking down on them God asked, "What pleasure




BARRY FIKE

do I have in your worship?" (verses 11-15). There was no deficiency in their sacrifices. They gave God what he had required of them, but neglected the spiritual application of his word (Matthew 23:23). Doing such a thing without involving the heart made it a wearisome thing for God (Psalms 51:16-19). They came to the temple and walked around it, but all they were doing was wearing out the floor. Thus God said in no uncertain terms, "If you can't do it the way I told you, don't do it at all!" Their worship had developed into nothing but a hypocritical dead work. Their prayer was not even heard by God.

Now look at us today! Are we any different? We are supposed to be peculiar from the world (1 Peter 2:9); but are we? Do we also have that outward SHOW of religion, yet reject the spiritual application in our lives? Do we worship from the heart? (Ephesians 6:5,6) Coming to the building, do we worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24)? or, do we just wear out the carpet? Brethren, if we can't worship God the way he has told us to, then let us not do it at all! It is nothing but a hypocritical dead work (Hebrews 10:22). Instead of blessing us, such will curse us. God does not accept worship that is

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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Detestable Worship

Continued from page 1

associated with wickedness (Matthew 5:23,24). Even our prayers won't be heard if they are not prayed from the heart (2 Timothy 2:22).

Is your worship detestable worship? or, true worship? It doesn't matter what you call yourself or what you do; if it is not in accord with God's word then it cannot be right. To become acceptable we must do what Isaiah suggested in verses 16-20.

First, we need to wash and cleanse ourself of the sin that pollutes us. Repentance is the first step to cleanse our soul from sin. We all have the ability to do that.

Second, they were told to put away evil. God cannot look upon such (1 Peter 3:10,11).

Third, they were to cease to do evil. Such does not immediately go away, so they were to wrestle with it until it did. If we want to please God we must put all evil away (Mark 9:43-47).

Fourth, we must become accustomed to doing good. When you quit one thing replace it with some good.

Fifth, instead of seeking for injustice, now look for justice.

Sixth, direct the oppressor in the way of justice, and if this means discipline such is necessary and should be properly administered.

Seventh, help the fatherless and the widow. Both have always stood under the special guardianship and care of God (Exodus 22:20-22; Jeremiah 7:6; Malachi 3:5; James 1:27).

Israel, like us, was worthy of death, but by the grace of God they were turned into saints of white. We too can receive that same cleansing through the blood of Christ by being baptized into his death (Romans 6:3,4).

Remember that for worship to be correct in the sight of God, one must do that which is pleasing to him and in accordance with his will.

Is your worship, "will worship?" detestable worship? or acceptable worship? This question should be answered, and answered correctly, before you stand before your judge in the time of eternity to assure yourself a home in heaven. Is your worship correct? — Rt. 2, Box 806-B Connelly Springs, N.C. 28612.



The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Make Your Home What God Wants It To Be

Jesus asked, "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6). God's original plan for marriage is that one man and one woman are to be united for life. God, who said, "I am the Lord; I change not" (Malachi 3:6), hates divorce, for he said, "I hate putting away" (Malachi 2:16). In this passage the King James II translators made it read: "I hate divorce."

Our loving Father had man's ultimate good in mind when he designed marriage to last a lifetime. The Holy Spirit directed Paul to write: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Romans 7:2-3).

That more and more marriages fail seems self-evident. In 1870 there were thirty-three marriages for one divorce in the United States. By 1900 there were only twelve marriages for each divorce. By 1930 there was one divorce for every seven marriages, and by 1960, one for every four! My father told me that he was sixteen years old before he ever saw a person whom he heard had been divorced! Now divorce, or at least family problems, and separations, touch almost every family — IN THE CHURCH as well as out of it.

One national journal, *Better Homes And Gardens* (July, 1983), published the results of a survey of its readers relative to threats to family life. Admittedly its readers may not be a fair cross-section of America's population, for of the 201,320 who responded to a questionnaire, 72 percent had attended and/or graduated from college, with 18 percent having done some post-graduate work; 85 percent were homeowners; the median income was \$33,462 per year; 89 percent are married; 43 percent have children aged 12 and under, while 26 percent have children 19 to 18 years of age. (It was interesting to note that, besides answering the questionnaire, ten thousand of those responding also wrote letters!) Because of the multiple-choices, many checked more than one answer. This accounts for the fact that when added together the total equals more than one hun-



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

dred percent.

When asked to identify the main reason why marriages fail, their answers were:

- 36 percent Immaturity of one or both spouses.
- 34 percent Selfishness.
- 28 percent Change in, and/or lack of, mutual interests and goals.
- 21 percent Financial problems.
- 10 percent Personality conflicts.

(In descending order they named: third party entanglements, job/career pressures, poor sexual relationships, domestic violence, conflicts with relatives, and the burden of children).

When asked for the greatest threat to family life in 1983, they cited:

- 33 percent Absence of religious/spiritual foundations.
- 26 percent Inattentive parents.
- 22 percent Divorce.
- 20 percent Moral decay.
- 17 percent Economic hardships.
- 16 percent Both parents working.

(In descending order they listed: abuse of drugs and alcohol; materialism; television, unemployment, crime, and war).

Notice that one-third of those responding listed as the greatest threat to our homes — in 1983! — is the absence of religious/spiritual foundations! In view of this, how can Christians stay away from church services, have no family devotionals, never pray together, and never read their Bibles? We cannot afford to rear another generation without spiritual guidance from God's word! Teach your children the Bible. Centuries ago God said: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 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. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Under how much greater obligation are we, who have a "better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6), to teach our children about our blessed Savior?

The first cause listed for marriage failures was lack of maturity on the part of the spouses — one, or both, of them. Children depend upon their parents and others. Adolescents seek to be independent, and resent authority. Upon reaching MATURITY, one should seek for the good of others as well as for himself, while striving to do God's will at all times. To strike back to hurt others, is a mark of immaturity, which often ends in separations and divorces. Marriage is not for babies, nor for children! Those who marry too young, who have not first matured and developed socially, psychologically, and physically, will find it hard to resist the

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Make Your Home What God Wants It To Be

Continued from page 2

temptations to be selfish, rude, jealous, cruel, and emotionally unstable. Some never become more mature than the boy who says, "If I can't be FIRST at bat, I'll take my ball and go home!" Maturity includes learning the principle that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). God first taught man to *work* — then provided for his marriage! (Genesis 2:15,18). Parents, right now is a good time to teach your children this verse: ". . . study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands" (1 Thessalonians 4:11). Those who marry while too immature for home-building responsibilities, and later find the going rough, are likely to quit and "go home to Mama!" Maturity helps people adjust themselves and to solve their problems together.

Inner conflicts with one's self contribute to the collapse of some marriages. If a husband is unhappy with himself, or a wife is miserable within herself, the inner struggles with self makes the partner (and others about such a person) unhappy also. While maturing for greater usefulness to God, happier lives, and for more efficient service, learn thoroughly Christ's perfect pattern for mental health — the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). Learn also Paul's 'recipe' for happiness from Philippians 4:1-15. Cultivate an inward contentment, for it is vital to happiness in the home. I commend Bro. Hugo McCord's book on the Beatitudes, which he entitled: *Happiness Guaranteed!*

In marriage, the husband and wife assume the responsibility to promote each other's happiness and welfare. Selfishness and inconsideration have wrecked many a marriage. In the lifelong bonds of wedlock, Jesus said the "two become one flesh," and that they "are no more twain (two), but one flesh" (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:3-12). The apostle Paul wrote: "He that loveth his wife, loveth himself" (Ephesians 5:28). Since marriage is for life, "trial" marriages are taboo. Even if husband and wife separate, they must "remain unmarried, or be reconciled" to each other, to whom God has 'joined' them (1 Corinthians 7:11). The traditional ceremony includes the vows of commitment to each other "so long as you both shall live in this world." A failure to recognize the permanence of the bonds of matrimony leads to easy 'dissolution' (in the eyes of men) of those bonds.

Some fail to recognize the home as a divine institution — but it is! Marriage is ordained of God to increase human happiness, and to support social order. Jesus wants marriage now to be what it was in God's plan "at the beginning" (Matthew 19:3-6). "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). This proves that God knows who the married people are, and who are not married — and that he will "judge" the whoremongers and adulterers. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Adultery causes some marriages to fail. This is the one — and only — cause for which the Bible grants a right to divorce, with the subsequent right to remarry (Matthew 5:32; 19:3-9). One is playing with fire (Proverbs 6:27-29) when he or she begins to flirt and pet outside the bonds of marriage. God intends that husband and wife give their bodies to each other only (1 Corinthians 7:1-7). Jesus said, "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). It is so exceedingly difficult to get people to repent of such lusts of the flesh, that Peter wrote of some "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin" (2 Peter 2:14).

Strong drink also wrecks many marriages. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). A billboard ad of a distillery depicted the

deterioration of one's penmanship under the influence of their product, and said: "You can't handle a car when you drink: you can't even handle a pen!" What an admission! Wine is never more than 14 percent (some say 12 percent) alcohol, for when fermentation reaches 14 percent alcohol, it destroys the bacteria which causes fermentation, and naturally never gets any stronger. (Man has learned that by adding more alcohol to it, he can 'fortify' wines!) But God said, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright" — in other words, when it is fermenting! (Proverbs 23:29-35). Total abstinence from alcoholic beverages is God's will! Alcohol — whether it be in wine, beer, gin, vodka, whiskey, or whatever — dethrones reason and impairs judgment. People under its influence are less capable of making intelligent decisions. Discernment is diminished, inhibitions against evil are subdued, and moral judgments are more difficult. This fact gave rise among men who would rob girls of their virtue, to the following ditty: "Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker!"

Solomon observed that under the influence of alcohol "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things" (Proverbs 23:33).

Harsh, bitter criticism causes some marriages to fail. Some who once saw so many wonderful things in each other, and 'fell in love' with each other, later do nothing but find fault with one another. They constantly criticize one another. This fault-finding spirit tends to make one self-righteous, and leads to self-pity. In turn, this leads often to impatience and intolerance. The Holy Spirit warns that sins of the tongue will make one's religion "vain" (James 1:26). Each must learn to bridle his tongue! Learn to speak softly, for "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stirreth up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). With his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, I suppose Solomon was in position to know first-hand what he wrote: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house" (Proverbs 21:9; cf. verse 19; 25:24). The new covenant of Jesus Christ requires: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3:19). Instead of censure

and fault-finding, try compliments! My father used to say: "An ounce of praise is worth a ton of bitter criticism!" Carping, critical fault-finding can wreck a marriage!

Financial irresponsibility causes some marriages to fail. If the husband does not earn as much as the wife thinks he should, and cannot afford to buy as much as she was used to — or wants! — they are in trouble! If he selfishly spends on himself all he earns, problems arise! If they overspend their fiscal abilities, and find themselves without funds for bills, they begin to fuss and quarrel — then separate! Newly-marrieds should not expect to have as much when they begin, as their parents have after twenty or twenty-five years of planning, saving, and buying. Neither spouse should upset the couple's budget by impulsive purchases which plunge them into indebtedness with no reasonable expectation of paying the bills when due. Problems resulting from irresponsibility often culminate in separations and divorces. Remember the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), and treat each other as you would like to be treated in monetary (as well as all other) matters.

Mixed marriages often fail! The "sons of God" married the unrighteous "daughters of men" and this contributed to such terrible wickedness that God sent the flood (Genesis 6:1-2, 5, 12). He later forbade marriages between his children and their heathen neighbors (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). Christians should marry "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39), even for the first marriage (1 Corinthians 9:5). Marriages which are a mixture of persons from vastly differing cultures — socially, economically, religiously, morally, or racially — are far less likely to succeed. Religious differences, and especially standards of morality with sharp variances, foment strife and make for troubles in marriages, which may result in separation and divorce.

Let every Christian resolve to make his marriage every thing which God wants it to be. Work at the task of reforming *yourself*, not your spouse! Resolve that if there is any problem in your marriage, it will occur because you could not prevent it! And determine, with God's help, to settle it in full accord with His will!

Thoughts On The Home

By A. J. KERR

OUR NATION, OUR COMMUNITY, and THE CHURCH cannot be any stronger than our homes. What we have read and heard about the homes on a national basis has not been good. One out of three marriages ends in divorce. The news media has given a lot of publicity to child abuse, wife beatings, the swapping of mates, couples living together out of wedlock, unfaithfulness, and incest.

Therefore, it is refreshing to find an article which lends encouragement to the brighter side. It was with a great deal of interest that I read in the Birmingham News of August 5, 1983, an article entitled: "Marriage study shows happiness, satisfaction" and this was written by Linda Owens. Her article was based on a book which has recently been released, "Wifestyles," by Dawn Sangrey. Mrs. Sangrey spent a year personally interviewing women in different parts of the United States and nearly three-quarters of the *Wifestyles* women gave their marriage a rating of 8 to 10 on a scale of 0 to 10. Ninety-two percent would marry the same man again; 73 per-

cent were satisfied with their sex lives; 94 percent of the mothers would have their children again. But for Mrs. Sangrey, the most powerful evidence was in the stories the women told of their deep joy in the ordinary things and the continuity of traditional married life.

May each of us be determined to keep our homes a fortress of love, joy, peace, fairness, consideration and stability.

The Bible is the greatest source book of **material** on the home. Now is a good time to take **stock of your** home! Does it meet with God's approval? Route 1, Box 287, Eldridge, AL 35554

Sooner or later we all need some foreign aid — the kind we get from praying.

Prayer must mean something to us if it is to mean anything to God.

A short prayer will reach the throne of grace — if you don't live too far away.

Fishers Of Men

CARLOS GUNTER

When you go fishing, what do you take with you? You would probably say, "My rod and reel, or trot line, bank lines, bait, tackle-box, net, etc." Why do you take all this equipment, and where do you go? You say, "To the river, lake, or pond." And no doubt, the only thing you have in mind is to catch fish. You are not interested in anything else. You don't want to be bothered with anything not connected with fishing. As long as you are fishing, you have to stay where the fish are.

Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). If I am going to fish

for men, I will have to take the proper "bait," and go where men are. I must know how to begin, carry on the conversation, and when to stop. To be a fisher of men, I must learn from Jesus.

Read Luke 5:1-11. After teaching the people from a boat, Jesus commanded Simon to launch out, and let down the nets. The reply came back, "We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." Having obeyed the Lord's command, the disciples soon had more fishes than they had thought possible. Though we are sometimes discouraged, we must do as the Lord says,

and "launch out into the deep." We must continue to be where the fish are, among the people. Then we must let down our nets; we must teach until the word is obeyed.

When the Lord had shown the disciples where and how to catch the most fish, he said to Simon, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The eleventh verse says that they forsook all and followed him. May we learn to do likewise. Route 2 Hohenwald, TN 38462

The Work Of An Evangelist

BARRY CUNNINGHAM

That an evangelist (preacher) has a SPECIFIC work to do is emphasized in Paul's words to Timothy: "... do THE work of an evangelist ..." (2 Timothy 4:5).

The work of an evangelist is preaching (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Romans 10:15).

The apostles made preaching their top priority.

Even the care of hungry widows could not supersede the preaching of the word. "It would be a grave mistake for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait at tables" (Acts 6:2, N.E.B.)

Since preachers today are uninspired they must "study" (2 Timothy 2:15), "give attendance to reading" (1 Timothy 1:13), and "meditate," i.e., practice contemplative thought (1 Timothy

4:15) in order to preach the gospel well.

During ninety two consecutive days I have taught or spoken for the Lord publicly at least seventy eight times. This required much study and preparation. It would please me to speak for Jesus seventy eight times seven, for THIS is THE work of a preacher.

P.O. Box 242 Morris, AL 35116

THE SECOND ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES



STUDIES IN HEBREWS

NOVEMBER 13-17, 1983

DUB McCLISH, DIRECTOR

312 PEARL ST. - 817/387-3531

CHURCH OF CHRIST

DENTON, TX 76201

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM Tommy J. Hicks THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS - AN INTRODUCTION
GOD HATH SPOKEN THE LIVING WORD (He 1:1-3; 4:12)

10:00 AM Dub McClish

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Avon Malone

3:00 PM T. B. Crews

4:00 PM Goebel Music

5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Charles R. Williams

8:00 PM Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 AM Gary Workman

10:00 AM Troy M. Cummings

11:00 AM Carl Garner

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Jerry Moffitt

3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM:
Jack Wood Sears
Ben Thompson

5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Norman Gipson

8:00 PM Hugh McCord

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

9:00 AM Frank Morgan

10:00 AM Hugh Fulford

11:00 AM Robert Taylor, Jr.

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Roy Lanier

3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM:
Waymon Miller

Gary Workman

5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Bill Jackson

8:00 PM Wendell Winkler

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

9:00 AM John Waddey

10:00 AM Bobby Duncan

11:00 AM James Meadows

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Tom Bright

3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM
Arlie J. Hoover

Dick Sztanyo

5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Garland Elkins

8:00 PM J. Noel Merideth

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

9:00 AM Troy M. Cummings

10:00 AM B. B. James

11:00 AM Larry Flutt

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Winfred Clark

3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM
Robert Shank

Wayne Jackson

5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Johnny Ramsey

8:00 PM Roy Deaver

BOOK AND TAPES OF LECTURES AVAILABLE

SPECIAL FEATURE: DAILY DISCUSSION FORUMS ON CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, . . .
the Words of Truth

it speak forth

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1983

NUMBER 44

How To Have A Cheerful Heart

" . . . a cheerful heart has a continual feast . . . " (Proverbs 15:15).

" . . . a joyful heart is good medicine . . . " (Proverbs 17:22).

There is enough doom and gloom in our world. Depression is almost a national epidemic. We need a revolution of attitudes. Few realize it is far easier to smile than to frown. It takes fewer muscles!

Most people think they cannot be cheerful. Circumstances, they feel, prevent them from giving the world a smile. Yet cheerfulness can be a part of our life. It CAN be learned.

Cheerfulness does not depend on outward circumstances. Our outward expression should be a reflection of what we are on the inside. As Christians, we have much to keep us in a joyful mood. The privileges and happiness of belonging to God, should make us joyful on the inside. We should then put our inside happiness on the outside for all to see.

Some may think, "I don't feel like being cheerful." The solution is to act as one should, even if one doesn't feel like it. It will surprise you how good you do feel when you act like this. Remember: "It is easier to act your way into a better way of feeling, than to feel your way into a better way of acting."

Cheerfulness is found by seeking the good in all things. As Christians, we have the precious promise that God will work with us to have good in all things (Romans 8:28). Good will not be found, unless we seek for it. There are enough pessimists in the world without anyone adding to the number. Let us live the words of Paul: "Be of good cheer, for I believe in God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told" (Acts 27:25).

Let us count our blessings. How often prayer is begun with a short thanks for the day and its blessings. Then prayer becomes a shopping-list of needs and wants. Too often, our problems are like a hole in a tooth, or a pebble in our shoe: they are



ANCIL JENKINS

usually much smaller than we think they are! We let these exaggerated, little things, blind us to our many, many blessings.

Cheerfulness is the outgrowth of contentment.

Contentment must be learned (Philippians 4:11). You can make the world a better world by giving it a smile. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Unity

GEORGE REED

What ever happened to unity? Is it attainable? Do we really want it? How far should we go to get it? Jesus prayed for unity among believers: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (Jn. 17: 20, 21). This text is often used to condemn denominational division. Jesus is not dealing with denominations; he is dealing with the brethren. Denominations are not even of us.


The apostle Paul gave a blistering sermon on division to the brethren at Corinth. The reason there was division at Corinth was because of contentions among them (I Cor. 1:11). The word "contention" (*eris*) means "strife, quarrel, especially rivalry, contention, wrangling, as in the church in Corinth" (Vine). Rivalry is described as meaning "One who is in pursuit of the same object as another; one striving to reach or obtain something which another is attempting to obtain, and which only one can possess" (Webster). Paul tells the Corinthians that following a man will not, and we repeat, will not get you to heaven. We, as believers, can only be loyal to Christ. He is the one who died for us (v. 13). We were baptized into his name, not the name of a man (v. 13).

Problems result when we start following man. If we keep our eyes fixed on Christ (cf. Heb. 12: 1, 2), differences can be and will be settled in the Lord. The Bible says we should be giving all diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). But of course, some brethren do not want to talk. Screaming "Jesus is the Answer," and "Let's love everyone," then refusing to talk it out or

getting mad, is not unity. It is true Paul and Barnabas had a "sharp contention" (Acts 15:39), but the work of the Lord went on, and no animosity was held. How could Paul tell Euodia and Snytyche to be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil. 4:2) if he and Barnabas were not? Something to think about, isn't it? It should be noted that Paul and Barnabas did not part over a doctrinal matter, either.

Brethren who are causing division in the body of Christ are going to hell; there's just no ifs-and-doubts-about it. Jehovah abhors those who sow division (Prov. 6:16, 19). Factions are a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). Vine says *faction* "denotes ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes party-making. It is derived, not from *eris* (strife), but from *erithos*, (a hireling); hence the meaning of seeking to win followers." The brother who is more interested in serving self, and getting converts to his own little group is described by the word *faction*. James says, "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (Jas. 3:16). A person who is gossiping and dragging members away from the local congregation is causing division within the local church.

Brother, instead of getting all hot and bothered where you are, why not sit down and tell the brethren how you feel? If we can all incorporate Ephesians 4:3 into our lives, the problems can be worked out. If you feel you are in a situation like Paul and Barnabas, let it be known that you hold no malice in your heart, and worship where you can grow and be used in the service of the Lord. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, Ca. 93907.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Melchisedec Typified Christ

After his nephew, Lot, had been carried away captive, Abram rescued him and all the other 'prisoners of war,' and was returning home victoriously when a signal event occurred. "Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all'" (Genesis 14:18-20).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (Jeremiah 23:5-6). Another prophet wrote: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). Yes Jesus Christ is King now!

Melchisedec Was Priest

The first verse which mentions Melchisedec introduces him as "king of Salem," then adds: "and he was the priest of the most high God" (Genesis 14:18). He was priest when he appeared upon the stage of action, and was priest when he disappeared from the stage, so he "abideth a priest continually" (Hebrews 7:3).

Jesus Christ is also "Priest." God the Father said to Jesus: "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalms 110:1). Peter quoted this on Pentecost day (Acts 2:34-35), and applied it to our ascended Lord. But three verses after this prophecy, David wrote: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Psalms 110:4). Jesus Christ is now our high priest: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, . . ." (Hebrews 4:14). He is "High Priest over the house of God" (Hebrews 10:21). The "house of God" is "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15).

As our great High Priest, Jesus "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, (and) sat down on the right hand of God; . . . For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:12, 14). Over the church Jesus Christ is God's specially-anointed and holy one. The sacrifice of his own life, his very blood, is the richest, most precious sacrifice ever offered upon any altar. His office, work, and glory were but dimly pre-figured in the Aaronic priesthood of the Old Testament, and by Melchisedec himself!

Melchisedec Was King and Priest At Same Time

Although the regal office and the priestly functions usually were separate—were filled by different men—yet Melchisedec filled both offices simultaneously (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1-3). When King Uzziah usurped the priestly functions, God smote him with leprosy (II Chronicles 26:16-21). Because King Saul presumed to offer a sacrifice as if he were priest, God through Samuel announced: Thou hast done foolishly. . . Thy kingdom shall not continue" (I Samuel 13:8-14). Judah was the royal tribe (Genesis 49:10), but the priesthood under Judaism was established with the house of Aaron of the tribe of Levi (Exodus 28:1).

Jesus Christ is also king and priest at the same time. "Behold the man whose name is The **BRANCH**; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6:13-14). [Note: we have already seen that Jesus is now priest over the church (Hebrews 4:14; I Timothy 3:15); therefore he is on "his throne" now — not merely his 'Father's

Continued on page 3

Acceptable Worship

What is right? What is wrong? These are natural questions that rise in every human heart. When our hearts turn to religion, we ask how should we worship God? How can we know his will in the matter?

God's will to man is expressed on the pages of the Bible. The inspired writers received "the mind of Christ" and were guided by the Holy Spirit to record the message for us (I Corinthians 2:10-13).



JOHN WADDEY

Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He commands us to observe all things whatsoever he commanded . . . (vs. 20). God made him head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:22). Today we are to honor him even above Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:1-5). Paul reminds us that "whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). To act "in the name of" a person is to do so by his authority.

Acceptable worship is that which is in harmony with the will of Jesus, revealed in the New Testament. Christ through his apostles, ordained that his church commemorate his crucifixion by the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29). We are commanded to give our gifts unto God on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). We are instructed to praise God with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts (Colossians 3:16). We see the early church praying and hearing God's message preached (Acts 4:23-24; 20:7). More than this in worship you cannot find in the New Covenant.

Faithful Christians will humbly worship and serve God, neither adding to, nor diminishing from, his will (Deuteronomy 4:2). If we wish to see God in peace, and live with him in eternity we must so honor his word, for Jesus is the author of eternal salvation only for those who *obey him* (Hebrews 5:8-9). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921
6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921

Personal History A Mystery
When the writer of Hebrews (7:3) says Melchisedec was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" he simply means that, so far as the genealogies are concerned, we have no account of his father or mother, etc. We know nothing of his ancestry, or descendants. He appears in his own striking character, and stands forth alone in the pages of revelation.

Likewise Jesus, as DEITY, has no father, nor mother — no beginning of days nor end of life. He is self-existent, immutable, and eternal. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). He claimed that he was "with" the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5). Of him it is said, "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Hebrews 1:10). Also, as a human being Jesus had no earthly father, but was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-21).

Melchisedec Was King

Melchisedec was introduced as "King of Salem" (Genesis 14:18). Inspiration further reveals that he was "by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace" (Hebrews 7:2).

In like manner, Jesus Christ is now King. The New Testament church is his "kingdom." God the Father "hath translated us into the KINGDOM of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). If one is not in this "KINGDOM" of Christ now, he is not saved, not yet "delivered from the power of darkness," and does not have "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). Jesus spoke of this realm as "my kingdom" (John 18:36). The peaceable nature of this reign was prophesied when it was predicted that Jesus would be the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6-7), and "righteousness" is his scepter (Hebrews 1:8). God foretold, "Behold, the day come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah

Melchisedec Typified Christ

Continued from page 2

throne' — as if they were two separate thrones!!! Hence, premillennialism is false.] At his crucifixion, the inscription on his cross read: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37). Of the priesthood we read: "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, "Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 4:5-6). Jesus Christ, being the "first begotten" from the dead, was made priest by an oath of God the Father (Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 7:20-21). Since his ascension he wears the heavenly royal diadem, and also has on the sacrificial vestments so that, as priest, he "ever liveth to make intercession for" us (Hebrews 7:25).

Melchisedec Had No Predecessors Nor Successors In Offices

That ancient king of Salem and priest of the most high God appeared upon the scene with not a hint as to his ancestry, nor his descending genealogy.

In like manner, no monarch left for Jesus a throne, nor a kingdom. He declared: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). He made it very clear that his "kingdom" is the same institution which he called "my church" (Matthew 16:18,19). As both king and priest, Jesus Christ stands forth in his own divine right, to atone for sins, and to govern. Having redeemed us with his own blood, he now reigns over those redeemed (Colossians 1:13-14).

Never in this world will he transfer either the crown or the mitre. None ever has, nor ever will, succeed him as King of righteousness nor as priest of the most high God. His sacrifice, once offered, possesses boundless virtue to avail forever; and his throne "is forever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8). The present kingdom of Christ, which was received in the first century, "cannot be moved" or shifted aside to make room for a future millennial kingdom on earth at his second coming (Hebrews 12:28)!

Melchisedec Blessed The Faithful

That ancient monarch blessed Abraham, the "father of the faithful" (Genesis 14:19; Hebrews 7:6-10).

All believers who obey Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham, for "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29; note also Romans 4:16). True believers today have "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

Melchisedec Used Bread And Wine

When he blessed Abram, he "brought forth bread and wine" (Genesis 14:19). So also our Lord Jesus Christ took "bread" and "the fruit of the vine" and made them symbols of his body and his blood (Matthew 26:26-30; I Corinthians 11:17). We eat the bread and drink the cup in communion of his body and blood which he offered for our sins.

Melchisedec Brought Blessings Of The Most High God

He said: "Blessed be Abram of the most high

God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14:19; Hebrews 7:1). He blessed Abraham, "who had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Hebrews 7:6,7).

The blessings which we have in Christ Jesus include present happiness, and eternal life (I Timothy 4:8).

Melchisedec Received Homage And Tribute

Greatly honored though Abraham was (and is), he paid tithes to Melchisedec (Genesis 14:20). This indicates that Abraham regarded Melchisedec as superior to himself: "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils" (Hebrews 7:4). In fact, in the person of Abraham (and thus, representatively), all Israelites — including the Levites — paid tithes to Melchisedec (verse 5).

All today ought to honor Jesus! We should cheerfully consecrate to him our all — our hearts, our lives, our influence. "Know ye not that . . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). He redeemed us with his own blood! If we live, we are obligated to live for him — for he bought us! If we die, we are still his! "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8). Let us in life, and in death, give homage and tribute to Jesus our King and Priest!

Attitudes Are Important

It is an observable fact that persons of a similiar bent of mind associate with one another. One is comfortable in the presence of those of like mind. One reason the Pentecostal groups are made up of those who are outwardly emotional in their nature is that emotionalism displayed in their assemblies attracts those who have this tendency in themselves.



R. W. GRAY

If we are to articulate the restoration pleas in an attractive fashion we must find some common ground with those we would instruct. We need to assume that they desire truth as do we. Few are turned off to one who is sincerely interested in them. Few find a sincere love for truth repulsive. But men of good will are not generally attracted to a quarrelsome disposition, or to an attitude that suggests arrogance and conceit.

There is an important difference in standing firm for the truth and in using unkind sarcasm toward those who are in error. While very young this writer was introduced to a gospel preacher as "the superintendent of the local Methodist Sunday School." The first response from the preacher was, "Give me five minutes of your time young man and I'll teach you better than that foolishness!" Needless to say, it was not the influence of this man, even though his intentions were probably good, that attracted this writer to the church of Christ.

Those who delight in putting others on the spot, who seemingly enjoy flaunting an imagined superiority over others, attract men of like mind. Some who are not the best examples of New Testament Christianity have found their way into our midst. Many are turned away from the truth by men and women possessed of this unsavory disposition. Such persons and their caustic statements present severe handicaps to those who seek to teach "the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

Enemies of the church are often unkind, unfair, and abusive in their attacks upon the truth. It is sometime difficult to respond in kindness to one who apparently seeks to use every means to discredit the cause of our Lord, and who scruples not to be ugly and mean in the attempt. But we are seeing in such individuals an attitude that is unChristian, thus a disposition we do not wish to mimic. It is better to learn in such cases to "overcome evil with good."

Caustic attitudes that produce carping critics provide ammunition for those who lend support to religious error under the pretext of showing a "more loving spirit." But while we must both love and respect those caught in error's trap, we must hate every false way (Psalms 119:104b). False doctrine cannot be tolerated even for an hour (Galatians 2:5). We must save those in error with fear, snatching them out of the fire. Those who are asleep are not aware of the fire and must be awakened.

As in the past, so it is today, that many are "destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hoshea 4:6). Our attitude should be that we have an obligation to point them to the word of God, the source of knowledge. We must maintain the attitude that we, too, may be mistaken in conclusions we have reached in regard to Biblical teaching; and our minds must remain receptive to correction and instruction. We must

remember how easy it is to be misled. Those of us brought up in denominationalism can remember we "felt" that we were "safe" under the guidance of our leaders, and but for the patient, skillful assistance of those who loved us sincerely we would yet be under that cloud of darkness.

It will help us to remember that men actually think they "see" in the Bible the message proclaimed by honest but often misguided men. A woman anxious about the safety of her sailor husband gave the preacher a note which said, "George has gone to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the church for his safety." In his hurried reading of the message the minister announced: "George has gone to see his wife, and desires the prayers of the church for his safety." While the temptation exists to become impatient with careless students of the word we must practice the golden rule in our discussions with them lest our attitude become the cause of their remaining in darkness.

In an excellent article on the restoration Franklin Camp wrote, "When I appeal to people to leave denominational error and to accept the truth, I do not question their intelligence. I make no claim of being unusually smart. . . I do not accept the idea that interpretation is not important. . . It is true that each one must study and have one's own convictions; but it does not follow that one's interpretation may be just any kind of conclusion" (Words of Life, Vol. 12, No. 8). This is the balance we must have. Our attitude must remain one of genuine love and respect for all men of good will, but it is a serious blunder to assume that error should be overlooked, or that we should embrace and fellowship others despite the false teaching they have espoused (Matthew 7:21-29). — P. O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

An Odor Of A Sweet Smell

WINFREY HENNESSEE

The thought of a sweet-smelling odor immediately directs a flower-lover's mind to a beautiful long-stemmed red rose. To a child who is hungry, it might suggest the smell of gingerbread cooking.

The apostle Paul described the works of Epaphroditus as "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18).

This example given by Paul takes our minds to an elderly lady who never misses a church service, even though she can walk or with

the aid of a walker. We are reminded of Titus 2:3, and we know that she conforms to the things Paul said about the aged women: "That they be in behavior as becometh holiness." This is an "odor of a sweet smell... a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

A man who serves as peacemaker within the congregation comes to mind. We think of what Paul said of Onesimus: "who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable" (Philemon 11). He circulates among the brethren saying only the things which are upbuilding and en-

couraging to all with whom he comes in contact "The odor of a sweet smell."

We are reminded also of a group of women who sew and make quilts for the needy. We become aware that we have not one lady only such as Dorcas, but we have many. Again we have "an odor of a sweet smell."

Our minister still uses the New Testament as his guide. This means more than money or the praises of men. All of which contributes to "a sweet smell." — P. O. Box 185, McMinnville, Tn. 37110.

Children Can't Live By Bread Alone!

When tempted by Satan, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). The same is true with children. America's children have more of the material things of the world than the youth of any other nation. Yet it is also true that many of our children are deprived of the very things that make life worth living. Every child has a right to that moral and spiritual training that will teach him how to serve God acceptably, how to live with his fellow man, and how to prepare for eternity.

Every child deserves a Christian home. The adjective "Christian" suggests a home where Christ is respected and obeyed, where his New Covenant is the standard of conduct. A Christian home is guided by Christian parents. In such a home there will be an active program of training and instruction in the Christian virtues and graces. The ethical standard of Christ will be planted in the children's mind even while they are young, and reinforced daily. A Christian atmosphere of love, concern and responsibility will permeate a Christian home. Nothing may be more harmful to a child's emotional health than to be continually exposed to hostility and outbursts of anger. Such frightens and upsets a child, and he grows up assuming this to be the normal and correct way to respond to his fellow man.

To have a basis to build his moral and spiritual values upon, every child needs to be taught the Holy Scriptures. In giving God's law to the Hebrews, Moses commanded, "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). It is the God-imposed duty of the parents to nurture their little ones in the "chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). One of the best ways to accomplish this is to have a daily Bible reading program in the home. For small children it would help to use a Bible-Story book which takes selected Bible episodes and retells them on a child's level. Children need to be taught to memorize verses of scripture that relate to life and service. Important sections of scripture should be learned by heart, such as the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:7-21), the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11), the Christian Graces (II Peter 1:3-8), the



JOHN WADDEY

Christian Code of Love (Corinthians 13:1-8). Youngsters need to learn the various books of the Bible and the key characters and events of it, if they are to enjoy studying it and appreciate the value thereof. They must be able to observe in their parents, love and respect for the Scriptures if they are expected to do so themselves. Each child should have his own Bible at an early age, and should be taught its importance to life, and to take care of it.

Every child has the right to be taught how to pray to God our Creator. Parents whose child is slow to talk and communicate are usually very concerned, and will consult a physician to determine if the child has a learning problem. How much more concerned should we be that our youngsters learn to communicate with our heavenly Father. While prayer is certainly commanded (I Thessalonians 5:17), it should rather well up as a bubbling spring within our hearts. Teach your toddlers simple prayers of thanksgiving, praise, and request. To pray acceptably they need to learn to pray through Christ, our only mediator (John 14:15; I Timothy 2:5). They must be taught to pray in accordance with God's will (Matthew 26:39), since we should not expect God to give us things contrary to his will. As in other areas, children learn first and best by imitation. Your children need to see their parents earnestly praying to God in the home. That lesson will be indelibly stamped upon their hearts.

To be taken to worship and Bible School is the right of every child. Since "each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12), each must have opportunity to know the Lord and how we should live before him. Is it not strange that some parents who recognize the children's need for

secular education and training, will wholly ignore the same need in the spiritual realm? If you expect your son or daughter to live a respectable, exemplary life, you must see that he or she receives that spiritual training that will guarantee such. Only when they are trained up in the right way will they walk in it (Proverbs 22:6).

Parents who want their youngsters to have the best that life can offer will see that the family regularly worships the Lord with his congregation. A child is blest indeed who has such in his weekly routine. As he learns to honor God he will also honor his father and mother, and will respect his fellow man.

As your child grows into adolescence he should become conscious of his moral responsibility to God's law. His transgressions will arouse guilt in his tender heart. At that point in life he or she needs to know God's plan for forgiveness and redemption. All must learn of Jesus, and trust him as their Lord and Saviour (Romans 10:17; John 8:24). They must be encouraged to acknowledge their sins to God and resolve to overcome them. This God calls repentance (Acts 17:30). When they are prepared to publicly confess Christ as Lord, they should be immersed with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:3-4). Upon so doing Christ's blood will wash away their sins (Acts 2:47; 22:16). No greater joy will come to you as parents than witnessing your children's baptism into Christ. With your patient help and guidance they can be faithful unto death and receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Remember: To live the abundant life, your child must have more than bread alone! — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921

Ideals

Much has been said about what America stands for. Let's not forget some things that America won't stand for.

Nobody has a right to criticize the government unless he voted in the last election.

The real trouble with government is that we have too few ideals and too many deals.

The ideal of some men is to marry a rich girl who is too proud to have her husband work.

The hope is that some day the Christian ideal will be put into practice.

Keep your ideals high enough to inspire you, and low enough to encourage you.

Ideals may be beyond our reach but never beyond our fondest hopes.

Most of us have high ideals and will stand by them as long as it pays.

Our ideals are too often like an antique chair — nice to talk about and show off, but too fragile to use.

The ideal summer resort is where the fish bite and the mosquitoes don't.

Ideals are like tuning forks; you must sound them frequently to keep your life up to pitch.

The true measure of a man is the height of his ideals, the breadth of his sympathy, the depth of his convictions, and the length of his patience.

It's a sad fact that many politicians are more concerned with deals than with ideals.



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

Some Prayers Written By Gus Nichols

(My father's files contained some prayers which he had written in longhand for his local radio program. They were not dated, but it is evident the first was prepared for a specific day. He gave prior thought to the content of his prayers, calling by name some individuals. Prayer is a "taught" subject (Luke 11:1). By sharing these samples of his prayers with readers of *Words of Truth*, perhaps others will be encouraged to study carefully what to pray for, and how to say it — (Editor)

Prayer No. 1

"Holy Father, We thank thee for thy grace toward us through Christ Jesus.

Dear God, Grant the desires and petitions of thy servants this morning; grant us a fuller knowledge of divine truth as we study the lesson of this hour. Through providence shield and protect us from all spiritual harm. Use us effectively in thy service, we pray; and give us more of thy likeness that we may be endowed with the Christian graces.

Bless brother (- - -) as he is to undergo surgery today . . . In infinite wisdom guide, overshadow, and supervise in such a way as is best.

Bless and comfort all who are shut-in (he named four, then added); and others too numerous to mention this morning.

Comfort us with thine unfailing promises, and help us to lean heavily upon thine everlasting arm.

Give us a good audience, and good attention, as we study thy word, and help us to win souls to Christ this morning.

In Jesus' name; Amen."

Prayer No. 2

"Dear Heavenly Father, Make us instruments of divine blessings. Where there is hatred, let us sow seeds of love and good-will. Where there is hurt and injury, help us to bring thy healing balm. Where there is sin, help us to bring conversion and pardon. Where there is sorrow and despair, help us to bring hope and good cheer. Wherever there is darkness, superstition, and ignorance, help us to bring the light of thy truth; and where there is trouble, peace.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be understood, as to understand. May we not seek so much to be loved, as to love — so that in giving, we may receive; in loving, we shall be loved; in forgiving, we may be forgiven; and in suffering and

dying for thee, we may find the more abundant and eternal life.

We pray through Jesus' name. Amen."

Prayer No. 3

"We thank thee, Oh Father, Ruler of thy universe, that thou hast been good to us, even in our unworthiness!

Be thou our strength and power, our all-in-all, while we do our best in thy service.

Have mercy upon us all, down here on thy footstool: for we need thy grace. Comfort the lonely; lift up the fallen; support the weak; and cheer the faint-hearted.

Be gracious to us as we try to be laborers together with thee. Through thy people and thy gospel, convert sinners, feed the hungry, raise up the weak, bring back the wandering sheep who have gone astray. Strengthen the fainthearted in thy church. Let all the people know that thou alone art God; — and use us to this end.

In the name of Christ. Amen."

Prayer No. 4

"Dear God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Our Father: Grant us grace to desire and to seek thee with our whole heart. May we find thee! And so finding thee, as thou art revealed, may we love thee; and loving thee, may we more fully hate our sinful thoughts and ways, for which Jesus shed his precious blood.

Teach and train us, Dear God, to love and serve thee more nearly as thou art worthy to be loved and served.

Help us to liberally give, and not to count only the cost, or begrudge the sacrifice. Help us to fight on and ignore the pain of wounds; to toil without seeking too much rest; to labor on and on, without seeking any earthly reward.

May the doing of thy will be our chief concern and delight.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Be Ye Thankful"

Could we ever adequately express our thanks to our heavenly Father for all the good things he has given us? Despite all our problems in America, is there any other place on earth you would rather live?

We occasionally sing, "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 deserving. It




JOHN WADDEY

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 (Psalms 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 (Romans 8:28).

In the words of David, "Fret not thyself" (Psalms 37:1). In the words of Paul, "Be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921

If you are satisfied with yourself, you had better change your ideals.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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Some Personal Reflections

God teaches us that a worthy woman's children "shall rise up, and call her blessed" (Proverbs 31:28). Is this any less true of the children's attitude toward their FATHER? The new covenant requires, "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Ephesians 6:2). It is not my intention to use these columns to constantly 'sing the praises' of my father, the late Gus Nichols. However, since he did establish this journal,



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

and was its editor for thirteen years, and since the eighth anniversary of his death (November 16, 1975) is approaching, I wish to share with our readers some memories of him. Part of the glory of this tribute duly belongs to my blessed mother, who yet lives, and who will be ninety years old next March.

Reared in denominational homes, Gus Nichols and Matilda Brown (who later became his wife) each joined a popular, but man-made, church. Three years afterward, Gus Nichols heard the gospel preached by brother Charlie A. Wheeler in its ancient simplicity, purity, and power. By that gospel he saw the difference between human denominations and the New Testament church. He realized that his conversion did not correspond to the New Testament cases of conversion — so he obeyed the gospel of Christ. About two years later (without Gus Nichols' knowledge or consent) brother Wheeler announced that Gus Nichols would preach the next month. And he did! With the passing of time his wife also left denominationalism to become and be simply a Christian, and was a tremendous source of encouragement to the young preacher. After he filled regular appointments to preach for a few years, he realized that he needed to go to school. With her unstinted backing, he enrolled in Alabama Christian College, at Berry, Alabama. She told him, "Well, Gus, if you are going to be a preacher, make a GOOD ONE! — And I'll stand behind you with all my power!" She never let him down, either!

"I Am There"

CARLOS GUNTER

Born in the early nineteen hundreds (September 30, 1904) in a rather remote, but not isolated part of the country, I began to grow, I suppose, about as any healthy boy would, having fun and enjoying life. Not knowing what was ahead, and for sure not trying to find out, I just listened and learned. I remember people dying, both old and young — very young, some were. Some of the young were sick and died because of the illness; others were killed through accidents. This did not bother me too much, because it was not I who was sick; and I did not fear death.

Then there were the old who died, and I learned that it was only natural that the old should die. This did not bother me, because I was not old. So I went on enjoying life, not realizing what was in the future for me. I heard the old people speak of death; but for me, that was way, way off in a distant time.

Growing older, and by the grace of God in excellent health, I was slow to realize that I would be "there" (at the "three score and ten") some time. So, I just kept rolling up the years but paid no attention to them. I worked with men much older than I was, listening to them tell about their aches and pains, their trips to the doctor — but it did not bother me; I was not sick, nor old.

All through those years I refused to see that one day I would be "there." I sang at funerals, acted as pallbearer, preached funerals, still pushing the idea off that I was nearing the solemn ceremony in which I would be the victim.

Finally I thought seriously, for the first time I guess; "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." One word, "Man," caught my attention — for by now I was a man! and it is appointed for *me* to die some time. But that still did not move me to any great extent; I was still well, happy, and doing the best I knew to live right.

Then some one who was my age died, — and — another and another, and still another. At the funeral of each, the preacher would say that Mr. or Mrs. So-and-So had reached a certain age — and that was *my own* age. I began to think, "I am there." Did you ever feel that every support, every prop you had ever relied on had been removed? I could no longer say that I was young. I could no longer feel the desire

activities, all the family and our frequent house-guests gathered into one room, where we read and prayed together. Those devotionals hold precious memories for me. The children were given a list of passages which all Christians should memorize. On Saturdays there would be longer sessions in our family devotions in which we would recite passages which he called for by references. Or, he would recite a text, and require of us the location of it. He sometimes would turn his back and ask us to read a passage of our selection, without telling him what book it is in — and he would quote the verse before it, the verse we read, and the one following it — and tell us where it is found! On journeys he would often ask us to name various objects which we saw, and he would quote a verse in the Bible which mentions the object. He taught us to be exact, and check our memorization word-by-word.

From my very earliest recollections, healthful living and habits of good hygiene were stressed. Dad tried to keep informed by reading *The Progressive Farmer*. He insisted that we drink plenty of water (and set a proper example by drinking three or four *dipperfuls* before breakfast!), and get plenty of fresh air. In hot weather, our farm-fresh milk, along with the butter, was put into the spring, or was suspended down into the well, to keep it fresh. Later, with his own hands he built an ice-box, lining it with galvanized metal, and insulating it with sawdust. It was chilled with blocks of ice bought from the "ice-wagon," and in this box our foods were kept from spoiling.

When few houses had screens on doors or windows, his did. He sawed small latches, nailing them to the sides of the windows, to hold up the window-sash. After their home was destroyed by a 'cyclone' which swept into Carbon Hill (1917), the Nichols family sought refuge many times in a "storm-cellar," around the walls of which he had built shelves to hold the canned goods. It was also a good place to keep watermelons cool!

Before farms generally had running water, Gus Nichols built an elevated platform behind the well-house, and from a barrel mounted there, he piped water into the kitchen. He also improvised a shower-bath beneath the platform! He and Mother taught the children that there is pleasure and dignity in labor, and the advantages of cooperation: the water was passed along from the well to fill the barrel via a bucket-brigade of children!

Each child was given designated jobs. The boys helped saw wood and haul it to the house. They helped split stove-wood for the cook-stove, and kindling for both the stove and fire-places. They filled the wood-box, built fires, and (later) brought in coal and took out ashes. They (with some help from the girls) also drew water for the household needs, and on wash-days filled the tubs and washpot. They helped feed the stock, gathered eggs, and worked in the fields.

The girls were trained to make up beds, straighten up the house, sew, cook, churn, do the laundry — either at the community 'wash-place,' down at the spring, or at the wash-pot near the well-house. They also learned practical child-care by looking after the younger children. They, along with the boys, knew

Our parents believed that God's word in our hearts will keep us from sin (Psalms 119:11). Hence they saw that the children memorized selected passages, which Dad put into notebooks for us. They understood that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17), and they were building faith in our hearts. Many of those texts we memorized I use often in sermons now, more than five decades later! Before saying 'grace' at the table, each child was required to recite a Bible verse, and tell its location. Guests were also invited to join the recitation. One visitor could recall only the shortest verse in the English Bible; but when the youngest child quoted: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35), the guest exclaimed: "--He 'shore did!'"

Bible reading and prayer as a family group was part of the daily routine in the Gus Nichols household. After breakfast, before we went to school or other

Some Personal Reflections

Continued from page 2

how to hoe the garden and flowers, and to *sweep* the grass-free (!) yards with a "brushbroom" made of dogwood (or some such) limbs.

On the small farm they bought, our parents built with their own hands a house; and with a mule and slip-scoop Dad built the road to it. After we moved in, he had to paint the house. At nights he would hang a lantern on the ladder! By starting at the rear, he could get some small experience at painting before he got to the front of the house! From his earlier employment in the coal-mines and on the railroads, he knew something of wood preservatives; so he painted his house with CREOSOTE! — I doubt if there is a rotten board in that house to this day!

Most wells were "dug," but Dad hired a man to bring his rig and "drill" a well on our farm. After he struck water, Dad removed the mirror from the dresser, and held it at an angle so the sun's rays were reflected down into the hole. He let us see the stream gushing into the well! I recall to this day the pride with which I regarded him: my daddy was so 'smart,' that he could bend the sunlight and make it light up the bottom of the well!

Father and Mother never mistreated or tantalized even a dog or a cat, nor would they tolerate such mistreatment of animals. They were always considerate of their livestock, often talking to them with kind tones. Once on the way home from church, although he had on his suit, Dad stopped and helped a cow get free from mud alongside a new road where her legs were completely mired. He would let "Ole' Kate" (his fast-stepping mule — she could plow four acres a day!) rest at the end of a row, while he removed from his overall bib pocket a New Testament to review some passage he was memorizing. Then he would proceed down the next furrow, quoting the verses over and over aloud — with no one present but 'Ole Kate! At other times, when taking a wagon-load of folk to church, Dad would hop off the wagon and walk UP THE HILLS — to lighten the load for the team!

To vary the family's diet, he would take the older children to pick blackberries, and Mother would preserve them in jars. Dad could pick as many berries as all the children combined — but he was teaching us the dignity of work, the joys of family associations, and the principle that "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Support for his revival meetings often included farm products — beans, corn, tomatoes, cabbage, watermelons, sorghum (and also ribbon-cane) molasses, and even chickens. The children were taught to help "can" the vegetables, dry fruit, etc. We raised our own chickens and hogs, and kept a cow as long as practical. The day the youngest child left home to go away to school, Dad sold the cow. This suggests that he kept her not only to provide milk and butter for the family table, but also to train boys! (What will bring a boy home before dark better than such home-chores?)

Our parents never allowed a deck of playing cards to be brought into the house. Dad would say, "Cards are the devil's tools, and usually keep bad company!" But with home-made games, such as might be played with buttons, or grains of corn, like "Fox & Geese," or with dominoes, or checkers, or with sleight-of-hand parlor tricks, he entertained us for hours. Good-natured humor was always enjoyed, but nothing *risque* was allowed, not to mention anything vulgar! At all times we were urged to follow the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), and were taught to play fair. We not only read aloud to each other, but we also sang together.

Because of the harmful effects of tobacco, and because of the influence of example, he and mother taught us not to smoke. When in the first grade, I — on a dare from a boy from church! — smoked my

first cigarette. I walked right down the road toward home, puffing away. A neighbor called our house and reported what I was doing, and Dad opened the door for me upon my arrival home! After what seemed an interminable lecture, he used the razor strop — not to sharpen his razor, either! (I had smoked at one end, and he made me burn at the other)! Years later I thanked him for what he taught me, and for that whipping! Without such guidance and correction, I may have sucked those things ever since!

After Dad was stricken with repeated transient ischemic attacks ("T.I.A.'s."), we children reflected during his illness over our family experiences. Not one of us could recall any thing we ever heard or saw either father, or mother, do or say of which we were ashamed at the time, nor later. What a blessing to have such godly parents! We know they were not perfect, but they were faithful, penitent, and prayerful. Thank God for such memories as they gave us!

Young People And Family Values

Dabney Phillips, in a recent article in his church bulletin, referred to a Purdue University study conducted among thousands of young people of high school age. The poll had to do with the family, its failings, its successes, the relationships of those within the home, etc. One of the most frequent desires voiced by these young people was this: "I wish my family would do more things together!"



BILL JACKSON

We often hear someone lament the loss of a sense of togetherness in the family unit today. We cannot state that this loss is only typical of the non-religious home. Indeed, right in our own midst, in homes wherein both father and mother are members of the church, the children sense that their parents have no time for them, and all are so "busy" that very little effort is being expended in developing even the spiritual well-being of the family.

All parents need to be reminded of the will of God, stated under the Old Testament, as pertains to the family and home, and the fact that the home is to be a spiritual training ground. After stating that the words of God are to be in the hearts of the parents, the Lord continued: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:7). Clearly, God had in mind that the home would not be just a place to eat and sleep, but that in the home there is definite teaching of the will of God. More, the wording is such to let us know that throughout all the activities of the home's operation, "thou shalt talk of them."

The same point, in the New Testament, is made when Paul addressed fathers with the charge, "... provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Men may not take these areas of responsibility seriously, and there is much evidence that they do not; but there is no way that the responsibility can be shirked without penalty. By noting the Old and New Testament verses, we see responsibilities resting heavily on the parents as those who guide that home. Inasmuch as God has warned that the young are responsible before God (Ecclesiastes 11:9), and thus the young are urged to remember God when in youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1), those in charge of the homes — the parents — are then to provide guidance for these tender souls.

Many parents are most anxious for the church to DO SOMETHING for the young people when they themselves — the parents — the very ones who should be the most interested in their young, never lift a finger to provide anything. We have seen, in too many instances, parents not providing for their children in any spiritual way, and then when the child goes astray, those same parents will turn to fault the church, the elders, the preachers, the Bible class teachers. Parents, when was the last time you had a get-together for your youngsters and those in their Bible classes? Yea, indeed, WHEN??? And, what kind of spiritual environment do you provide in your home, in being a proper godly example, and in seeing that in your home spiritual things are spoken of in reverence?

Now is the time, if we parents intend to provide spiritual nourishment for our children. If we expect them to have godly homes, wherein the word of God and the kingdom of God come first, then let us show them that kind of home right now — today! And, let us take an interest in our young people, and encourage them toward, and make provision for, their having association and fellowship with others in the church. It IS the home's responsibility! — 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX 78745

"I Am There"

to do physical work as I had at one time done. No longer could I take part in ball games. Eventually I was "laid on the shelf;" and then I began to hear one say, "He sure does get around like a feeble man," or another say, "Look out, I'll do that; you might hurt yourself." Again, "Let me do that; I am younger than you are." Yes, I now realize—"I AM THERE." It is hard to realize that I am the person who was at one time, for many years, well, healthy, strong, ready to challenge most any kind of hard work — but it is true: "I am there." I am wondering what happened to all those years I have passed through so fast; I got "there" before I knew it.

But I am so thankful that early in life I was taught and obeyed the gospel and made ready to be "there." Pleasant memories are in my mind of doing what the Master, my Savior Jesus Christ, instructed me to do. Even now, when "I am there," I press on to live according to the holy and divine instructions that are, have been, and always will be, my guide. I hope to be able to help in some way to advise others, by the use of God's word, the Bible, to get ready to be "there," because we will all eventually get "there," and maybe before we know it. — Route 2 Hohenwald, Tn 38462.

True Assumptions Of The Evolutionist

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Evolution has made great inroads into the minds of many over the past one hundred years. In his book, *Theistic Evolution*, Bert Thompson gives an encompassing definition of the term "evolution:"

"All living matter as we know it today had its origin from one primitive source. From this spontaneously produced source, probably originating in the primeval ocean water from a combination of existing molecules and atoms, life began and through eons of time, changes in this life form took place in a progressive manner. From unicellular life came the more complicated invertebrate multicellular life, and from this, vertebrate life. Finally, primitive man made his appearance and evolved into the human species of today" (p. 23).

One who holds to this theory (a theory and not a fact) holds to several audacious assumptions about which he cares little to discuss. Such assumptions are: 1) order and design are the result of chaos and confusion; 2) life can originate from non-living matter; 3) the conscience can be produced by the non-conscience; and 4) intelligence can spring from non-intelligence. The dating methods of the evolutionist are also filled with assumptions which destroy the validity of the results. The reconstruction theories are nothing more than an assumption which has been drawn on paper. And their largest assumption is that man could and would create the God which is revealed in the Bible.

As stated, these are mere suppositions which the evolutionist takes for granted, which with a small degree of experimentation, a small degree of common sense, and a large degree of honesty will prove to be false. On the other hand, there are two assumptions which the evolutionist holds dear and which have helped to promote his godless theory.

The first of these assumptions is that no one will doubt what he says. These individuals flaunt their education by the use of letters on the end of their name. They consistently flash their knowledge and years of training and expertise in their field. They lecture using large words and "excellency of speech" which "deceive the hearts of the simple." The majority respect the opinions of these elite and never doubt what they have to say. These individuals set forth their theories and hypotheses as fact, and as the final word on the subject. The world is drinking deeply from this deadly fountain, having never stopped to test the bitterness of the waters. Paul, however, urges mankind, and especially Christians, to "prove all things: hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). The apostle John in this same vein says: "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). Just because a man may make an assertion does not make that assertion so, for "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). It is better to do as the psalmist instructed: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8). The reason which causes us to trust in the Almighty rather than human judgment is stated by Paul: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; . . . But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. . . . For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain" (I Cor. 1:25, 27: 3:19,20).

A second assumption which evolutionists make is that those who do doubt what they say will have no reply. This welcomed assumption by the evolutionist developed because of the attitude of indifference on the part of individuals who do believe the Bible teach-

ing of creation. Evolutionists for years promulgated their false notions, and yet, little, if any, was said by Bible believers. The attitude was that evolution is science, and special creation is religion; and that both could exist and never the twain should meet. This, however, is untrue. The Bible plainly teaches: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). To teach otherwise is to deny the scriptures and the Great God of heaven. In Exodus 20:11 we read: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is . . ." For one to express something contrary to this delves, directly into matters of a religious nature. And in Matthew 19:4 we are told that Jesus replied to the Pharisees: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male

and female . . ." To elucidate differently than this is to repudiate the Son of God. It is time that all wake up to the endangering effects of evolution. From henceforth, we must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1). It is past time for us to show the world what foolishness evolution truly is. It is time for us to doubt what they have to say on this vital subject and stand with God's word in its repudiation. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord . . ." (II Tim. 1:7,8). — 600 W. Sadosa #28 Eastland, TX 76448

Our Service To God — Is All Of It Worship

BILL JACKSON

From time to time, when this question has been asked, some men have been quick to answer, "Yes." We believe them to be as wrong as wrong can be! Getting right to the heart of the matter, one can certainly say that all worship IS service; and it is also correct to say that NOT all service, though, is worship!

Inasmuch as the Lord, in our obedience, has a claim to all of our lives, and to every aspect of our lives, then all of life should be SERVICE to him! We serve him in our thinking (2 Cor. 10:5), and in both our speech and our actions (Col. 3:17). Whatever we do, whether in word or deed, is to be done "in his name" — within his will for us. Indeed, our lives should be living sacrifices unto him, with our lives demonstrating what is God's will (Rom. 12:1,2). When one who is a Christian goes about his secular labors, he is to be in every way and in every thing pleasing to the Lord, and thus he is SERVING God. The servant to man, in the New Testament, was told to render obedience to his master, doing so "heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men" (Col. 3:23). One then can be SERVING THE LORD in being a godly parent, SERVING THE LORD in working as a farmer, mechanic, banker, carpenter, housewife, etc. This is true because his life, in whatever he labors, is pleasing to God, and is lived obediently to the Lord's will; the living is SERVICE. All obedience is then SERVICE; but NOT all obedience is worship!

The New Testament does specify some things wherein the church SERVES the Lord, and thereby the members WORSHIP. Those items are study, giving, prayer, singing, and observing the Lord's Supper. We are SERVING the Lord as we WORSHIP. But we are not WORSHIPING in the acts of repairing an automobile, washing dishes, cleaning out a sewer, etc. That is not to say that our thoughts are not always to be such that he will bless us, for we have seen that point in 2 Corinthians 10:5.

We wonder why this idea ever came up, anyway? And then we know, merely by reflecting upon it for a moment. If Satan can get across the idea that any SERVICE to God is WORSHIP, then what difference does it make, next Sunday, whether I am worshiping with the saints of God, or "WORSHIPING" by mowing my neighbor's lawn? If all SERVICE is worship, then what difference does it make, Sunday evening, whether I am WORSHIPING with the saints, or helping someone short of funds in the repair of his automobile — as Christian SERVICE? One can clearly see where such ideas lead, and we can know that Satan is behind it all. By such thinking he is leading men away from the church, away from worship, and away from God!

May we always remember that in our lives there are continual opportunities to SERVE God in our

homes, in our businesses, in our recreational times, in our associations with our fellow-men-yea, in ALL OF LIFE. But beyond these things there remains the OBLIGATION and PRIVILEGE of WORSHIPING God in keeping with the New Testament order. WORSHIP of God is indeed SERVICE, but NOT all SERVICE to God is WORSHIP! — 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX 78745.

Could It Be That Shouting "Praise The Lord" Doesn't Create The "Joy Of The Lord"?

MARTEL PACE

Most churches in the country receive free a bi-monthly magazine called *Your Church*. It covers almost any problem related to churches and is occasionally controversial. The News section (p. 41-f) included a report titled "Depression, Says Study, May Lurk Behind Exuberant Style of Worship!" (Sept.-Oct., 1983).

Seven thousand and fifty patients at a Mid-western psychiatric clinic suffered from a variety of problems but depression "showed up significantly only among Protestants who typically belong to evangelical and Pentecostal churches." This came from Coval B. MacDonald, a therapist writing in the current issue of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. For some time it has been known that many people turn to the modern emotional religions (Charismatic, neo-Pentecostal, tongue-speaking groups) for a release from emotional problems. The joy and general good-times in their services seems to put the worshippers in a good mood. (Have you watched the "Rock Church" of cable-TV? The hand-clapping and dancing would make one feel better if he were just doing it to the loud noise of a rock-and-roll band. It has interested me for some time that evangelists and rock-and-roll performers used the same methods to get their audiences involved.

If the shouting, hand-clapping and dancing in worship is a cover for depression it fits in well with the findings of Mr. MacDonald. No doubt there are many evangelists and charismatics who have a real joy and do not suffer serious depression; but I doubt seriously their exuberant practices in worship contribute any measurable amount to their joy. Without a real faith in God and Christ our Savior, the "peace that passes understanding" will not be created through audience control and showmanship by a charismatic evangelist. And if one thinks it will, he will be sadly disappointed when the show is over and he returns to the routine of daily life. — P.O. Box 722, Kennett, MO 63857



Words Of Truth

(USP)

"I am not
the Words of Truth

It speak forth

— Acts 26:25

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Serving Christ In The Golden Years

More people are living to advanced years than ever before. The consequences of this fact are mixed. Some resent growing old; others resent old people. In an age that worships the goddess of youth, we need divine guidance to develop proper attitudes toward our retirement years. Scripture teaches the older disciple how to grow old gracefully, and the young how to treat their seniors.



JOHN WADDEY

There is a place in God's kingdom for the aged. The business world may consider you too old at sixty-five, but not so God. He has always used older disciples. Moses did his greatest work between ages eighty and one hundred twenty. John wrote the Revelation when near one hundred years old. Anna the prophetess was yet serving God at the temple at eighty four years (Lk. 2:36-38). Only those widows sixty and above could be enrolled by the church to serve the congregation (I Tim. 5:9). Men must be old enough to be called "elders" before they can be considered for the leadership of the church (Tit. 1:5).

God expects us to serve his Son all our days. David wrote of saints that "shall still bring forth fruit in old age . . . To show that Jehovah is upright" (Psa. 92:14-15). Joel the prophet of Pentecost wrote of Messiah's age when "old men would dream dreams" (2:28). God expects all disciples to be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

You are needed in the church. Every congregation desperately needs the help that older Christians can render. You have more time to devote than younger adults who must meet job schedules. You have wisdom that younger folk have not yet gained. You understand the needs of people because of your life's experiences. Your knowledge of scripture has accumulated over the years. Put all of that to

work for the Master. Older women are needed to "train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home . . ." (Tit. 2:3-5). Older men can assist young men in the same fashion to learn their role and responsibilities in life.

Never retire from active duty. Of course, you won't be able to walk as many miles, or work as many hours; but there is a level of service you CAN fulfill --do it! You will probably live longer, be more alert, and surely you will find more happiness in so doing. I well remember older Christians who inspired my early years. Sister Lula Brown of Nashville retired from her work at the insurance company but devoted herself to volunteer work at a Christian youth project. She trained deprived girls how to cook and sew. She was thrilled with the opportunity. Brother John Rossbacher was going strong at eighty: He repaired old Bibles for his friends. He knocked on the doors of his community inviting folk to worship with the church. After a day of such work for the Lord, he fell asleep in the pew as we were waiting to begin our worship. What a beautiful way to graduate to glory. Few men have accomplished as much for the kingdom in a lifetime as has Brother J. C. Bailey since he turned sixty-five. Thousands have been saved through his mission efforts in India.

Above all, never allow Satan to tempt you into begrudging younger people who are now doing the work YOU once did so well. Remember, "envy is the rottenness (cancer) of the bones" (Prov. 14:30).

There is glory, beauty and dignity in advanced years. Such qualities in old age are not accidental, however. Nor are they a necessary corollary of aging. A graceful old age is the fruition of a well-cultivated, properly sown, and nurtured Christian life. In our personality as in all other things, we reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7). The aged psalmist wrote "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth . . . yea even when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not, until I have declared thy strength to the next generation . . ." (Psa. 71:17,18). As fine fruit does not appear on a tree until it is mature, so the fruit of the Spirit is most perfected in the mature saint (Gal. 5:22).

Some virtues especially shine in our later years.

Wisdom: Elihu recognized the truth that "multitudes of years should teach wisdom:" (Job 32:7). Younger disciples are blest by considering the issue of their life, and imitating the faith of their older brothers (Heb. 13:7). Nothing can be substituted for their *experience* in life and the faith. *Maturity* of thinking and action in Christ is beautiful. Gone is the rashness, shallowness and irresponsibility of youth. *Moderation* has triumphed over the temptations of life. *Mellowness*, *tenderness* and *understanding* are seen in dealing with problem people and those with problems. A "son of thunder" became "John the beloved" in later years. In older saints we see a growing awareness of a closeness to eternity. Salvation is much nearer than when you first believed (Rom. 13:11). Although the outward man is decaying, the inward man is daily renewed (II Cor. 4:16). Such joy in the heart makes a cheerful countenance (Prov. 15:13).


There is a special delight in seeing one's descendants following your steps to heaven. "Children's children are the crown of old men" (Prov. 17:6). How much more *Christian* grandchildren!

An aged saint has a storehouse of memories, and the satisfaction of a life well-lived, and of victories won. Having fought a good fight and kept the faith, one can patiently, even eagerly, await for the call to set sail into eternity (II Tim. 4:6-8).

The young owe respect to older Christians. "Ye younger be subject unto the elder" (I Pet. 5:5). We are obliged to give honor to whom "honor is due" (Rom. 13:7). Pity the senior citizen not worthy of honor because of a misspent life! The "Golden Rule" demands that we show love, kindness and consideration to those who need our special help in their declining years. Some day WE will be infirm. We must do now what we would want done for US then (Matt. 7:12). Some of the saddest words of Scripture are those of the aged Paul: "Demas forsook me;" "at my first defense no one took my part but all forsook me . . ." (II Tim. 4:10,16). May we never be guilty of such negligence.

Some unknown poet wrote this *Prayer For Older*

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

I am not mad most noble Jesus
but speak forth the Words of
Truth and soberness
— Acts 26:25

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Serving Christ In The Golden Years

Continued From Page 1

Folks. Its message is appropriate:

"Lord, thou knowest that I am growing older.

Keep me from becoming too talkative, and particularly keep me from falling into the tiresome habit of expressing an opinion on every subject.

Release me from the craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Keep my mind from the recital of endless details. Give me wings to get to the point.

Give me grace, dear Lord, to listen to others describe their aches and pains. Help me to endure the boredom with patience and to keep my lips sealed. For my own aches and pains are increasing in number and intensity, and the pleasure of discussing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that, occasionally, I might be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not wish to be an angel (angels are so hard to live with); but a sour old woman is the crowning work of the devil.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not pushy; independent, yet able to accept with graciousness favors that others wish to bestow on me.

Free me of the notion that simply because I have lived a long time I am wiser than those who have not lived so long.

If I do not approve of some of the changes that have taken place in recent years, give me the wisdom to keep my mouth shut.

Lord, thou knowest that when the end comes I would like to have a friend or two left.

In Jesus' name. Amen."

The goal of every Christian should be to grow to think as did Paul. He was eager to depart this life to be with the Lord. He was willing to linger only if he could be of some benefit to his fellow Christians (Phil. 1:20-24). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921.



Prayer Is A Taught Subject

"Prayer in the Bible is the uplifting of the heart to God It includes supplication, whether in view of material or of spiritual needs; intercession, for individuals or communities; confession of sin-- but also assertion of righteousness; adoration, colloquy with God; vows; thanksgiving; blessing; imprecation" (Hastings' *Dictionary Of The Bible*, p. 774).

"Prayer is communion with God. It implies that God is a person, able and willing to hear us, who has created the universe and still preserves and governs all his creatures and all their actions. He is not the slave of his own laws He can influence the hearts and minds of men more readily than even



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

a man can induce his fellow men to action

"Prayer is instinctive with man. In his extremity of need he cries out to God To pray to God implies a right relation to him. Acceptable prayer can be offered unto God by the righteous only. The prayer of the wicked is abomination unto him (Prov. 15:29; 28:9) Prayer is the communion of the child of God with his Father in heaven. It consists of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and petition (Neh. 1:4-11; Dan. 9:3-19; Phil. 4:6)

"Prayer is thus the natural expression of the religious feelings; and God's blessings are given in answer to prayer (I Kings 9:3; Ezek. 36:37; Matt. 7:7)." (*Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 490).

There are at least five prerequisites to acceptable prayer. First: Our prayers must be addressed to God the Father. While Jesus was on earth, he taught his disciples: "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven . . ." (Lk. 11:2; cf. Matt. 6:9). There must, of course, be proper reverence when man -- the creature -- approaches deity. Thus Jesus taught: "Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9; Lk. 11:2). "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28,29). Any prayer not properly and reverently addressed to God will, like mail improperly addressed, end up in the 'dead-letter' office! The apostle Paul wrote of "My heart's desire and prayer to God" (Rom. 10:1), and stated clearly that our "giving of thanks" should be directed "to God and the Father" (Col. 3:17).

Second, we must pray in the name of Christ. "Whatsoever ye do, in word--" (this includes our praying) -- "or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "In the name of" means "by the authority of." Christ, our advocate or mediator, declared: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). To his apostles he said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (Jn. 14:13,14). That same night he reassured them:

"Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (Jn. 15:16). To see that our prayers are not to be addressed to Jesus, hear him: "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 16:23,24).

Third, we must pray according to God's will. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (I Jn. 5:14,15). John expresses the Christian's confidence: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I Jn. 3:22). Jesus is the supreme example of praying according to the Father's will. Although it resulted in his laying down his life for us, Jesus meant it in his very heart when he said, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Lk. 22:42).

Fourth, we must pray in faith. Jesus said, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11:24). He prefaced this lesson with the admonition: "Have faith in God" (verse 22). Prayer without faith will not please God, "for 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). Jesus assured his apostles: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22). And to all Christians James wrote: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas. 1:6).

Fifth, prayer must be in an obedient spirit. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). Jesus asked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lk. 6:46). Christ also warned: "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). This includes having a forgiving spirit, for Jesus said: "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mk. 11:25,26).

Perhaps many take too lightly the assurance of Jesus: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7,8).

In the public assembly, a brother who verbalizes a prayer should keep in mind the fact that he is speaking to God, through Christ; but furthermore he is speaking for the entire congregation. All Christians should be able to say "Amen" at the close (I Cor. 14:16), hence all should be able to hear and understand the prayer. He should avoid saying "I" but should include the entire assembly by saying "we." Jesus condemns praying a PRIVATE prayer in public: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypo-

Continued on Page 3

Equating The Harmfuls

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, Memphis, Tennessee, January 20, 1976, carried an article on page 8 entitled, "Panel's Study Equates 'Pot' With Alcohol." The study was made by a special legislative study committee here in Tennessee. The committee was appointed in 1974. Its stated purpose was to determine the effects of Marijuana Smoking on Health and Law Enforcement. The specially-appointed committee concluded that marijuana is "no more detrimental to the user than other accepted recreational drugs such as alcohol and tobacco." The panel study also added, "Marijuana may be less harmful than alcoholic beverages." The panel study also added, "Marijuana may be less harmful than alcoholic beverages." What an equation of the harmfuls! For a fact Marijuana does not come in with flying colors when it is compared with other known harmfuls.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

INJURIOUS LIQUOR

Marijuana is really in exalted (?) company when it is placed in comparison with ruinous liquor! That really sings the song of its innocency! Liquor is a known destroyer of human health. It kills tens of thousands annually upon our highways. It breaks up homes. It turns men into monsters, and aids women toward a life of fleshly dissipation. It helps destroy brain cells -- damage which is permanent. It has long been an enemy of the human liver -- a most important organ of the human body. It is a wrecker of promising careers. It chases away the sanity of sobriety and invites the foolish danger of drunkenness.

There is an exceedingly-high price tag placed on alcoholic consumption in our land. During a recent year of the 1970's the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) reported that alcohol-related problems cost the American people a staggering \$25.37 billion. In that same year the total amount of public revenues received from alcoholic beverages stood at \$7.96 billion. This simply meant that society paid out some \$3.18 for every dollar received in alcoholic beverage revenue for that year. How many business men would count it a wise investment if every dollar they made cost them \$3.18? How long could they stay in business at this rate of grave loss?

The Bible has much to say in regard to strong drink for thousands of years. Solomon said it so well in Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Again the Wisest of the Ages said

in Proverbs 23:29-32: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." The holy Habakkuk said, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (Hab. 2:15.) Herein declared is a principle: Do not give another that which is harmful.

If marijuana is in the same general class with alcohol, how would the principle work in the case of paving the way for the eventual decriminalization of marijuana and of its later legalization? Is it not obvious that this is the groundwork that was laid by this committee? If not, why not? In a very sweeping statement Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:21,22).

The committee spoke of alcohol as being both "recreational" and "acceptable." "Recreational" is surely an improper adjective to place before alcohol. They affirmed it was "acceptable." But acceptable to whom? There are still many citizens in the Volunteer State to whom alcoholic beverages are *not* "acceptable" in any sense. The same is true throughout the nation. We are not yet a nation of total alcoholic consumers! This writer is unequivocally opposed to alcohol *and* marijuana, whether they are kept separate, or mixed, as is sometimes the case today.

NOXIOUS NICOTINE

Tobacco also comes into the comparison. In some ways tobacco is not as harmful as alcohol, such as in the drinking driver, the violent drunkard, or the wrecker of homes. Tobacco does its damage to its user and to his family when heavy smoking takes him to a premature grave. Medical evidence is abundant that nicotine cuts life expectancy.

It is a knowncrippler of a sound heart and a good set of lungs.

There recently came to this writer's attention some facts about smoking from the American Cancer Society. Cigarette smoking is the greatest single cause of preventable death in our country at the present time. If you are twenty five years of age and are a non-smoker, you can expect to live six-and-a-half years longer than your neighbor who is twenty five and smokes one or more packs per day! Among 25-year-old men (on the average) two times as many heavy smokers will die before sixty five as non-smokers. By "heavy" smokers they mean two packs or more a day. Lung cancer is ten times as likely to strike cigarette smokers as non-smokers. Men smokers between forty five and fifty four are three times as likely to experience death from coronary heart disease as are non-smokers.

Emphysema is on the rise in our country. It is a major cause of disability. It is a crippler. It is

a killer disease. Emphysema causes the lungs to lose their elasticity. The person with emphysema fights for every breath he gets. It becomes an agonizing struggle to face every moment of the day. Is smoking really worth the risk of contracting emphysema? Visit a heavy smoker in the hospital who is dying a little each day from this dreaded disease, and see what his answer will be. This writer knows -- for he has visited some of these.

Not much of a case can be built up for marijuana by saying it may not be any more harmful than nicotine. Again we protest the use of the word "recreational" by the word tobacco. The adjective does not fit. And smoking is not "acceptable" to millions of us who have to smell its offensive odor in still too

many public places.

COMPARISONS WITHOUT PROFIT

The committee informs us that marijuana is no more harmful than either alcohol or tobacco. There is neither value nor profit in comparisons of such equated harmfuls. Russian Roulette may not be any more harmful than two daredevils racing at each other in automobiles to see which one will first "chicken" out. Facing a deadly rattlesnake may not be any worse than facing a mad dog. But who wants to take the odds of survival with either one? Would it be much comfort to one who is dying of a deadly rattlesnake bite to be told, "You could have been bitten by a mad dog, you know!" Marijuana has not been made into a harmless, or even a wholesome, drug by saying it is no worse than alcohol and tobacco. If so, how?

AN EMBARRASSING INCONSISTENCY

A generation of marijuana users have asked their drinking and smoking parents why they oppose 'pot' while they have a cigarette in their mouth and a cocktail glass in their hands. Other than the fact that marijuana is still illegal, and the other two drugs (alcohol and tobacco) are not, the older generation has had no real good answer. In fact they have recognized the embarrassing inconsistency. Not wanting to give up their own pet drugs, older society is getting ready to legalize another drug. We guess it will join the group of the ones that are now by some considered "acceptable" and "recreational!" So far as what harm comes from all three, the panel may well be right in lumping them all together. They may not have missed the mark of accuracy in the equalization of the harmfuls. Yet what an equation! It is an equation that adds up to harm, not wholesomeness.

In January of 1971, the cartoonist Al Capp stated in Nashville, Tennessee, "When Margaret Mead told you that marijuana in itself is harmless, she was telling you the truth. When Al Capp tells you jumping off the top of the Empire State Building in itself is harmless, he's telling you the truth. It's where they both end that hurts." Add tobacco to the group, and it is where all three end that hurts, would be this writer's sentiment! — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, TN 38063.

Prayer Is A Taught Subject

Continued from page 2

crites 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. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, 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 knoweth what things

ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:5-8).

A teacher is expected to come to class with his lesson prepared. The preacher is expected to study his sermon. A song leader wisely selects the proper songs before the worship hour. Should not one who

directs our hearts in prayer to God study how, and for what, to pray? Prayer is a taught subject, and we must study in order to learn how to pray acceptably. The disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Lk. 11:1).

Too many people run out of ideas long before they run out of words

Unexpressed ideas are of no more value than kernels in a nut before it has been cracked.

Nothing dies quicker than a new idea in a closed mind.

Some people entertain ideas; others put them to work.

Biographical Preaching

Moses reminds us to "remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will show thee, thine elders, and they will tell thee (Deut. 32:7). Biographical preaching looks to those of olden times for lessons for today. No more fascinating endeavor can be enjoyed than character studies of the personalities of the Bible. The lives of notable people of the past are exciting and challenging to every generation. Goethe wrote, "Man alone is interesting to men." Christians have a rich heritage of great biographies to study, for the Bible overflows with life stories of both good and bad people. From the lives of those gone before we can learn many lessons, both of things to be done, and others to avoid. Paul writes concerning ancient Israel: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they lusted" (I Cor. 10:6). Since a congregation will never grow weary of biographical lessons from the Scripture, a wise teacher will make extended use of such in his preaching.

Everett Dirkson wrote: "Gallant men have faced dangerous and long, arduous journeys to widen the borders of man's freedom. Each in his time contributed to our tradition something which has inspired not only his own generation, but the generations that follow." Great and good men and women inspire us by their noble examples to walk the paths of righteousness. Thus we imitate Paul as he imitated Christ (I Cor. 11:1). Any person will be influenced to greater things by a study of Gideon, Barnabas, or Elijah. All will be warned by the mistakes of Judas, Bathsheba, or Herod.

The author is constantly looking for fresh ways to present the old principles of the gospel, lest his lessons become stale and repetitious to his hearers. Biographical preaching is a marvelous way to meet this need. Even youngsters love character studies.

Biographical preaching offers a unique and versatile approach to preaching in a local congregation. After one has served a church for many years, how does he preach on those same essential themes that need to be taught repeatedly without becoming repetitious and boring? How does one keep his approach to salvation, or to baptism, fresh after he has already preached ten sermons on these subjects? If one wishes to preach on baptism why not present a lesson on the man from Ethiopia? (Acts 8:26-40). He was baptized. This is the major point of the lesson. If you would preach on the errors of modern "faith healing," preach on the lame man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:1-26). Have you a problem brother in your congregation? Would a lesson on Diotrophes fit his need? (III John 9-11).

Our understanding of the Scriptures is greatly enlarged when we take time to learn of the social and economic, the religious and historical, backgrounds of the key characters. Extended research and study of these characters over many years is as close as possible to actually walking and talking with them in their ancient environment -- and what a delight that is!

One problem to be faced is where to find a good source of biographical materials that are homiletically arranged. For several years this scribe has been collecting such books and lessons. Commonly three to six sources are studied before my own outline is



JOHN WADDEY

sketched.

To be interesting, such lessons need to move swiftly. Getting bogged down on any one point is usually fatal. Lessons should be delivered in no more than 30-40 minute time frame.

Biographical lessons are really a variety of expository preaching. All agree that both the speaker and his audience grow most on the expository diet. Too, when we get thoroughly acquainted with the people of the Bible, we are better able to comprehend

the messages God sent to them. In addition, we see ourselves reflected in their lives, their struggles, failures, and victories (James 1:25). Such study aids us in improving our character.

Surely God's book is an inexhaustible treasure-house of spiritual riches which will ever thrill the heart of eager students. Let us search them out and utilize them for our own benefit and those that hear us. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Courage To Begin Again

John Callender was an officer under George Washington in the Revolutionary War. He failed miserably during the battle of Bunker Hill and was dismissed from the army for behaving as a coward. On his papers, General Washington wrote: "Cowardice--most injurious, and the last forgiven." To his credit, Callender allowed his shame and embarrassment to move him to try to overcome the past and redeem his good name. He reenlisted in the army as a private and so conducted himself at the Battle of Long Island that Washington reinstated him as a captain and revoked his earlier sentence.

May Callender's failure and subsequent success encourage all of us. No person escapes episodes of weakness, failure, and humiliation in this life. Sin is experienced in all of our lives. Paul said, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Those with the courage to begin again are people to be admired.

Sin makes cowards of many people. The devil degrades us to the extent of causing some to deny the fact of sin. The tendency to be defensive and filled with false pride increases. James teaches, "... God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

humble . . . be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up" (James 4:6, 9-10).

David, the King of Israel, took the wife of a soldier and had him killed by the Ammonites by withdrawing from him in battle. In the process, he was guilty of adultery, murder, and lying. Though we can be forgiven, we must reap what we sow. Nathan pointed out David's sin to him. David repented. Nathan also told David the consequences of his sin. He said, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? . . . Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, to be thy wife" (II Sam. 12:9-10).

David repented. He said, "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Sam. 12:13). He further said, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving/kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me" (Psalms 51:1-3).

Though the sword never left his house, David served the Lord. The Lord deposed Saul from the kingdom. Samuel said, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue; the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart . . ." (I Sam. 13:14). How was he a man after God's own heart? When he sinned, he repented. He continued faithful to God.

HAVE COURAGE TO REPENT AND BEGIN AGAIN — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, GA 30728

The Visiting Preacher

JIMMY EDWARDS

The word "visit" means: "to go to see in order to comfort or help; to pay a call upon as an act of friendship or courtesy; to go to see or stay at (a place) for a particular purpose." No doubt this definition, from *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, aptly describes one area of the preacher's work. One who would have a successful ministry must be one who calls on those who need his assistance.

The church in numerous areas has been benefited tremendously by a visitation program. Christians who visit regularly the hospitals, nursing homes and shut-ins have caused communities to have much respect for the Lord's church. Only Christ knows how much good has been accomplished by preachers who visit prospects for Christ.

Jack Meyer, Sr., in his book *The Preacher and His Work* stated: "We still insist that the preacher should do visiting that is considerable as to amount, that is steady and planned. He will exert a definite influence on the person visited. Even if the one visited never responds and forever stays away from Christ and the church, there will be an indirect influence upon those who are connected with the one visited. Often this indirect benefit or influence

will spring up in quarters of which one does not even dream. His personal contacts influence the general feeling over the community. There is simply no substitute for visiting."

In an article entitled "Serving Effectively As The Local Evangelist," Cleon Lyles wrote: "Visiting the sick, helping people with their personal problems, strengthening those who are weak, and making personal contacts with those out of Christ will open unlimited fields for the gospel preacher. We should never lose an opportunity to do good."

The preacher should use every method and means scripturally possible to reach those who are not New Testament Christians in his area. A regular schedule of visiting will be a tremendous asset to the Lord's cause. If the minister is already visiting he should improve his agenda if possible. If he is not actively engaged in a personal visitation program he should review his reasons for preaching.

In closing the chapter on "The Problem of Visiting," Jack Meyer, Sr., stated: "Never lose sight of this: the more you visit and work with people, the more you help them and yourself." — 316 La Fayette St., So., La Fayette, AL 36862.



Words Of a

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Thinking Of Men Above That Which Is Written

The church at Corinth had many problems. One of them was "preacheritis." Some were saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas" while others were still attempting to follow only Christ (I Cor. 1:12). This indicated that they were carnally (not spiritually) minded (3:1-4). It may be that Paul and Apollos were not actually the ones they were esteeming too highly. At least Paul wrote, "these things, brethren,



JOE E. GALLOWAY

I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written" (4:6).

"Thinking of men above that which is written" is an ever-present problem. It is difficult to maintain proper balance in our feelings toward men we appreciate. We are to render honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:7). We are to esteem elders "very highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thess. 5:13), and we presume this would apply to gospel preachers and to all others who help us spiritually. Still we need to realize that such men who have done so much for us and the cause of Christ are just that — men. They are fallible, and can be wrong, or become wrong, in teaching, and/or in practice. We rightly can follow them only to the extent that they follow Christ (I Cor. 11:1). The men who are doing the most in the service of Christ are still simply servants, using the abilities given them by God (I Cor. 3:5). Paul reminded the Corinthians: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (3:6,7).

Putting too much confidence in some man will both divide God's people and keep one from giving Christ the preeminence that he deserves and requires (Col. 1:18). The Corinth example shows the division that will result from such. That men often forsake the doctrine of Christ which they once followed in order to stay with some esteemed friend who has turned

aside from the faith illustrates the latter. Probably every heretic who has ever left the faith has taken others with him because of the tendency to "think of men above that which is written." At least this has happened time after time in our day. Some gospel preacher will publicly espouse some false teaching. There is no reason to deny his unsoundness since it is a matter of public record. Yet some who have esteemed him highly because of his past accomplishments will defend him, and even will follow him away from Christ into error because "he is such a good man." This happened even in New Testament times: some followed Hymanaeus and Philetus when they taught the resurrection to have been past already (II Tim. 2:18).

"But, isn't it true that love 'taketh not account

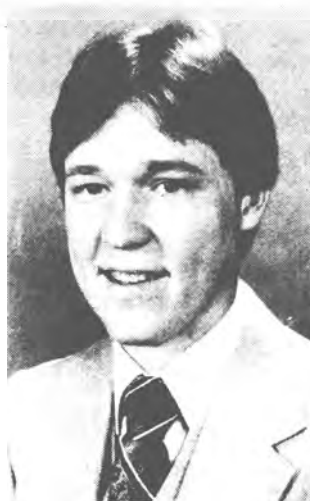
of evil' (I Cor. 13:4)?" Yes, we must be slow to believe all we hear about a person. One's enemies may falsely accuse. We should not accept rumors. Yet when it is obvious from what the person himself says that he is in error, love will not cause us to close our eyes to wrongdoing and pretend that all is well. Instead, love for God will cause us to stand for truth and right in spite of past friendship, and love for the brother in error will cause us to do our best to correct him. When he will not be corrected it will cause us to no longer have fellowship with him in order "that he might be ashamed" (I Thess. 3:14). God must be loved and honored above all men! Let us never think of any "above that which is written!" — 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.

Majoring In Minors

A motorist in Minnesota drove into a service station and asked for ten gallons of gasoline. Immediately three attendants sprang into action: one wiped the windshield, another checked the air in the tires, the third checked the water in the radiator, and checked the oil. When they were through the motorist paid for ten gallons of fuel, and drove off.

A few minutes later, however, he returned with a worried look on his face and asked: "Did any of you put gas in my car?" The three looked at one another . . . then meekly admitted that nobody had!

Does not this same thing happen often in our lives? In the rush and hustle-and-bustle of everyday activities we become so occupied with the "glitter" of the world that we overlook the main purpose for



BARRY FIKE


which we were created — to serve God and keep his commandments (Eccl. 12:13,14).

If Solomon were alive today I'm sure one of his sermons, which is recorded in the Old Testament, would be entitled, "Want to be Happy?" There would be six main points. The first would be about wisdom. The wisdom of Solomon was so great that people from all over the world would come just to hear him (I Kings 4:29-34). But happiness was not found for Solomon there.

The second point would be concerning construction: ". . . whatever he desired to build," he could (I Kings 9:10,19,24,26). The temple of the Lord had thousands of laborers working 7 years to complete it. The palace of the forest of Lebanon took 13 years. He also built a navy, cities for his chariots and horsemen, and a beautiful throne (2 Chron. 9:17,19), plus many, many other structures. But happiness was not found there.

The third point would be concerning farming. Of course having the wisdom that he had, he could do wonders with farming which had never been done before (Eccl. 2:4-6). With all of the people he entertained, he had to have some way to feed them. Having

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Be Ye Thankful"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

It is right for Christians to give thanks! God commands his children to be grateful in heart and to be expressive of thanks. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15). We should sincerely appreciate all the benefits we receive from God, and also all the favors other people bestow upon us.

Webster defines THANKSGIVING as the "1. Act of rendering thanks, esp. to God. 2. A prayer expressing gratitude. 3. a A public acknowledgment or celebration of divine goodness and mercies.

A day set part for making this; specif. [Cap.], U.S. In Full, Thanksgiving Day . . . A day (usually the fourth Thursday of November) set apart each year

for thanksgiving and praise to God."

Jesus Christ gave thanks. Hear him: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth . . ." (Matt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21). At Lazrus' tomb he prayed, "Father, I thank thee . . ." (Jn. 11:41).

The apostle Paul expressed often his appreciation: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ . . ." (Rom. 1:8; 7:25). Regarding his brethren he wrote: "I thank my God always on your behalf . . ." (1 Cor. 1:4); also v. 14; 14:18). "I thank my God on every remembrance of you . . ." (Phil. 1:3). "We are bound to thank God . . ." (2 Thess. 1:3). "I thank Jesus Christ who hath enabled me . . ." (1 Tim. 1:12). These are but a few of many expressions of his gratitude.

When brethren from Rome met the approaching apostle, Luke tells us that "Paul thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15). Paul was also thankful that those who had been servants of sin, sincerely obeyed the gospel of Christ (Rom. 6:16-18).

Let no Christian limit his giving of thanks to one day in the year, but rather "in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

Majoring In Minors

Continued from page 1

the proper knowledge I'm sure that he grew much of his own food and raised feed for his livestock. But happiness was not obtained here.

The fourth point would concern money. Every year he received six hundred sixty-six talents (twenty five tons; ten million dollars) of gold (2 Chron. 9:13). His navy brought in sixteen tons of gold (1 Kings 9:28), not to mention the gifts and money that those who visited him brought (1 Kings 10:25). Silver became as common as stones (1 Kings 10:27), and all the goblets in his house and all other household articles were made of gold (2 Chron. 9:20). It got to the point where the Bible just says, "So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom" (1 Kings 10:23). Yet, happiness was not obtained here.

The fifth point would be about all of his wives and lovers. 1 Kings 11:3 says that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. And yet all they did for him was to lead him to worship foreign gods. Certainly, happiness was not found here.

The last point would concern his social activity. The daily provisions of his table were one hundred eighty five bushels of flour and three hundred seventy five bushels of meal, not counting all of the livestock (1 Kings 4:22-24). Some have estimated that as many as 48,000 to 54,000 people fed daily at his table. The Queen of Sheba saw all of this and said that she had heard of him but that the half had never been told to her (1 Kings 10:1-9). And yet happiness was not found here.

How do I know that happiness was not found in any of those items? Because Solomon said so! "Vanity of vanities, said the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity . . . I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 1:2-14). Jesus asked, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mk. 8:36)

Let us learn a lesson from a man who did it all. Nothing was left that Solomon did not do to gain happiness. But all was vanity and vexation of

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There Ought To Be A Better Way



S. G. GRAY

Christians aspire to the highest possible moral standards with Jesus Christ as our example (1 Pet. 2:21-22). Christians should, therefore, always deal honestly, ethically and morally with their fellow man. Elders and preachers should lead the way and set the proper example as to how the Golden Rule (for example) should be observed. In most events, elders and preachers behave honorably, ethically, and morally; but there is one area where this often fails, and that is in getting rid of a preacher who is no longer wanted, or in resigning a work that is no longer desirable. Some times good and honorable men stoop on such occasions to levels they ordinarily detest.

There is no clear-cut Bible example for acquiring a preacher, nor for getting rid of a preacher. The Bible does say that preachers are to be sent (Rom. 10:15), but the present practice is for preachers to be called. The Bible teaches that God ordained the work of an evangelist as he has the work of pastors (Eph. 4:11). The implication is clear that elders and evangelist are co-workers, working as a team, complementing each other - - but never opposing, abusing or undermining each other, as is sometimes the practice today.

When a new preacher is "employed" for a work he is usually thought of as "the very man this congregation needs." Yet a few months (or years) later,

when he is "fired," HE is the cause of all the failures and problems within the congregation - - according to what is said about him! On the other hand, when a preacher is moving to a new work, he is excited over the prospects of working with such wonderful elders who are so truly dedicated and eager for the church to prosper and grow. However, when the preacher is ready to leave, either by his choice or otherwise, he may have negative things to say about *the very men* who were so great and wonderful only a few months (or years) before!

If an eldership is ready to make a change in the pulpit, but do not want to suffer criticism from the congregation for having "fired" the man they love, - - the man who sat with them in the hospital as a loved one was dying - - who wept with them at the funeral - - the elders may find ways to make the preacher unhappy so he will "resign." Recently an elder told this writer that their preacher had "resigned of his own choice," and then added: "but just before he was fired." Without persuing the matter for details it was obvious that somehow the preacher was given a signal that it was time to move on. Do you suppose that the "signal" was one of love? encouragement? support? and kindness? I wot not.

As the title of this article suggests, there ought to be a better way. What good is an article of this type if it only points up the wrong way, without suggesting a better way? Consider the following as a better way.

If both elders and preachers are seeking first the kingdom of God, both are looking out for what is best for the church, not what is best for them. If the elders and their preacher are working together as a team, from the very beginning of their relationship, they will openly discuss the work of the congregation, its

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A Little Appreciation

The pages of WORDS OF TRUTH have always carried great and useful material on such vital topics as how to establish Bible authority. One would be hard pressed to find serious criticism with the good work of brethren Bobby Duncan and Gus Nichols in the pages in years gone by. I have the utmost confidence in brother Flavil Nichols as he takes up the mighty pen in a greater capacity.

I have before me the December 14, 1973, issue of WORDS OF TRUTH in which appears a great lesson by brother Gus Nichols on New Testament examples. It is characteristic of his sound reasoning regarding the difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion. At the time of the production of this material I do not believe that I realized how important it is. Brother Nichols knew from experience that the vast majority of differences between God's people exist because many do not know how to establish Bible authority; and hence, do not know how to determine when a thing is a matter of faith and when it is a matter of opinion. I recommend that you get a copy of that issue and read it carefully. I shall carry the matter into an area where much needed teaching should be done today, ten years later, as we fight the same battle.

When God has commanded a thing either by express command, example or implication, and has specified HOW it is to be done, both the thing commanded and the way it is done is a matter of faith (Rev. 22:18,19). We may sin in the matter by omitting it altogether, substituting our way, or by doing its opposite. However, when God has commanded that a thing be done, but has not specified exactly how, we may do the thing as we deem expedient (I Cor. 6:12). We must not violate the command in either way mentioned above, nor violate any other command as we proceed. The best illustration I can use is Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them" Since "go" is generic (it does not say how; e.g., ride, walk, fly) we may go as we please. Verse 20 says we must "teach" men to observe "all" that Jesus commands. Jesus specifies what is to be taught: the gospel (Mk. 16:15,16).

Identifying matters of faith and matters of opinion is not always easy. Some things which once were considered to be matters of opinion are now considered to be matters of faith; and many are confused, and want to know why. The Bible has not changed. Are these real issues, or are they issues created by preachers and their bulletins and papers? I believe people deserve an answer. There are some plausible explanations as to how matters of opinion seem to become matters of opinion turned out (upon closer study) to be matters of faith. Such was the case with premillennialism, which was thought by some to be a harmless theory. As its advocates developed the theory, and we began studying it more closely, we realized that it (1) made God false to his promises, (2) made the mission of Christ a failure, and (3) nullified the gospel -- among other things. Like the instrumental music question, and the missionary society, of the mid-1800's, these matters were always matters of faith; some just thought at one time they were matters of opinion. No man ever changed

their nature at any time. We ought to be thankful to the men and their presses, who exposed these things for what they were, instead of accusing them of printing some sort of gossip page full of personalities and preacher issues!

Another way opinions appear to become matters of faith is when a preacher or teacher teaches a false doctrine in a limited setting (such as his own congregation where he is employed full-time, or in a college, where his influence is limited), and then writes a book or spreads the matter abroad in various publications. He may object that he has always taught the doctrine, but has only recently been accused of false teaching and therefore those who oppose him are the ones who have moved doctrinally and now seek to make what they all once believed (?) to be matters of faith. Those who go public with false teaching should be the ones reprov'd (II Tim. 3:16,17; I Thess. 5:21), and not those who oppose the false doctrine (I Pet. 3:15). These matters would never see the light of printed page were it not for false teaching to begin with. If false teachers have the right to be heard, do those who oppose the doctrine not have the same right?

Sometimes the thing preached is not the point at issue at all, but the teacher's attitude toward it. Such is the case involving the how of the care of orphans, and cooperation in evangelism. Cooper-

ation in evangelism is authorized in Acts 15 by example, and the care of orphans is authorized in James 1:27. No passage says there is one exclusive approved way. If I believe congregations should not cooperate concurrently or that destitute children should be cared for in private homes I have not violated any scripture. However, if I teach that these are the only ways to accomplish the work, and that those who practice them any other way are to be disfellowshipped, I have made a matter of option, or opinion, law; and an attitude about opinions has made it a matter of faith.

About every ten years a brother arises who believes that he is the saviour of the church. He believes that he has come along just in time to restructure it, change it, and save it from becoming sectarian and totally tradition-bound. Because of such we must ever be on guard and fight old battles again on some of the most simple doctrines. Thus, we will always need the good, sound and practical Bible instructions contained in WORDS OF TRUTH and periodicals like it. We will always need men like Flavil Nichols, Bobby Duncan and Gus Nichols. May their tribe increase. May they always stand for the truth; and may we all stand with them for the truth -- and we will all stand together. — 940 Wood Rd. Oxford, AL 36203.

Spirituality



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

When the word "spiritual" is applied to a person, the speaker is saying that the individual is led by the Holy Spirit. There are many spirits in the world. Some are good and some are evil. There are two spirits which lead all other spirits. These two spirits are God and the devil.

In the New Testament the word "spiritual" is used in the form of an adjective and an adverb. The Greek word for "spiritual" in the adjective form is *pneumatikos*. It does not occur in the Septuagint, nor in the gospel accounts. It is in fact an after-Pentecost word.

May we notice its New Testament use: (1) The angelic hosts, lower than God but higher in scale than man in his natural state, are "spiritual" hosts. The expression is "spiritual host of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12). In this passage Paul is saying that our warfare is not against man, but against the evil influence of the "spiritual host of wickedness." This spiritual host is the devil and his crowd. They are called "spiritual." (2) Things that have their origin with God, and which, therefore, are

in harmony with his character (as, his laws) are "spiritual." Paul says the "law is spiritual" (Rom. 7:14). We are under law to Christ (I Cor. 9:21). (3) "Spiritual" is prefixed to the material type in order to indicate that what the type sets forth, not the type itself is intended. Paul speaks of the "same spiritual meat," "same spiritual drink," and "spiritual rock" (I Cor. 10:3-4). All of the expressions refer to the teaching or doctrine of Christ. (4) The purposes of God revealed in the gospel by the Holy Spirit. "Which things we speak . . . comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13). The A.S.V. states "spiritual words." (5) a. "Spiritual songs" are songs of which the burden is the things revealed by the Spirit (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). b. Paul mentions "spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col. 1:9). This refers to wisdom and understanding of the revealed message through the inspired men. c. Men in Christ who walk so as to please God are "spiritual" (Gal. 6:1). (6) The blessings or gospel given to regenerate men are called "spiritual things" (Rom. 15:27). "Spiritual blessings" (Eph. 1:3). (7) The activities Godward of regenerate men are "spiritual sacrifices" (I Pet. 2:5-6). (8) The resurrection body of the dead in Christ is "spiritual," that is, such a body as is suited to the heavenly environment (I Cor. 15:44). (9) The "spiritual" man walks by the Spirit. Paul expresses it, "Walk in the spirit" (Gal. 5:16). "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

The spiritual state is normal for the believer. Paul contrasts the "spiritual" state and the babe in Christ: To the Corinthians Paul said, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto the carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" (I Cor. 3:1-3).

Such as are led by the Spirit are "spiritual." Evidence of spirituality is growth in "the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, GA 30728

Majoring In Minors

Continued from page 2

spirit. Solomon concludes that the only way to gain satisfaction in this life is to do one thing: ". . . Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Looking for happiness? This is the only way to gain it.

Listen to a man that tried everything, and learn

from his wisdom and his experiences. Turn over your life completely to Christ and believe that, ". . . to live is Christ; and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). — W. Hickory church of Christ 349-33rd St., SW, Hickory, N.C. 28601.

Responsibilities Of Christian Leaders

*Too many folks fail to appreciate the responsibilities God has laid on those who are elders, preachers and teachers in his church. Theirs is not an honorary office; it is a work to be done. In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul sets forth some of their fundamental duties.



JOHN WADDEY

They help members of the congregation to become fully equipped for serving Christ. This is the meaning of "perfecting the saints" (Eph. 4:12). The Greek term rendered "perfecting" is used for setting a broken limb, or putting a dislocated joint back in its proper place. Thus, the primary thought is that of putting a person or thing into the condition he ought to be in. The same thought is expressed in Galatians 6:1: "Even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one" Tragically many Christians function at a fraction of their capacity, and no one helps to perfect or bring them to maturity. Others are out of joint spiritually. We need good leaders to set them straight once again.

It is the duty of leadership to see that the work of *servicing* goes on in the congregation. This is the "work of ministering" of our common translations. *Diakonia* means practical service. The Lord's service involves so much more than preaching, teaching and worshiping. There are human needs that must be met. Some one has to lead the church in seeing and meeting those needs. Widows and orphans must be provided for (James 1:27). Personal needs and problems of people must be seen to. The sick, suffering and aged must be ministered unto (Matt. 25:35-40). The needs of people are many and varied. The church is God's service organization. But before any job is properly done, someone must be in charge and lead the way. Only when we do the work of ministering in a responsible way are we truly Christ-like (Matt. 20:26-28).

Christian leaders are responsible to see that the church-body is built up. Building up, not disrupting; construction, not destruction, is the work of a leader in Christ. It is not enough to be no troublemaker: the leader must be a peacemaker in the kingdom (Matt. 5:9). Every congregation needs leaders like Barnabas who "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:28). When leadership fails here, the church suffers and disintegrates.

It is leadership's job to help each brother and sister attain unto the unity of the faith (Eph. 4:13). He must know and respect Christ's wish for unity among his people. All Christians are to be one, as Christ and the Father are one (John 17:21). A godly elder, preacher or teacher will constantly work to achieve that goal in his own life and that of the congregation. It takes *diligence* to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3). "Diligence" suggests hard work — even to the point of perspiring. But that is what leaders are for in God's church.

Christian leaders seek to guide every disciple to perfect manhood in Christ: "Unto a full-grown man" suggests maturity. With proper leadership we will "no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). Paul writes, "Be not children in mind . . ." (I Cor. 14:20). Each of us began the Christian life as a new-born babe in Christ (I Pet. 2:2). Every babe needs help to grow to adulthood in the faith. We grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (II Pet. 3:18). In every congregation there are babes who

need the milk of the word, and full-grown men who need the solid food (Heb. 5:12-14). The teaching of God's word is the basis for all growth.

Leaders must see that the brethren attain a stature of growth that can be measured by the fulness of Christ: "Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" is the ASV rendition. The mission of the church is to produce and train a generation of disciples who think and act like Jesus. That is the significance of the word "Christian." Paul calls upon us to imitate him as he imitated Christ (I Cor. 11:1). That stature of Christ is attained by means of "the knowledge of the son of God" (Eph. 4:13). We are transformed by the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2). Christ in the Christian is the hope of the world (Col. 1:27). The world desperately needs to see the Lord's presence reflected in his people. The church which fails to produce such Christ-like people is failing in its mission.

"That we be no longer children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine . . . by the sleight of crafty men," we need strong leaders (Eph. 4:14). There are always some disciples who must be protected. Some folks are attracted by novelty. Such are often led astray by the latest fads in religion. They are influenced by the last teacher they heard. Sticking to the fundamentals of the faith is difficult for them. To survive, the church must be stronger and more permanent than the changing fads of the times.

There are some people in the brotherhood and in the congregation who must be guarded against. The Holy Spirit through Paul speaks of "the sleight of men." The Greek *kubeia* describes those with skill in manipulating the dice. There will always be tricky, smooth-talking folk with a cause to promote, an ax to grind, a peculiar doctrine to sell. Paul warned the Ephesian elders about this type in Acts 20:28-31. He likens them to wolves preying on

helpless sheep. Strong leadership is needed to identify and mark such men and keep the church from their clutches (Rom. 16:17,18). Because Satan is shrewd, and because some of us are naive, God gave us experienced brethren, sound in the faith, to lead the church. For this we should be grateful.

Good leadership will help us all to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). God's truth must be *taught*. It is not absorbed or inherited (Tit. 2:15). Disciples must be taught the Christian attitude of love. The overflowing kindness of *agape*' love is unique to the Christian way. As Christ taught his disciples to love one another, so must we (John 13:34,35). A congregation needs to see their leaders speaking the truth in love whether in the pulpit, classroom or daily life. Truth can be used in a cruel and hateful way; but such is not the way of a mature Christian. Whatever we have to say to anyone, "the law of kindness" will be on our tongue (Prov. 31:26).

Our goal is that every brother and sister, young or old, will "grow up in all things unto Christ" (Eph. 4:15). This last phrase aptly summarizes all that has been said. Helping each disciple to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus is fundamental to the leadership role. Not all begin at the same point of knowledge or maturity; not all grow at the same rate. But grow we must! Good leaders will help us so that whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, it will be to God's glory (I Cor. 1:31).

May evangelists, pastors, and teachers dedicate themselves to fulfilling the intended purpose of their post. May every member of the body be willing to be led to that high level of maturity God desires of him. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

*The author is indebted to Wm. Barclay for the heart of this lesson.

There Ought To Be A Better Way

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needs and strengths, as the coach and quarterback discuss the plays in a football game. No football team could be a winner if the coach and quarterback are working against each other. Neither can a congregation succeed in the Lord's work if the elders and preacher are opposing each other. Occasionally a quarterback will admit that he "doesn't have it today," and suggest being taken out of the game. If a preacher is mature and wise, he will be the first to recognize that he has lost his influence or that his preaching is no longer effective. He will also be the one who proposes a change, if he has the best interest of the church at heart. Also, should the elders detect that the preacher is no longer effective in his work, they will lovingly and patiently work with the preacher so that he can regain his effectiveness. (It is usually less expensive, and more fruitful,

to work with the old preacher than it is to hire a new one!)

Now, the elders and the preacher have mutually agreed that a change in the pulpit is the best thing for the local church. What action should be taken? Would an honorable eldership allow their preacher to be turned out into the cold without any means to support his family, causing him to become worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8)? I aver not. Hence, the elders should help the preacher to find a better work with better pay than they can offer him, and assure him that he will be supported until such can be found. However, in some congregations today the preacher is running scared, and the elders are treating him as a temporary hired servant. "My brethren, this ought not so to be!" — P.O. Box 842, Washington, Georgia.

Honesty

Our country was in better condition when there were more whittlers and fewer chisellers.

The best way for any business to keep on the upgrade is to stay on the level.

A well-rounded character is square in all his dealings.

There's no limit to the height a man can attain by remaining on the level.

Always trust a fat man. He'll never stoop to anything low.

Ambition

We rate ability in men by what they finish, not by what they attempt.

Some fellows dream of worthy accomplishments, while others stay awake and do them.

Every accomplishment, great or small, starts with the right decision, "I'll Try."

Don't just stand there — do something!

Don't sit back and take what comes. Go after what you want.

The fellow who has an abundance of push gets along very well without pull.



Words Of

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(USPS # _____)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Dangerous "D's" Of The Dollar

VICTOR M. ESKEW

The world today is saturated with get-rich-quick schemes. These plans provide anything from make-up to motor oil to mama's pasta. The usual sales pitch is that within several months one can have his debts retired, his day-dreams made realities, his delicacies at his reach and his desires at his request. Many take the proposal hook, line, and sinker, without ever having stopped to search out what the Scriptures say in this regard. Their eye is on the 'almighty dollar,' and Paul's words are everlastingly forgotten: "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Tim. 6:10).

Throughout the sixth chapter of First Timothy, Paul lists some dangerous "D's" of the dollar. First, one notes that the dollar causes DISSATISFACTION. In verse six Paul states: "But godliness with contentment is great gain." But the rich feel that "gain is godliness" (v. 5). If their gain were removed, dissatisfaction would result. Contentment for the rich is found only in the "certainty" (?) of riches.

Another "D" involved with the dollar is DISAPPOINTMENT in death. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (v. 7). Those who prosper in this life find, at the end of their existence, they must leave all their gains behind. Now applicable at this point is the statement of Jesus: "But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20,21).

A third "D" is DISCONTENTMENT. Without the abundance of this life's goods, the rich find it hard to be content. They find Paul's statement in verse eight as one hard to be digested: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." This was one of the problems of the rich young ruler, who, when told to "sell all thou hast, and distribute to the poor," was "very sorrowful: for he was very rich" (Luke 18:22,23).

"D" number four is the DROWNING in misery and perdition. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition"

(I Tim. 6:9). James emphasizes how man's lusts are involved in temptation leading one to sin and ultimately to spiritual death: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14,15). Jesus referred to such individuals as "thorny ground" (Matt. 13:22).

The fifth "D" is revealed in verse 10: it is the DESIRE for more. This is expressed in the phrase, "which while some coveted after." As stated before, these individuals are discontent with the basic necessities of life. They are constantly wanting more. They consistently seek new ways to add to their vast empire. Some reach the point at which they no longer regard God. Earthly treasures are sought first, and the kingdom of God may even be forgotten. If not forgotten, mere lip service is paid to the God of heaven.

Consequently, there is the sixth "D," a DEPARTURE from the faith. Paul affirmed this when he said: "they have erred from the faith" (I Tim. 6:10). Jesus used the words: "and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22). At this point riches become their god. Priorities are changed from seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness to the savage search for surplus and gain (Cf. Matt. 6:33).

This then leads to a DISTORTION of their lives, the seventh "D," "for they pierce themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:10). What they thought would lead to the pleasures of paradise soon turns to shouts of sadness and mourns of remorse. Seeing this, the poor usually question: "How can he be so sad when he is so rich?" But what seems to be a paradox to the human mind was foretold by the Scriptures many years ago.


An eighth dangerous "D" of the dollar is DISESTEEM for others. It is for this reason that Paul tells Timothy to "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded" (I Tim. 6:17). All too often wealth causes a person

to be haughty, arrogant, self-complacent, and self-glorified which results in one's having a higher opinion of himself than he ought. When this happens others are disesteemed, degraded, and demerited. Regardless of the pride one has at the present, the words of Jesus will remain true: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12).

The final "D" is the DECEPTION of self. The tendency of the rich is to place their "trust in uncertain riches" rather than "in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Tim. 6:17). Regardless of the faith one may have in riches, those riches will perish with using. The day will come when they all will be destroyed" (II Pet. 3:10). And those found with faith in them rather than in God, the giver of "every good and perfect gift" (James 1:12), will perish with them. They will never enjoy the heavenly riches for they never had any credited to their account.

In conclusion, let us remember that riches in and of themselves are not evil. It is the "love" of such which is the "root of all evil" (I Tim. 6:10). If the rich will do good, be rich in good works, be ready to distribute, and be willing to communicate, they will also be "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:18,19). The wealthy who do this, however, are not many in number for Jesus said: "... How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:24,25). But to the rich who want to do that which is right, he did leave some very encouraging words: "... But with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). — 600 S. Sadosa #28 Eastland, TX 76448.

A man without a single idea is less of a bore than a man with only one idea.



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691-760)

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

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The Wisdom Of Silence

Due to my moving and all the activities associated therewith I am substituting this article by John Waddey this week for my editorial.

Flavil H. Nichols

* * * *

In Second Thessalonians 2:3 Paul warns, "Let no man beguile you in any wise . . ." Those brethren were being troubled by folks claiming to be Christians who were in reality false teachers. A war rages for the souls of men (II Cor. 10:3-5). As disciples of Jesus we are caught up in that warfare and it will last till Jesus comes again (Rev. 20:7-10). It is impossible to have a conflict-free Christian life. We must be prepared to fight the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12), and be good soldiers of Christ (II Tim. 2:3). Elders are our appointed leaders in this combat. It is our duty as Christians to submit to and follow their leadership (Heb. 13:17).



JOHN WADDEY

Elders as leaders often have to make serious decisions for the cause that are painful and difficult. These are especially hard when they deal with personalities such as preachers. Poor leaders fail at this point and the congregation suffers accordingly. Good leaders will do what has to be done to ensure the success of the Lord's work.

A leader cannot always reveal all the factors and particulars that led to his decision. This ruffles some inquisitive church members. We should recognize the reality of this fact. The nation's President cannot publicly announce everything he knows about a difficult problem. Such could jeopardize national security and the lives of innocent people. Doctors do not tell us everything they know when they treat us. Wisdom dictates what is shared. Some bad news could have a severe depressing effect and actually harm the patient's chance of recovery. Journalists do not tell everything they have learned or from whence they got their information. We do not expect them to do so. Police are selective in releasing information about an investigation, lest their entire effort be undone. Parents are not obligated to tell their children everything about every family matter. We would judge them foolish if they did so. In the same light, we should not expect or demand that our elders reveal everything they know about congregational problems. That would reflect poor judgment if they did so.

It is a mark of wisdom to be selective in the information one dispenses. Solomon learned this long ago. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgressions; But he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely" (Prov. 10:19). "He that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter" (Prov. 11:13). "A fool uttereth all his anger: but a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it" (Prov. 29:11). Jesus withheld information from his disciples that they were unable to

bear (John 16:12). Like Paul, wise leaders will spare their followers unnecessary burdens in times of trouble (I Cor. 7:28). Ambrose of Milan said it well: "He is wise who knows when to hold his speech." Kessuth said: "The unspoken word never does harm." The wise DeSales wrote: "A judicious silence is always better than truth spoken without charity."

There are times when we must trust the wisdom and judgment of our elders in the handling of tough problems in the congregation. A selfish egoism may make us demand to *know all the background facts*. Such a demand reflects a lack of faith and confidence in our elders. A sordid curiosity on our part might demand all the information. An appetite for juicy gossip makes such information as dainty morsels that go down in the innermost parts (Prov. 18:8). Should elders give in to such demands for a full revelation at any cost, they throw wisdom to the wind in so doing. Such demands should be kindly, yet steadfastly, refused.

There may be occasions where *wisdom and kindness* would demand silence today, but *wisdom and justice* would demand that one speak tomorrow. Should elders detect that a brother is taking advantage of their silence to sow discord or to convey false impressions, they might be forced to make a full disclosure to stop the mouth of the troublemaker (Tit. 1:11).

Rather than complain when we do not have a total revelation, let us thank God for wise and good elders who accept the difficult challenges and deal with them, sparing us the ordeal (I Thess. 5:12-15). Remember, there is wisdom in silence. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd. Knoxville, TN 37921.

Attempts To Justify

VICTOR M. ESKEW

There have been many attempts to justify the use of gimmicks and gadgetry in the Lord's church. Each of these is exactly what it seems to be, a mere attempt of individuals to do exactly what they want to do. And that which they are trying to do is to become like "the nations" around us. One such effort which people use to make right (?) the building of family-life centers is by saying: "If the church does not provide the recreation then our children will just go elsewhere." The argument sounds good; but this would also give the church grounds for erecting McDonald's restaurants and all other types of facilities. It also overlooks the fact that it is not the responsibility of the church to provide recreation for children. That should be left where God has placed it, in the home. This argument is as flimsy as the parent who lets his children drink or smoke at home for if they do not let them do so they will just go behind their backs. Ridiculous? Indeed!

Another such attempt is based on Luke 1:80: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." Where one can find scriptural authority for a

Continued on page 4

Matthew

(First in a series on New Testament books)

The gospel according to the inspired writer Matthew is the first book of the New Testament. This gospel naturally follows the Old Testament because it was written primarily to those who had first received the Old Testament, the Jews.

The Jewish people were longing for the coming of the Messiah. They anticipated the arrival of that prophet of whom Moses in the law did write. Matthew points these searching Jews to Jesus of Nazareth. He proves that Jesus is the prophet of whom Moses did write in the law by the fulfillment of that law by Jesus.



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

The following statement from Matthew 1:22 is common to this gospel: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying . . ." (See Matt. 2:15, 17, 23; 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9).

The Jewish people would be aware of these prophecies and be able to see that Jesus literally fulfilled them. This evidence would be overwhelming to those with honest hearts. Only an unbeliever would deny the deity of one who so wondrously fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law.

Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18).

This is the purpose of the gospel according to Matthew: to reveal the new lawgiver, Jesus of Nazareth. — P.O. Box 242 Morris, AL 35116.

Tradition vs Traditionalism

With reference to tradition (paradosis), W. E. Vine observes, "a handing down . . . , the teachings of the Rabbis, interpretations of the law, which was thereby made void in practice, of apostolic teaching, of instructions concerning the gatherings of believers, . . . of Christian doctrine in general . . . is used of everyday conduct" (*Expository Dictionary*, pp. 147,148).



R. W. GRAY

We may observe that the word is used variously in our time. Some speak of "traditions in the church," implying that some (or much) of that which was taught — handed down — by the pioneers is, in practice at least, a departure from the scriptures. Others appear to use the same term to imply that anything handed us by our forefathers in the restoration is sacred truth, and that the slightest departure from the "norm" (as they viewed it) is heresy.

So far as the scriptural connotations are concerned, tradition may be good or bad, depending upon its source and the use made of it. There is no need to become unduly alarmed when one refers to us as "traditionalists." It may very well be a real compliment. We are certainly not ashamed to sing, "Faith of our fathers! living still, In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword."

As there were cultural practices and customs that attached themselves to the law of Moses there are such customs growing out of our application of New Testament principles. There was nothing inherently sinful in perpetuating circumcision as a permissible practice under the New Covenant. It became false doctrine when imposed upon Christians as "law" (Gal. 5:1-6). It is a good idea to wash one's hands before a meal; but when it becomes a ceremonial matter imposed with the weight of law, it becomes evil (Matt. 15:2).

The "manner" of serving the Lord's supper, and even the hour of the Lord's day it is served, has become a rather fixed custom among us. Some have come to feel that the "place" in the worship activity that is reserved for eating the Lord's supper has been divinely set. No wrong is done, to be sure, in following these customs. They are not wrong in themselves. Great harm results when one insists, "it cannot be served in another manner!"

With the exception of their policy of "closed communion" we have generally served the bread and the fruit of the vine in a manner similar to our Baptist friends. Even our "custom" of conducting Gospel Meetings or Revivals follows a pattern used by fundamental denominationalists. And who is to say that the tradition should be abandoned on this account?

It is healthy and sound to observe the difference between a custom and/or tradition that has grown up with us which is a matter of indifference, and the revelation of "the faith once delivered the saints." Yet there is no profit in insisting upon change in these customs for the sake of change. Such should be changed or abandoned only when they no longer serve an accommodation or purpose.

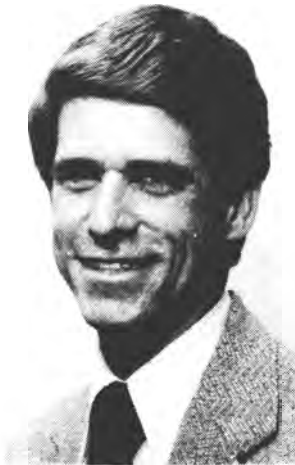
If it is in regard to such customs that we are branded as "traditionalists" we would do well to bear with the complaint. It may well be that some customs should be changed for the ongoing of the church and the spread of the gospel. But when the charge is leveled on the basis that we show respect for the scholarship of the pioneers of the

restoration, we do well to be cautious in hearing such charges. While it is true that these great leaders were not infallible, it is the case that they pointed men back to the Bible. It is with very poor grace that some belittle their efforts, or ignore their findings. The "tradition" of speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where it is silent is a custom we must follow religiously, or the cause of Christ will perish.

It is an alarming development among us that some prefer to adopt the "tradition" of quoting Barth, Bonhoeffer, Tillich, Trueblood, etc., while

they brand as "Church of Christ Traditionalists" those who have the good habit of quoting from McGarvey, Wallace, Lard, and Nichols. It seems to this writer that to be ashamed of such men is to be ashamed of the Book from which their message came. And great men now living who continue to follow their leadership deserve our respect and admiration. If we are following their tradition of pointing lost men to the Lamb of God we do well. It is in this tradition that we sing, "Faith of our fathers, holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!" — P.O. Box 90236 Eastpoint, GA 30344.

Faith And Works



JIMMY EDWARDS

Countless have been the times when someone has made the statement: "Members of the church of Christ are trying to work their way into heaven." Such a statement indicates that either Christians have not done an adequate job preaching an important Bible doctrine, or else what Christians have preached has been grossly misunderstood. It could be, too, that some members of the church leave the impression that they think they must "work their way into heaven." Perhaps the misapprehension is a combination of the three.

James 2:14-26 contains one of the best-known and lengthiest discussions in the whole New Testament of the relation of faith and works. James indicates that faith will prove itself by a response. Faith must find expression in works of obedience for it to be a saving faith. If it does not, it is a dead faith. Dead faith will not save.

In Ephesians 2:8-10 Paul explains clearly the connection between faith and works. The passage reads: "For by grace are ye saved through faith;

and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

First, Paul insists that Christians are saved by grace. We have not earned our salvation, nor could we, even if we tried. Salvation is a gift from God; we simply accept it by faith. "Faith" means relying, trusting, and believing without seeing or touching. Our relationship with God comes through trusting Jesus and what he did. Faith leads to action of obedience to God.

Secondly, Paul is not indicating here that obedience has absolutely nothing to do with salvation. To assume such is to misinterpret the text. Paul is saying that all the works in the world cannot save a person, but there is something drastically wrong with Christianity if it does not encourage good works.

Finally, Paul teaches that Christians are the "workmanship" (product, making) of God, "created" to be active in doing good works. No one *deserves* God's love or grace, but everyone can spend his life *trying* to be worthy of it. Christians can show their gratitude for the grace and gift of God by living for him and allowing their lights to shine before men so they can see their good works and glorify God (Matt. 5:16). — 512 Gardendale Dr. Montgomery, AL 36110.

The Beareans Searched For Truth

Luke tells us, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). We learn from this statement that some people are not interested in truth, and some people are interested in truth. Some do not want to be bothered by inquiry. They had rather depend on someone else to do their studying. One lady said that she paid her preacher to do her studying! She cannot rely on him to be judged for her at the judgment.

Truth is to be very highly prized. Solomon said, "Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

instruction, and understanding" (Prov. 23:23). Jesus prayed concerning his apostles, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17). To know the truth, we must know the word of God.

The Psalmist wrote, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:103,104). Jesus taught, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

John wrote, "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). The false prophet does not advertise himself as such. Paul informs us, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed, as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"

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Is Woman Really "The Weaker Vessel?"

An article in the November, 1983, *Readers Digest* tells of how strong women really are, that they can do quite well in competing with men, and that they should not be barred from many Olympic sports. Much of this may be correct.

However, the apostle Peter spoke by the divine inspiration of God when he called woman the "weaker vessel" (I Pet. 3:7). An article in the *Alabama Journal and Advertiser* (Oct. 30, 1983,) on "Women & Alcohol" once more bears



MARTEL PACE

out the statement by Peter. Women are now trying to live and act as men; and the consequences are serious and startling.

With the acceptability of women drinking along with college men we have long anticipated a rapid increase in women alcoholics; and the results are coming in. They are not pretty figures: in 1970, one woman for every five men sought treatment for alcohol-related problems; by 1981, that ratio had changed to two women for every three men!

In 1968, twenty-two percent of those in Alcoholics Anonymous were women; by 1983 the figure is at least thirty-five percent. More than sixty percent of all adult women drink and ninety percent of all women in college drink. One in three in each group is an alcoholic! This means that those who are still young enough to be in college have already become addicted and the rate is one in three!

This is a far higher ratio than for men even though

the number of men who become alcoholics is likewise increasing. It is about one in ten today whereas when I first began studying this problem in the early 1950's it was one in sixteen. Where do all these alcoholics come from? They come from the ranks of "social drinkers." They come from those who think they are having a "good time," and alcoholism won't strike *them*. Solomon was right — "Wine is a mocker!" (Prov. 20:1). And Peter was right: women, for whatever reasons, can't take drinking alcohol as well as men. No pregnant mother should ever touch it. It is an extremely dangerous drug that if it were just coming on the market today would be outlawed by the Food and Drug Administration! Men are fools (Prov. 20:1) to take chances with it; but women, as weaker vessel, are taking an even greater chance. — 3314 Elaine Montgomery, AL 36109.

The Beareans Searched For Truth

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(II Cor. 11:13-15). A false veneer will not work. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves . . . wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20).

We must take time to learn the false doctrines that are taught in our world. It is necessary to be able to refute those doctrines. When they have infiltrated the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, it often

is too late.

There are many deceitful doctrines of our day. They come from immoral people, denominationalism, and atheistic humanism. The study of these may not be enjoyable. Having surgery is not pleasant, but is often necessary to preserve life. We must use the spiritual sword (Eph. 6:17). Paul says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,

but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5).

THE BATTLE OF TRUTH IS BEFORE US. LET US NOT LOSE OUR COURAGE IN FACE OF THE ENEMY! — P.O. Box 506 LaFayette, GA 30728.

Attempts To Justify

Continued from page 2

family-life center in this passage is beyond all rules of exegesis with which this writer is familiar. This is nothing but mere sophistry.

The most recent attempt at justification of these "new methods" of which I have read was: "Heaven had tried various signs and prophets to reach the covenant people of old. Finally, a more radical approach was attempted: God came among his creatures in the person of Jesus. The divine nature of God did not change, but his method of attempting to communicate with humanity did change." Such logic as this is foolishness. First, if taken to its logical extent one would have to say that God failed in his first efforts. One would also have to say that God also failed by the use of his Son. And who is to say that he will not fail in the use of the Gospel in this the Christian dispensation? What method will he turn to at that time?

Secondly, this attempt to justify the modern-day gimmickry overlooks what God actually had in mind from the foundation of the world. God has never changed his method. He only had one method that he was going to use to redeem fallen man, and this is through his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus' coming to this earth was not a more radical approach, but was a continuance of God's plan which he had from the beginning: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . But with the precious blood of Christ . . . Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times" (I Pet. 1:18-20). When God sent forth his Son into the world he did not alter his method. He was merely exercising that which had been planned all along. "But when the fulness of 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" (Gal. 4:4,5). The "fulness of time" refers to that time for which God had made preparation in the ages past.

The church of our Lord and the Gospel dispensation, also, is not another method to reach lost man. It is "the plan" which God has always had for fallen man. "Unto me, who am least than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Christ Jesus: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:8-11, emphasis mine).

Such efforts to justify the whims and fancies of man are perversions and misuses of the word of God. Instead of trying to justify our method, we ought to go

back to the Book and use its methods. In each case of conversion, it was the preaching of the word (the method) which brought men to an obedient faith in Christ Jesus: (1) The Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:22, 37-47); (2) The Jews (Acts 4:4); (3) The Samaritans (Acts 8:12); (4) the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:35); (5) Saul (Acts 9:6); (6) Cornelius (Acts 11:13, 14); (7) Lydia (Acts 10:14); (8) the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:30-34); and (9) the Corinthians (Acts 18:8). It is only this method that will convert men in today's society. This is the only method that will not pass away: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:23-25). — 600 W. Sadosa #28 Eastland, TX 76448.

Prayer must not be taken out of the public schools. That's the way, the only way, many of us got through.

New ideas hurt some minds the same as new shoes hurt some feet.

Some people feel we don't need prayer any more since we now have penicillin!


It is possible that you could stop an army of a million men, but you can't stop a good idea when it comes along.

An honest prayer: "Stop my neighbors, O Lord, from buying things I can't afford."

A "sensational new idea" is sometimes just an old idea with its sleeves rolled up.

Prayer will either make a man leave off sinning, or sin will make him leave off prayer.

An idea isn't responsible for the people who believe in it.



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— Acts 26:25

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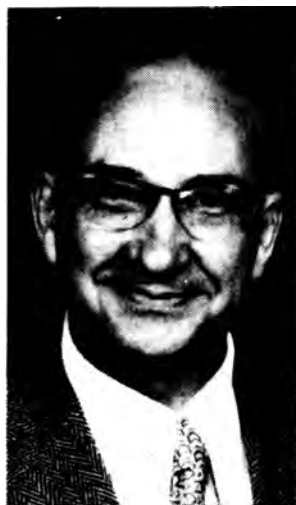


The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

I Am Debtor

The apostle Paul wrote: "I am debtor, both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:14-17).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The sentiment expressed by Paul should be characteristic of each Christian. All of us should be aware of how much we depend on others. In a revival at Jasper many years ago the late brother N. B. Hardeman preached a sermon on this truth. He pointed out that we rely on others to raise the wool, shear the sheep, card and spin the thread into cloth, cut out and sew together our clothing. For our food we are indebted to the farmers who raised it, the industrialists who process it, and the shipper and distributor who make it available in our area. I am debtor to someone who raised the cow, to the slaughter-house where she was killed, and to the tanner for preserving and making pliable the leather of which my shoes are made — then I am debtor to the shoe-cobbler (or factory) who

cut out the leather, according to a pattern, and then sewed them together to fit my foot. Yes, I truly am dependent on others.

The apostle Paul not only recognized and acknowledged his indebtedness to others — he also stated how he would meet his obligations to them: "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (V. 15). He proposed to 'pay' his debt by preaching the gospel to them to the fullest extent of his abilities.

In my moving to Jasper, I am humbled by the realization of how much I am indebted to so many who have brought this great church to where it is today! Aside from my father, I am indebted to C. A. Wheeler who converted him and often preached at Jasper, and to the other local preachers who have served here: L. R. Wilso, W. A. Black, and Bob Duncan. I am indebted to the present Eldership and Deaconship who serve the Lord in their functions, as well as those who similarly served in years gone by. I am indebted to the membership of today, plus those who previously have meant so much in building the congregation into what it now is.

I can never pay in dollars-and-cents this debt which I owe. I shall strive to be like Paul who said: "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (V. 15). While I realize that the gospel deserves a far better presentation than I shall ever be able to give, I am "ready" in spirit to preach the same old Jerusalem gospel to all whom we may be able to reach. Please command me fully if I may be able to serve you personally, or the great Cause which we mutually love.

Mark

The gospel according to Mark has been rightly called "the gospel of power."

Unlike Matthew's gospel which was written with the Jew in mind, Mark's gospel was written to reach the Roman world. The Roman citizen was generally considered to be more interested in action and power than in philosophy and instruction. Hence, Mark presents Jesus as the conqueror of nature, spirits, disease and



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

death. In Mark's gospel Christ is the power of God!

We observe the wisdom of God in the writing of the gospel according to Mark. People are different. What may be an excellent approach for reaching one ethnic group with the gospel, may not be effective at all with another. The Romans would not be as interested in the fulfillment of prophecy as the Jews. Hence, Matthew's gospel to the Jews presents Christ as the fulfillment of Moses' law, whereas Mark shows Jesus to be a mighty doer of wonderful works!

Because Mark 16:9-20 is not found in the two oldest Greek manuscripts some believe this section should be omitted. (It is found in the Alexandrian and Ephraem manuscripts). If we did delete these verses Mark's gospel would end with the words: "... for they were afraid" (Mark 16:8). This would be a strange ending indeed, especially for a gospel that was written to reach the fearless Roman world! So, Mark 16:9-20 is found in every major English translation known to the writer. We accept it as the inspired, inerrant word of God.

One can read the Gospel according to Mark in less than an hour. In less than sixty minutes you can read a survey of the greatest man who ever lived! Why not take time today to read of Jesus the conqueror and Lord? — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL.

"Always Faithful"

It must have been a very emotional scene as the Marine Commandant visited the young men who lay wounded on their hospital beds following the terrible bombing incident in Beirut. One young Marine, who was critically wounded and could not talk because of the tubes in his throat, made signs with his hands as the General visited him. It was soon understood that he wanted a pen and pad in order to write something. Upon receiving the requested pen and pad, the Marine wrote the word "Semper Fi," short for "Semper Fidelis." The message: "Always Faithful," is a motto of the Marine Corps. In the face of death, in pain and discomfort, here was a person loyal to the cause, faithful even unto death. Admiration must be given to young men with such courage, fortitude and



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

faithfulness.

My mind was filled with exhortations from the Holy Scriptures regarding the faithfulness of Christians to the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), Jesus Christ. The encouragement in Revelation 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death . . ." must be understood in the light of the context. The church at Smyrna was undergoing severe trials. Many of the saints were being imprisoned, and not a few were being killed because of their love for and loyalty to the Lord. Regardless of the severity of the persecutions, Christians were urged to be faithful to Christ even if it cost them their very lives. If they would not recant but die confessing Christ, the Lord promised them "the crown of life."

Oh, how we need to emulate the traits of courage and faithfulness of the young marine, and especially of our brethren in the first century, many of whom were burned at the stake. The example of faithfulness exemplified in the lives of men and women of every age needs to be imitated today. No greater example of endurance and faithfulness to the Lord can be found than that of the apostle Paul. Think of his rejection, his sufferings, his imprisonments;

The Occult

Continued from page 1

involving ritual murders. Hardly a secular magazine can be found without at least some articles concerning occult practices, many of which present the occult claims in a favorable light. Television, especially the talk shows, has much to say about it. Book stores not only carry many popular books on the occult (both fiction and non-fiction), but many even have complete sections devoted to it.

Why This Present Occult Emphasis?

1) The occult thrives in times of insecurity, confusion, uncertainty and breakdown of religious belief — and certainly we live in such a time as this.

2) The liberal religious theology which has influenced more and more of the thinking of the average man has excluded anything that cannot be explained as natural happening from the Bible account. Many who are spiritually starved for something transcendent are looking for it outside what they think of as "institutional religion." This same liberal theology emphasizes tolerance and open-mindedness toward other religious thought (as long as such is also tolerant of them!), so this attitude encourages experimentation in the occult.

3) The mystical, idolatrous religions of the Far East are gaining much ground in our present-day society. Most of these Eastern religions are

heavily steeped in the teaching and practice of the occult.

4) The occult is an easy, permissive religious substitute. It does not demand courageous dedication and costly, time-consuming participation of its adherents. It helps sooth one's conscience by encouraging one to believe that the stars decide his activities or that "the devil made me do it" and that one is not really personally responsible for his activities. Not only is the occult very permissive, morally, but certain rites connected with it often encourage immoral acts.

The Bible and the Occult

Both the Old and the New Testaments condemn any participation in the occult. Deuteronomy 18:9-12 states that the user of divination, the observer of times, the enchanter, the witch, the charmer, the consulter with familiar spirits, the wizard, and the necromancer are all abominations to the Lord. Exodus 22:18 pronounces the death penalty on a witch. According to I Chronicles 10:13-14 King Saul died "for asking counsel of" one that had a familiar spirit. All Bible students are familiar with this event in I Samuel 28. Witchcraft is listed among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20) which will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God.

We would think that surely no member of the Lord's church would ever dabble with the occult, even as an "innocent" means of entertainment. Yet, we have heard of some who use the ouija board and even insist that it works. Several times we have heard others talk rather excitedly about their horoscope. In the past some members have become rather disturbed when we have questioned the practice of witching for water. Do we not realize that these are the devil's tools just as much as obscene reading material and denominational doctrine?

The occult falsely claims to be able to open for us the door to the secret things of the future. We all at times would like to know what is in store for us. We need to realize, though, that God has revealed in the Bible all that we need to know for our good now and for our eternal happiness. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). Let us never allow our curiosity to lead us to the idolatrous practices of the occult! "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (I Jn. 5:21). — 204 Creek Trail Columbia, Tenn. 38401.

"Always Faithful"

Continued from page 2

yet, he never wavered in his faith. He, too, could have written "Always Faithful" while on his death bed. In fact, this is what he did: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). His faithfulness cost him his earthly life but he received that "crown of righteousness" from Jesus Christ.

It is truly disheartening to learn of brethren, after many years of faithfulness, falling from grace.

Some apostatize because of apathy, others because of carnality, while many fall because of their unscriptural marital relationships. Some apostatize from Christ, embracing denominational errors and practices. How foolish for a person to 'quit the church' because of hurt feelings, or injury to one's pride. In contrast, it is so wonderful to know of brethren who remain faithful to Christ all their lives. Just recently, I spoke at the funeral of an elder where I had formerly worked. It was with confi-

dence and assurance, made possible by God's love and the death of Christ, that it could be said that this brother had gone to be with the Lord. It could have been written on his grave marker, "Always Faithful." Whether your life may be taken because of your love for the Lord or whether you live until you die because of natural causes, may it be written of you: "Semper Fidelis!" — 214 Amanda Lane Prattville, Alabama 36067.

Divorce, Remarriage And The Holiness Of God

God is independently, infinitely and immutably holy. He sits upon the "throne of his holiness" (Psa. 47:8). He is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:12). He is "light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). In repetitious form, the Bible describes God as "the Holy one." God is absolute in holiness, untouched by even the shadow of sin.



FRANK CHESSER

One of man's basic errors is the formation of God in human likeness. Man has attempted to pare God down to his own level. In essence, man has formed his own god, which feels and thinks just like he does. God's goodness and longsuffering are designed to provoke repentance (Rom. 2:4). However, while enjoying these traits of the divine nature during the practice of sin, some have confused them with the humanizing of deity. Having depicted his forbearance with man while on a course of sin, God exposed man's self-drawn

conclusion saying, "thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Psa. 50:21).

Certain physical substances appear fuzzy when viewed with the natural eye. But when seen through a microscope, their true nature becomes readily apparent. Even so, one of the most effective means of discerning error to be error is through the disclosing power of the nature of God. Every fundamental religious error can be verified as such when viewed through the microscope of God's nature. By contrasting humanly-devised doctrines with the character of God, one can easily perceive the error in the creative works of the human mind. This is true even of the new convert who does not yet possess the ability to produce specific passages exposing a particular error, or of a mature Christian who is unable to answer all the arguments made on a difficult passage at a given time.

Consider the well-worn doctrine of salvation by faith alone. This doctrine, while emphasizing God's grace, nullifies the concept of God's holiness. Advocates thereof have a one-sided perception of God. They feel that God's grace will override almost anything. During a fleeting moment, John Doe utters a profession of faith in God's existence and the deity of Christ. He proceeds to live a life of debauchery; and at death, leaves behind a body ravaged by long years of sin, only to have some

preacher attempt to secure his soul in that heavenly abode. Such a doctrine is blatantly inconsistent with the holiness of God.

The impossibility of apostasy dogma is equally offensive to God's nature. Consistency demands the position that one could die in the very bosom of the most vile sins known to man and immediately be bidden into that eternal realm of perfect righteousness by the outstretched arm of the holy One himself. One preacher stated on a local television program, "I could not be lost even if I were swinging over the fires of Hell on a rotten potato vine, spitting tobacco juice in the Devil's eye." This contemptible doctrine makes a mockery of the holiness of God.

The Calvinistic concept of unconditional predestination and election is easily perceived by the unprejudiced mind as being utterly incompatible with the very essence of deity. Biblical scholarship is not a prerequisite for discerning the obvious contradiction between this tenet, and God's love, mercy and justice.

The premillennial theory has many defenders, but no defense. Though the novice might experience some difficulty contending for the faith relative to the specifics thereof, the basic incongruity between this doctrinal product of the finite mind and the nature of

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Divorce, Remarriage And The Holiness Of God

Continued From Page 3

God is easily discernible. The mentality of the Judaizer has been resurrected in the premillennialist with his physical temple, kingdom, throne and reign. This materialistic thrust is patently inconsistent with the spiritual nature of God.

With immeasurable sadness, attention is now drawn to one of the most loathsome theories ever expounded within the confines of New Testament Christianity. This doctrine concerns the limitation of God's marriage law to Christians. Accordingly, such passages as Matthew 19:9 can be applied only to those marital relationships where "both" partners are Christians.

This theory encourages the very thing God hates. "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away" (Mal. 2:16). Thus, God hates divorce! Is it conceivable that our holy God who hates divorce would leave the teeming masses of humanity in pagan darkness without any law to restrain and govern their sexual relationships? Are we to conclude that by divine design, the non-covenant world is allowed to wallow in the pit of sexual indulgence with as many partners as they wish until they find themselves within the borders of the church? By his permissive will in the absence(?) of law, would not God be encouraging animalistic sexual behavior among his own offspring?

Consider the man whose daughter is married to a non-Christian. Certain problems arise that threaten to dissolve their conjugal union. The concerned father who holds to the above position, approaches them with fervent hope of aiding them in saving their marriage. What is he going to say to them? On what basis will he plead for them to remain together,

work through their problems and expend the effort necessary to save their marriage? He cannot refer to God's law for marriage, for he does not believe they are amenable to such law. Is it not obvious that his philosophy renders him impotent? His position on this vital matter will not allow him to make use of the most powerful means at his disposal to exhort his own daughter's faithfulness to her wedding vows.

We read much about grace, love, law and obedience as though the principles were at war. Wherein lies the problem? Webster defines law as a "rule of conduct." Divine law is an expression of divine grace and love. The presence of God's law constitutes the basis for man to manifest his love for God. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Man's loving compliance with God's will is God's way of enabling man to appropriate to his life the rich provisions of grace and love.

The existence of law is God's way of saying, "I love you." Parents understand this principle. Therefore, they lovingly encircle their children with laws (rules of conduct) in hopes of preventing their participation in activities that would destroy their happiness and general well-being and fill them with life-long sorrow and regret. God operates on this same basis. The stringent nature of Matthew 19:9 is God's way of preventing a mountain of woes from entering the marital state and thus aiding man in developing an intimate marital relationship, tightly bound by the cords of love, trust and mutual respect.

Consequently, the reality of divine law governing the marital state is a manifestation of God's grace, love and deep concern for those who become one

flesh. Man's submission to God's law results in holiness, a separateness from the very sins that could destroy the one flesh relationship and man's enjoyment of the rich blessings of that most sacred state.

Are such expressions of divine grace, love and concern denied to the inconceivable masses of humanity outside the church? Is God indifferent to their fidelity in marriage? Have they been left without rules of conduct to govern their sexual behavior? Have they been encouraged in their wanton, lewd and self-indulgent conduct? Can a Christian marry and divorce as many non-Christian partners as he desires until he finally enters a marital union with another Christian? Who can believe such a thing? Yet such is the inevitable result of the doctrine which would limit God's law to those marriages in which both partners are Christians.

This humanly-devised doctrine is an odious affront to the holiness of God. It is as incompatible with the nature of God and as easily discernible as such as is the Calvinistic view of predestination and election, or the impossibility of apostasy. This matter could not be more serious. This is not an ivory tower theological debate on some abstract principle. It is an eternal-destiny-determining-matter, involving the souls of men and the unity of the church. The principle of God's holiness is overwhelming evidence for the fallacious nature of this doctrine and those in kinship therewith, and for the universal application of Matthew 19:9 and kindred passages. — Route 5 Thomson, Ga. 30824.

"The Word Became Flesh..."

KENNETH W. BURTON

The apostle John wrote, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14), Paul sets forth plainly how that Jesus, though he existed in the form of God, "emptied himself," and became a man (Phil. 2:5-8). The apostolic statement is made simply: "God was manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16). Each of these passages shows the importance of Christ's coming in the flesh. The epistle of I John emphasizes this fact, I John was probably written in answer to the Gnostic heresy which was developing in the second half of the first century, a heresy which denied, (1) the humanity of Christ and (2) the deity of Jesus.

How often, though, do we think of the practical benefits which we enjoy as a result of the coming of the Word in the flesh? Certainly we are aware of the fact that, had he not become a man, his precious blood would not have been shed, (This is the emphasis of I John 4:1-3; 5:6-8). However, there are other blessings which we enjoy because of the coming in the flesh of our blessed Lord. The Hebrew writer points out four of these blessings.

In Hebrews 2:9 we have presented to us the doctrine of the atonement. Though some would preach the doctrine of John Calvin, and hold to a "limited atonement," and affirm that Christ died only for the 'elect,' the Hebrew writer plainly states that Christ "tasted death for every man." This is the consistent teaching of the Bible (cf. I John 2:2).

Hebrews 2:11 states, "For he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Having this assurance, that we are his brethren, and further, that this is something of which he is not

ashamed, then we can begin to appreciate another aspect of a blessing that is precious indeed! That he would condescend to become flesh, and bestow upon us the privilege of calling us "brethren," what marvelous love!

By Christ's coming in the flesh he was able to "bring to nought him that had the power of death" (Heb. 2:14,15). In Genesis 3:15 the promise was made that, though the serpent (Satan) would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, yet he would "bruise the head" of Satan. Jesus spake of binding the strong man before entering his house and spoiling it (Matt. 12:27-29). John makes reference to the one who "was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1:18). Matthew 16:18 contains a promise and prophecy of Christ's breaking the bonds of death; and Peter quoted several passages from the Psalms which predicted the bodily resurrection of the Lord, and forcefully affirmed that these were fulfilled (Acts 2). Paul shows what Christ's resurrection means to us, he being the "first-fruits" (I Cor. 15:23), the guarantee that we shall be raised in like manner, to share the glory of the resurrection (Phil. 3:21; Rom.

8:23). Though there are mysteries connected with the resurrection of our bodies, we have this comfort, knowing that "... when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). All of these great blessings which stem from the empty tomb of Jesus are a result of his "becoming flesh, and dwelling among us."

The fact that Jesus came not "in the nature of angels," but rather as "the seed of Abraham," qualifies him to be a merciful and faithful high priest (Heb. 2:16-18). As our high priest, Jesus can be "touched with the feelings of our infirmities," for he was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He is in a unique position, for his trials and temptations make him sympathetic to men, yet his sinlessness makes his sacrifice perfectly acceptable to God.

How constantly thankful we should be that Jesus "took upon him the form of a servant; and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:7). What marvelous blessings are ours because he loved us enough to become one of us, so that he could save us! — 722 N. 4th Piggott, AR 72454.

The world will be a better place to live when the "found" ads in the newspapers begin to outnumber the "lost" ads.

No one will ever know of your honesty unless you give out some samples.

We cannot have an honest horserace until we develop an honest human race.

If you are honest only because you think it's the best policy, your honesty has already been corrupted.

There's no place a man values honesty more than in a competitor.



Words Of Truth

noble Festus; but speak forth
and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 50

The Beauty Of God's Plan

The Ephesian letter has often been entitled, "The Epistle of the Church." The book beautifully divides itself into two sections: Chapters 1-3, The Nature of the Church; Chapters 4-6, How to Live in the Church. In Ephesians 5:22-23 we see the beauty of God's plan both for the church and his plan for the home. Was Paul's purpose to discuss the relationship which exists between husband and wife, or



RONNIE LOWE

that between Christ and his church? "The mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church" (Eph. 5:32). Paul uses these illustrations because of the many similarities between the relationship of Christ and his church, and the husband and his wife. God has a divine plan for these two great institutions, and many problems result when we forsake this sacred design.

First, in verses 22-24, we see the beauty of *submission*. In every relationship there must be one source of final authority. Can you imagine the chaos that would result in a huge corporation or a sports team if everyone 'did his own thing' instead of abiding under one single authority? Subjection is not an ugly or degrading thing for it is the supreme principle which is to guide the Christian in all relationships. We are to subject ourselves one to another in the fear of Christ (Eph. 5:21).

The church is to be subject to Christ, for he is the owner and head of the church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:18). But Christ himself was subject to someone higher than himself. "Jesus said unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). Submitting to Christ is a privilege, for he takes the lead, makes the decisions and bears the burdens. And as he leads, he does so by example and not just by command.

Just so, the wife is to be subject to her husband. The home is not to be ruled by an authoritarian principle with one harsh ruling force. Nor is it to be ruled according to hedonism in which each member uses the family for his own selfish purposes. The husband is to rule with the same sacrificial love and devotion with which Christ rules the church. The wife is not inferior, but has a divinely ordained place in the structure of society. The wife must be willing to accept the decisions made by her husband. This places upon her the obligation to be sure that she trusts both his judgment and his love for her before deciding to marry. Many problems after marriage would be avoided if she honestly faced this question, "Am I willing for this man to make the decisions for me for a lifetime?" If you cannot answer, "Yes" then don't marry that man. Submission is beautiful if both the members are willing to do their job.

Secondly, in verses 26-27, we see the beauty of *Sanctification*. To sanctify means "to set apart for a particular purpose." Christ purchased the church to be set apart from the world (Tit. 2:14). We are to let our light shine by being drastically different from our surroundings. Christ wants the church to fit a certain description (vs. 26,27), but in order for the church to fit such a description, I as an individual Christian must fit that same description. The church and the Christian must be pure in doctrine, worship and living.

The husband and wife are to likewise be sanctified to one another (I Cor. 7:14). In the wedding ceremony they make a promise that they will forsake all others and cleave to one another. "Let marriage be

had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Problems will always arise when we forsake this perfect plan.

"Adam was not beguiled; but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression; but she shall be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and *sanctification* with sobriety" (I Tim. 2:14,15). Both the home and the church are sanctified.

Finally, in verses 25 and 28-33, we see the beauty of *Sacrifice*. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Indeed, Christ was willing to make the supreme sacrifice for his bride — the church.

The husband is to love his wife as he loves his own body and treat her as he would treat himself. He is to love her as Christ loved the church and be willing to die for her. This kind of love prompts the husband to make whatever decision is in the best interest of his wife. It is inconceivable that a husband could have such a love, and yet be overbearing or inconsistent. Husband, do you want your wife to be in subjection to you? Then love her and treat her as you do yourself. It is a two-way street. We have no right to demand her subjection unless we are willing to love her with the proper intensity.

God's plans for the church and for the home are beautiful indeed. They are beautiful for they deal with submission, sanctification and sacrifice. Let us respect and follow this divine plan, for it is the best one the world has. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, TX 76470.


Whose Side Are They On, Anyway?

JOE E. GALLOWAY

The September *Reader's Digest* printed an article, "Getting Away With Murder," which illustrates a sad situation in our American society. It cites the nearly universal silence of our news media regarding the savage, systematic massacre of thousands of civilians in Afghanistan by the Soviet Union while the same media seemingly seeks out

items to make the U.S. look bad in El Salvador. This same left-wing element which organized mass demonstrations against U.S. involvement in Vietnam a few years ago seemingly shows little concern for the genocide practiced by the communists there and

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— Acts 26:25

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Whose Side Are They On, Anyway?

Continued from page 1

in Cambodia when our involvement ended. This same problem can presently be observed as we notice the many editorials against the U.S. action in Grenada while little is written critical of the evident communist build-up there in its continued progress in taking over this hemisphere. Why do *our own people* criticize U.S. efforts to help endangered people while encouraging those who wish to enslave the whole of mankind? Whose side are they on, anyway?

We mention the above to illustrate a condition in the Lord's church which, we are sorry to say, seems parallel. Anyone who knows much about the church, brotherhood wide, and about the trends and attitudes that are widespread, would have to be extremely naive or uncaring if he is not concerned about the present danger of the church going into digression. In fact, month after month we are learning of once-faithful congregations, elders, and preachers who have abandoned the faith they once believed, taught and practiced for the more liberal, tolerant doctrines of denominationalism. Yet, we notice a definite trend of many in the church to be extremely vocal in talking and writing against those who warn about such dangers, while they are noticeably silent about false doctrine and practice that is going on all around them. Whose side are they on, anyway?

Often labels such as "witch hunters," "inquisitors," and "keepers of orthodoxy" are used with reference to faithful brethren who are doing their best to defend truth and right from its modern enemies. It is remarkable how judgmental brethren often become in accusing such concerned brethren of being guilty of "judging" and of being "unloving." Religious papers which courageously point out dangers and digression in doctrine and practice (in direct accordance with the divine injunction of Romans 16:17) are said to be "scandal sheets" and "missives of hate." (Some will probably so label this article!) In this manner those who love God and His truth become "the enemy" and those who are openly critical of God's truth are "friends." We need to carefully consider the implication of Paul's question to the Galatians: "Am I therefore

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Study Your Bible

Faith is produced by the word of God. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Jesus prayed for "them also which shall believe on me through their word" (Jn. 17:20). The purpose of the *record* of the life, teaching, and miracles of Christ is to produce faith: "These are written that ye might believe . . ." (Jn. 20:31). So, faith comes by hearing the word of God. Faith is also strengthened by the word, and grows by the word: "Your faith groweth exceedingly" (2 Thess. 1:3).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Without the word, there can be no faith. This is why Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that *believeth* . . ." (Mk. 16:16). No preaching means no hearing, and

results in no faith! Paul quoted from the Old Testament: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," (Joel 2:32) and he asked a series of questions: "How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? . . ." (Rom. 10:14-17). Paul said some were guilty of "forbidding us to speak unto the Gentiles, that they might be saved" (I Thess. 2:16).

Man's spiritual nature — his inner self — cannot digest French Fries and Hamburgers! To try to live by "bread alone" is to invite disaster, for Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Therefore each of us must find time to read the Bible!

Take time away from other duties or pleasures for daily Bible reading and study. If one neglects to budget his time wisely, there will not be any time "left" for this — so each simply must put this into his schedule. You will not likely 'find time' for it automatically!!!

"The Day After"



RAYMOND ELLIOTT

Of course, existence will not be measured by days because time will be no more: Eternity will have begun. There will be no longer seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades nor millenniums. There will be neither clocks nor calendars. Our finite minds are unable to comprehend the meaning of eternity — no beginning nor ending. We simply refer to that period of awareness following the event that ended time and the human race as we now understand them to be.

The universal catastrophe occurred suddenly and without warning. There were no signs nor definite indicators as to when the force would destroy the earth, the planets, the stars, the sun and the moon. Jesus mentioned that no man knew the day nor the hour of his coming (Mark 12:32). The Apostle Peter said that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night (II Peter 3:10). There will be no survivors of this destructive power of God. Man will not be the source of such force. God has reserved this planet to be destroyed by fire (II Pet. 3:7).

For the masses of people who chose the broad way that leads downward to eternal perdition, "the day after" will be terrible (Matt. 7:13,14). There will not be any span of a thousand years for some to have additional opportunities to obey Christ. For when Jesus shall come again, all in the tombs will hear his voice and shall come forth, both good and evil (John 5:28,29). The righteous will hear the precious words of Jesus as he welcomes them

into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34). However, the wicked, disobedient persons will be separated and cast into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). The smoke of their torment will ascend for ever, and ever (Rev. 14:11).

The eternal abiding place of the wicked is called Gehenna (hell) in the New Testament (Matt. 5:22). It is described as a place of outer darkness where there will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, and where the worm dieth not. — A terrible place inhabited by the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars (Matt. 25:30; Rev. 21:8).

If a person believes in the sonship and veracity of Jesus Christ, he will also possess a belief that such a place as hell exists for the wicked. The reason being, Jesus often referred to the eternal abiding place of the disobedient (Matt. 5:22; 10:28; 25:30,46). We may not have an absolute knowledge that nuclear war will eventually come, however, there is no doubt that there is coming a time when the Lord will render vengeance upon them that know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ (II Thess. 1:7-9).

What preparation have you made for the day of the Lord? Shelters stocked with food and water will not suffice. In fact, some will pray for the mountains to fall upon them at the appearance of the King (Rev. 6:16). Fear is not the highest motive in life, but it *is* a factor in our deciding to prepare for that day when this old planet will be set aflame. Surely, the goodness of God should lead you to repentance. Watch and pray, for you know not when the Lord will return (Matt. 24:42). It is not fiction but fact. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is" (Rev. 22:12). — 214 Amanda Lane Prattville, Alabama 36067.

Whose Side Are They On Anyway?

Continued from page 2

become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16). Whose side are we on?

Perhaps someone will reply, "I don't believe in taking sides. I'll stand in the middle of the road." May we remind such members that there is no middle ground regarding right and wrong; truth and error; God and Satan. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Lk. 11:23).

We all have an obligation to God's truth that goes beyond our initially learning, believing and obeying it. We must defend the truth! Contrary to what some say, truth cannot speak up and defend itself without human help. Paul said, "I am set for the defence of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17), and in the same chapter he told Christians that with one mind they were to strive together "for the faith of the gospel" (v. 27). Jude 3 exhorts us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Furthermore, we have an obligation to warn and correct when we see imminent dangers of false doctrine, unscriptural practice, and sinful living. God's preacher must reprove and rebuke as well as exhort (2 Tim. 4:2). Scripture is profitable for reproof and correction as well as for doctrine

and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

The Bible is replete with warnings of dangers to God's people. Even a casual reading of the Old Testament prophets will show this to have been one of their main reasons for speaking and writing. Jesus often warned of false teachers and false teachings. "Beware of false prophets . . ." was a part of his great "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt. 7:15ff). He told his disciples, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Saducees" (Matt. 16:6). Paul warned the Ephesian elders of coming apostasy (Acts 20:28-31), and his epistles contain warning after warning, including the specific naming of false teachers (e. g., 2 Tim. 2:17). Peter, in quite explicit language, said, "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. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of . . . whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. 2:1-3). John (1 Jn. 2:18, 2 Jn. 7-11) and Jude (in practically his entire book) gave similar warnings. Nothing

is more Biblical than giving proper warnings of dangers to God's people! We are in good company if we engage in this important task.

We are not at all suggesting that our *only* work and emphasis is to be correcting and warning. We need, to the best of our abilities, to teach *all* of God's truth on *all* Bible topics. This will include "first principles" to alien sinners, and encouragement and motivation to them to obey the gospel. It will include lessons on Christian living, the work of the church, on scriptural worship, and in the many other New Testament truths needed for growth and faithfulness. Yet, it must also include adequate warning if it is to be the *complete* truth.

When God's truth is taught, regardless of the above category in which it falls and of who may not like it, we all need to back it without wavering. We need to stand behind *all* truth because God is its source and because we need to know and obey truth to be saved (Jn. 17:17; 8:32). Let us never be so timid or compromising that people will wonder: "Whose side is he on?" Let us all show that we are on the Lord's side by living, teaching, and defending the truth! — 204 Creek Trail Columbia, Tenn. 38401.

Finding The Right Approach

"How would you like the company served?" asked a maid. "What do you mean by that?" her employer inquired. "I mean do you want me to serve them so they'll come again or so they'll stay away?"

Much is being said these days of the need to find the best approach in reaching the lost for Christ. This is a good sign. Some have been needlessly turned away from the truth by those who did not employ tact in their teaching methods. It is correctly stressed that great harm is done when we simply "argue a point" while failing to demonstrate sincere interest in and love for one whom we seek to teach. This cannot be over-emphasized.

One point that seems to surface in many articles and lectures of late is that points of controversy, or so-called minor issues, should not be discussed up front. But one tends to become somewhat uneasy when these would-be minor issues are identified. It is probably more than we are capable of deciphering in the first place. A matter that may appear minor to us may be very big in the eyes of the Lord.

Some time ago an article by a conservative Christian Church preacher reached my desk. The gist of the article underscored the fact that the instrument question was no longer a major issue with churches of Christ, as evidenced by the failure of their ministers to preach on the subject. This is disconcerting enough, but when we hear preaching brethren ridicule us for having "said too much on the subject," or saying, "this is a minor point that should be left for later discussion," there is cause for serious investigation. The Christian Church preacher was more nearly correct in his evaluation of our recent emphasis than are our own people who complain that we make "too much of it." We must surely realize that a question that has divided the body of Christ, and that has to do with acceptable or unacceptable



R. W. GRAY

worship before Almighty God, is not a minor issue.

If we evidence a genuine love for the Lord, for his word, and for the one we hope to lead to Christ, the subject matter is not as important as some seem to feel. If God's word is being discussed we need not shun, or relegate to the back burner, any religious theme. The Bible principle is that we begin at the place of the prospect's interest. Luke tells us that Phillip "began at that same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Why begin here? The prospect had inquired of that matter. This was his primary interest at that point in time. Doubtless the preacher would have made a tragic mistake had he suggested, "Just hold on to that question! We will discuss it at a later time. The first thing we must do is determine whether or not you love God, and that you understand that his word is our authority."

It is obviously unwise to impose discussion of some theme in which the sincere prospect appears to show no real interest. We do well to lead him or

her to understand that all Bible subjects are important, and that nothing is to be "put off" that is within the realm of our understanding or ability to discern. And if the prospect inquires about instrumental music in worship, or the role of women in the public assemblies of the church, we are remiss to dismiss the question, or to suggest that it is a "minor issue." Let us learn to begin where the prospect is, and with God's help lead him to a better understanding of his soul's needs. If we listen to his questions we will determine his point of interest. Let us not assume that we know best what his present needs may be, or wherein his level of interest should lie.

"O teach me Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart." - Frances R. Havergal — P.O. Box 90236 East Point, GA 30344.

The Superiority Of Christianity

Other religions, especially those from the East, have come into prominence in the news media lately. The following fictional comparison is interesting as we consider the teaching of others.

A man once fell into a deep, muddy ditch and could not get out. A follower of Confucius passed by and said, "This is evidence man should stay out of such places."

A Buddhist said to him, "Let this be a lesson to the rest of the



ANCIL JENKINS

world."

A Moslem told him, "It is the will of Allah."
A Hindu tried to comfort by saying, "Cheer up: you will come back better in the next life."

However a Christian passed, got down in the ditch with him, and helped the man out.

Some might be attracted by a strange doctrine or a life meditation. A true test of a religion is, "What does it do for others?" Look to the countries where such non-Christian religions dominate. See the treatment of the homeless, poor, the disabled. What do they do for women? How are the helpless treated?

When one is in need, nice platitudes will not help. One needs someone in the ditch with him. The religion of Christ (Matt. 7:12) teaches this is our place. — 1701 Gold Ave. S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Married To Christ

We are living in an age of broken commitments and unkept promises. A man's word is no longer his bond. Even contracts seem to be made to be broken. One of the major tragedies, however, is the veritable flood of broken marriage vows in today's society. At the present rate, within the next few years, the divorce rate will be over fifty percent. **Marriage was intended to be a lifetime union.**



RONNIE LOWE

It is an honorable state not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly. Indeed, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). Man has no right whatsoever to break that which God has bound together.

But, as a Christian husband, I have two marriage bonds to keep. In Romans 7 Paul emphasizes that we are bound to a law so long as that law lives. And just so, a woman is bound to her husband so long as her husband lives. If he die, she is free to marry another just as we are free to abide under a new law if the old law be dead. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). We are thus married to Christ and have certain God-given responsibilities to our spiritual mate. But how does one become married to Christ? Do you simply choose him as your mate -- and that's it?

To become legally married I must go through some type of ceremony. This ceremony may be in someone's home, or in a judge's chambers, or in a church building or anywhere else. The ceremony may be elaborate, or simple and brief. But there is a ceremony. The couple cannot simply decide to become married and stop there. They must obtain a license and go through certain steps. Just so, in order to become married to Christ one must go through a type of "ceremony." What action is it that enables us to be in Christ -- to be married to Christ? "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). This action is a very simple one, yet one that is absolutely essential for us to enjoy this beautiful union with Christ.

Being married does not guarantee a lifetime of happiness and bliss. In fact perhaps the opposite is true. In every marriage there are the ups and downs, the good days and the bad days, the high points and the low points. We can readily see that going through a ceremony does not guarantee the lifelong faithfulness of the parties to the union. Likewise, being baptized doesn't guarantee a lifetime of bliss, but in fact just the opposite. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you" (1 Pet. 4:12). "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Just so, being baptized does not guarantee a life of faithfulness to God. Many, such as Simon the sorcerer, Alexander, Hymenaeus, and Demas obeyed the gospel, only later to forsake their first love. Neither the marriage ceremony nor baptism has a miraculous power to guarantee happiness and faithfulness. These are things which must be worked for. The results will be worth every effort.

The marriage ceremony does not have the power to charge the lives of the two parties involved. Chances are that they don't ever have the slightest idea what was said during the ceremony. If the man didn't

pick up his dirty clothes while he was single, the ceremony itself is not going to make him do it after he is married. The change is not in the ceremony but in the hearts of the ones involved. Being baptized does not change my life. In baptism, I am to die to this world and become alive unto God (Rom. 6). But baptism itself does not do the changing. The changing must be done by me with the Lord's help. Becoming a full-grown Christian does not come automatically. For Christian living is a constant growth process that is to continue to the end of my days.

The wedding signals the changing of relationships. Before the wedding the man and woman are friends, prospective groom and bride, fiance and fiancee, but they are not husband and wife. Before baptism one is an object of God's love as is everyone, but he is not a child of God, an heir of God or a joint

heir of Christ. Before baptism one can not rightfully call God his Father, because he is not in his family. In baptism he ceases being a child of Satan and is born of water and of the Spirit (Jn. 3:5) into the family of God (Rom. 6:16-18). Being in the family of God he thus has all the rights, privileges, and obligations of son-ship.

Everyone needs to be married. It might not be as husband and wife, but we all need to be married to Christ, because in order for us to be married to Christ and to spend eternity with him, we must be married to him in this life. To be married we must go through a type of "ceremony." That act is simple yet profound. It includes baptism. It takes work and effort to make a success of any marriage, but the return is well worth the investment. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, TX 76470.

Modern People News!

"'MODERN PEOPLE NEWS' has revealed plans for the filming of a movie based on the sex life of Jesus in which Jesus is portrayed as a swinging homosexual. This film will be shot in the U.S. this year unless the public outcry is great."

So goes a new petition being circulated among churches. Naturally, any God-fearing, Bible-believing person would want to write, protesting such a movie.

The petition even gives you a form letter, written to Attorney General Scott at 301 South Second Street, Springfield, Ill. 62606, imploring him to do



RAY HAWK

something about this movie. In the body of this letter, the culprit, *Modern People News*, is located at 11058 W. Addison Street, Franklin Park, Ill. 60131! With that kind of information, surely one would write to have Attorney General Scott to investigate this unholy business!

One of our deacons, Darrell Kimbel, called Attorney General Scott to see if this petition was valid. Mr. Scott said they had investigated and there was no such organization in the State of Illinois and the address given in the petition was bogus. He said he had received thousands of these petitions and the whole matter was a hoax.

If you see or hear of this petition, please put it to rest. We need to fight against every form of evil; but let us not spin our wheels feeding someone's sense of humor by falling into his trap and adding fuel to his practical joke. — 1461 East Chester Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

"It All Belongs To God"

Suppose God granted you a life of seventy years. How would you spend it? An average person would spend it like this:

- Six years getting an education
- Eight years recreating and relaxing
- Six years eating
- Five years riding in a car
- Four years talking
- Fourteen years working
- Three years reading
- Twenty-four years sleeping

How much time do you give to God? If you went to church every week and prayed for five minutes every morning and evening, you would give five months to God — five months out of seventy years. — Selected

This brief lesson is likely to be misunderstood. Our first impression is how little time in our life we spend in God's service. This could create a burden of guilt, unless we also understand one great principle. The time we spend in worship, study and prayer



ANCIL JENKINS

are not the only time we give to God.

If we think like this, we make the tragic mistake of dividing our lives into secular and sacred compartments. This can allow us to divorce our secular lives from any obligation to God. We think we can do as we wish, since we also have a spiritual life.

The teaching of scripture is that all our life belongs to God (Rom. 14:8). Living or dying, we belong to Him. Paul also states that all is to be done to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:30). The context shows that in the way we eat, drink, and interact with others we glorify God, not just our worship.

How much of our life is to be given to God? Not just the five months of worship and devotion, but the whole of it in service and glory to Him. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

There is a right way to settle our problems, most of which are caused by trying to avoid that way.

A commentary on the times in which we live is that the noun *honesty* is usually preceded by *old fashioned*.

It is not enough to be "as honest as the day is long." You should behave yourself at night too.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 6)

—
speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 19

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1983

NUMBER 51

The Preacher's Character

In the life of a gospel preacher there is absolutely no substitute for the attribute of good character. This was the belief of Batsell Barrett Baxter. In his *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* classes at David Lipscomb College no subject was stressed any more than this one as an essential trait of the man who would preach God's Word. In fact, character headed the list of the qualifications he felt important to preaching.



JIMMY EDWARDS

No doubt many more besides brother Baxter have stressed the necessity of the preacher's character. It is definitely a subject which needs to be mentioned more often. It should be emphasized because the preacher's character serves as the base for an effective ministry. A man may possess every other qualification a preacher needs, but if he lacks good character his ministry is doomed.

A minister of the gospel should be a man marked by distinguished and outstanding Christian character. He should be a man of good reputation. His life should be characterized by moral excellence and firm Biblical convictions.

Batsell Barrett Baxter is the author of *The Heart of The Yale Lectures*. In this book brother Baxter sifted the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching to discover what they had to say about important aspects of preaching, with emphasis on the qualities of preaching. Especially interesting and helpful is a lengthy section dealing with the preacher's character. The following is a summary of what the lecturers said in regard to character. The preacher's character is discussed from three slightly different viewpoints.

First, from the standpoint of his spiritual grasp on that which he preaches. The preacher "before he begins to make God known, must first himself know God." The preacher must have "a

deep possession in his own soul of the faith and hope and resolution which he is to offer to his fellow-men for their new life." People want a "spiritually-minded man." "A Christless man can never preach Christ."

Second, from the standpoint of the preacher's character on the reception of what he preaches. The preacher must live a righteous life. A righteous life "serves to undergird and make effective his pulpit utterances." A man "must keep clean the vessel which is to deliver and distribute the things of God." "His chief concern is not to prepare sermons, but to prepare himself to deliver sermons." A preacher should, first of all "see to the elevation of his own character." "It is necessary to lead a clean, upright, steadfast, useful life, purged from all insincerity, and lifted above all selfishness." The responsibility of the preacher's personal character "is therefore the greatest of all (his) responsibilities."

Third, from the standpoint of the power of the

preacher's example to influence men. The preacher must demonstrate and exemplify "the type of life he would have others attain." The preacher "must not merely preach a sermon; he must in humility, but with relentless self-requirement, be a sermon." The preacher "should be an example before his people and the world of a man walking with God." "A gospel unsupported by the example of those who profess to have received and obeyed it will be powerless, and the preaching of it in vain."

One would have to agree that these observations and statements regarding the preacher's character are very timely, perhaps more so now than ever before. Knowing Christ, living so people will receive the message, and being an example in daily living should be a major concern of every true gospel preacher.

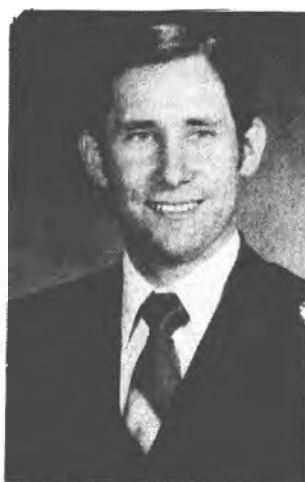
Paul's advice to Timothy is a fitting conclusion: "But be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). — 512 Gardendale Dr. Montgomery, AL 36110.

Finding Life!

Life is such a precious possession! Everyone wants to enjoy life to the fullest. We only live once on this earth, and we should try to get the greatest amount of good out of this life. But how can we get the most out of life?

Is it by fulfilling every worldly pleasure and every desire of the flesh? Solomon tried this method, and he learned that it was all worthless (Eccl. 2:1-11). His experiments proved that true fulfillment in life is not found in satisfying the desires of the flesh.


How do we, then, get the most out of life? It is by losing ourselves. Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will



RONNIE LOWE

lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). Does this mean that we should have ourselves killed in order to find our life? Certainly not! But it does mean we must lose ourselves in the service of the Lord. Paul wrote, "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" (Gal. 2:20).

Christ wants us to enjoy the best life now and in eternity: "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness" (respect and obedience toward God) "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8). Christ died to give us the abundant life: "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). It is comforting to know that our loving God condemns all thoughts and actions which would be harmful to our lives, and he encourages and rewards Christians for doing those things which are good. Only through serving him can we find true fulfillment in life. — 202 Mesquite Ranger, TX 76470.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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"Members One Of Another"

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:4,5). Here the apostle Paul is emphasizing that various members of the church perform varying functions, as is true also of the differing members of a physical body. However, there is to be no friction within the church over the different tasks being performed, for we all are members of the one body.

The same inspired apostle wrote Christians to put away lying, and "speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

(Eph. 4:25). Since each Christian is a member of the same body with every other Christian, no member should lie about any other member — for we are members one of another!

Because we are part of each other we should seek to make it easier for each other to go to heaven. We care about one another! Each should be encouraged by the others. "Be thou faithful unto death..." (Rev. 2:10).

A good memory verse for this week is I Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." Compare this reading from the King James Version with the American Standard (1901): "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all." The Revised Standard Version reads: "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." Does not this passage underline the fact that we are members one of another, and care one for another?

"The Rise Of The Clergy"

This is a phrase you may have heard. Supposedly it is the time that a select group of people took over the work and leadership of the church. This group then led all public prayers and did the preaching and teaching. They were given special titles and sometimes dressed differently. This took place several hundred years after the establishment of the church.

My study of church history and human nature leads me to believe there was no sinister rise of the clergy. Their prominence probably came because the other people were willing to let this class develop. They felt since the clergy could do these things better, they would become spectators and just observe and listen. The reason for the clergy does not lie solely with them. It lies also with the laity who let the clergy rise.

We have no such "clergy-laity" organization in the Lord's church. This is because the Bible teaches that the teachers, preachers, and leaders are no different from every other member (Matt. 23:9). We are all ministers of God, called to do His work and service (Eph. 4:11-12). We are a kingdom of priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices (Rev. 1:6, 1 Pet. 2:5).

Yet, the spirit that let the clergy rise is not dead among us, by any means. We must have leadership in the church. Yet, no one can escape his responsibility to be God's servant. As a part of the body of Christ, each must make a contribution.

Let us follow those who lead. Let us learn from those who teach. But let us also realize they are not the only workers for the Lord. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.



ANCIL JENKINS

Years ago a young college student spent a summer vacation looking for what he called "local color" for use in a book he planned to write. The main character was to be drawn from an impoverished, shiftless community. Soon he came to a place, made to order, with rundown farms, seedy men and washed-out women. To top it off, the epitome of the shiftlessness he had envisioned was waiting for him near an unpainted shack, in the shape of a scraggly-bearded old man in faded overalls who was HOEING AROUND A LITTLE PATCH OF POTATOES WHILE SITTING IN A CHAIR.

He could hardly wait to get back to his rooming house and his typewriter. As he made the turn in the dirt road which ran past the cabin he looked at the old man from another direction and saw something that stopped him cold in his tracks. From that view there was visible a pair of crutches leaning on the chair. He also noticed one empty overall leg hanging limply to the ground. In that instant the lazy shiftless character he had first seen was transformed into a figure of dauntless courage.

The young man said, "Since that hour, I have never judged a man after only one look or one conversation with him. And I thank God that I TURNED FOR A SECOND LOOK."

There is room for strong suspicion that we are often guilty of cruelty by making a snap judgment after we have seen only a small part of the whole picture in certain situations.

While attending a meeting recently in which Flavil Nichols was present, he gave this account which involved his father. Brother Gus Nichols had a preacher visiting him, which was not unusual. In the visitor's presence he told his secretary to "take this article out of the Gospel Advocate and turn it in to the local newspaper for his "Article of the week." The guest became very upset and

A Second Look

ELBERT HENRY

finally said, "Brother Nichols, I'm surprised that you would do a thing like that — copy an article written by someone else and sign your name to it." Brother Nichols at this point showed him the Advocate article — *which he had written*. The guest said that he was glad to know this, otherwise he would never have had any more confidence in brother Nichols. He thought he knew exactly what had happened but had arrived at a very unjust conclusion.

How easy is it to hear a part of a conversation or see a part of an act and jump to a cruel conclusion. (They say that's the way some people get their mental exercise!) There may be something we did *not* hear or see that would change the picture completely — into a favorable light. It just might be a good policy to forego judgment until we know the "rest of the story." — 6620 Bonny Oaks Drive Chattanooga, TN 37421.

**Season Greetings To All Our
readers of Words Of Truth from
the Editor and staff.**

Four Little Words That Describe Baptism

Little words, like many other little things, fill an important place in human affairs. The Bible warns against despising the "day of small things" (Zech. 4:10). God was able to use a small child, crying in a basket, to deliver, eventually, the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt (Ex. 2:1-10). Jesus used a small boy, five loaves and two fishes to feed about five thousand people (John 6:5-14). Be assured that God can take your small talents and use them to make you a soul-winner for Jesus, provided you will begin to exercise them (Matt. 25:14-30).



W. A. HOLLEY

There are four little words which very accurately describe the Biblical function of baptism. Although these words are small, they are very significant. We shall notice these words one by one.

(1) The first of these little words is *IN*. Baptism . . . water baptism . . . is to be performed *in* water — not in oil, nor buttermilk, nor orange juice, etc. . . . John the Baptist baptized in water — not the Holy Ghost. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him *in* the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:4-5; John 1:33-34; Acts 1:5).

The Sacred Scriptures teach that those who wish to be saved must submit to His authority. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "In the name of Jesus" means by the authority of Him who has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18-20). "In the name of Jesus" does not refer to a certain baptismal formula, as is asserted by some. Such references as Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:47-48; 19:5, tell us what to *do*, not what to *say*, when baptism is performed.

John the Baptist did not administer his baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 18:24-26; 19:1-5). This fact explains why it was necessary for those who had been baptized with a baptism which had gone out of date, to be "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Thus, a defective baptism must be corrected.

(2) The second little word that describes one of the functions of baptism is *BY*. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." (I Cor. 12:13). What does "by one Spirit" mean? Well, it means by the Spirit's direction, instruction, or teaching. How does the Spirit lead, guide, instruct men today? The answer is simple: It is through the Holy Scriptures which the Spirit of God gave to all of earth's citizens (Acts 1:16; II Tim. 3:16-17).

The conclusion thus drawn can be easily comprehended by considering I Corinthians 12:3. Notice, ". . . No man speaking *by* the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and no man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, but *by* the Holy Ghost." (Emphasis mine, W.A.H.). What does the word "by" mean? It means that no person on earth could know that Jesus is Lord, if it were not for that divine revelation of truth as revealed in the Holy Bible (II Sam. 23:2; Neh. 9:20,30; Heb. 10:8-10).

What is the meaning of I Corinthians 12:13? By the teaching of the one Spirit (the Holy Spirit), we were all baptized (immersed in water) into the one body (the church), and were made to drink into (to receive the benefits of) the one Spirit. In this process the Holy Spirit is the agent, not the element.

The Holy Spirit mentioned in the foregoing Scripture does not refer to Holy Spirit baptism. There were two baptisms in Apostolic times (Holy Spirit, and water); but Holy Spirit baptism ceased, while water baptism continues (Eph. 4:4; Matt. 28:18-20; I Cor. 13:8-13).

(3) The third little word is *FOR*. Acts 2:38, says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." What does "for the remission of sins" mean?? Does it mean that one is to be baptized "because one has already had his sins remitted?" No, not unless one is to repent "because of remission of sins." Both repentance and baptism are coupled together by that little conjunction "and," which means that both repentance and baptism move in the same direction. Consider: two box cars coupled together cannot move in opposite directions, one east and the other west. Neither can "repent" and "be baptized" point in opposite directions.

Dear readers, if "for the remission of sins," in Acts 2:38, means "because one's sins are already forgiven," then "for the remission of sins" in Matthew 26:28 means Jesus shed his precious blood "because sinners had already been forgiven." These two passages (Acts 2:38 and Matthew 26:28) contain iden-

tical language ("for the remission of sins") in both English and Greek. If one means "for the remission of sins," so does the other; if one means "because of remission," so does the other. Thus, faith, repentance, confession, and water baptism are for, unto, in order to, that your sins may be forgiven (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; I Pet. 3:20-21). It is dangerous to reject the counsel of God (Luke 7:29-30).

(4) The fourth little word is *INTO*. Salvation is in Christ; but we are baptized into Christ (II Tim. 2:10; Romans 6:3-4).

The saved are in the church, but we must be baptized into the body which is the church (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23).

Jesus shed his precious blood in his death; but if we wish to share in the benefits of his cleansing blood, we must be baptized into his death (John 19:33-34; Rom. 6:3-4).

Salvation is in the name of Christ; but we must be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:12; Matt. 28:18-20, ASV).

Dear readers, does your baptism meet Bible requirements? — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 36580.

"He Cannot Sin"

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him — whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (I John 3:6,9).

These verses have been most troublesome to many because they believe (1) that they are children of God, (2) they know that they do sin, and (3) yet the Scripture plainly states that one begotten of God does no sin. So, some throw up their hands in utter confusion, not sure whether they are saved or not.

The universality of sin is abundantly taught in the Bible. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "There is no man that sinneth not" (I Kgs. 8:46). "For ye were going astray like sheep" (I Pet. 2:25) and many others.

Surely Simon Peter, the apostle of Jesus, was one begotten of God, his child; yet he sinned grievously (Gal. 2:1ff). And the Spirit himself said that "some shall fall away from the faith" which fact makes it certain that they would be "in the faith," that is, "born again" or they could not fall away. From these and many other references and incidents we see that a child of God can sin, though the sacred text says that such "cannot sin" because he is begotten of God.

Now if you had personally received a letter that we call First John you would not jump into the middle of it and begin reading, but would go to the very first word and read straight through, and in so doing would be ready for the things that follow. Thus we would have read "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). Further "if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father,



VIRGIL BRADFORD

Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). Remember, these things were written to Christians, born again people, who have the assurance that "if we walk in the light — the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sins" (I John 1:7). From our point of view we can never relax our guard against temptation and sin; from God's point of view he keeps on cleansing his struggling children by the blood of Jesus, a continuous process.

John, above all biblical writers, is fond of using verbs in the present tense which show continuous action or state of being: walk, confess, sin, know, deceive, abide, and others. Now since we have established the truth that we do sin and yet are among those that cannot sin we find the strong implication that the sins of those walking in the light are done inadvertently, or in ignorance, and are not wilful, deliberate and habitual. The very fact that the blood of Jesus cleanses (keeps on cleansing) is a good indication that we do sin (keep on sinning) in some way. If there is objection that the perpetual cleansing of sin by the blood of Jesus eliminates the need of repentance and confession, observe that these things are a vital part of walking in the light. None can claim that he is walking in the light of God's word while stubbornly holding to a course of wilful sin.

Going back to our text in chapter 3 this is what we have: "Whosoever (keeps on) abiding in him does not (keep on) sinning: - - - whosoever (stands) begotten of God does not (wilfully keep on) sinning." The reason and the power behind this is that the "seed (keeps on) abiding in him: and he cannot (continuously, wilfully, deliberately) sin, because he (stands) begotten of God." The seed is God's word.

In contrast to sin the same principle holds true when applied to righteousness. When we obey the Lord we do righteousness. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him" (I John 2:29).

We should avoid the extremes of over-confidence on the one hand, and excessive guilt feelings on the other. The heart condition is of utmost impor-

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God's Power Unto Salvation

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Although the gospel is God's power to save sinners, it can be perverted (Gal. 1:6-9). Thousands of preachers are heralding the doctrines and commandments of men as if man's ways are as good as God's ways (Ezek. 22:26; 44:23).



W. A. HOLLEY

If the gospel is to accomplish its purpose, we must be honest with its message, and obey its commands (Acts 17:5-11). Truth unbelieved can accomplish nothing (Mark 16:16). Even the power of the gospel can be made ineffective and neutralized by unbelief. So often, prejudice against God's truth blinds the minds, stops the ears, and closes the eyes of unsuspecting thousands to the knowledge of God (Matt. 13:15; II Cor. 4:4). Jesus could have taught the Jewish people of His day the truth of God, which they so desperately needed to know, had it not been for their bigotry, intolerance, and prejudice. Prejudice sees what it pleases, but oftentimes cannot see the plain truth of God.

Herewith we shall present some startling facts, especially in the light of modern denominationalism: (1) All truth necessary to save the souls of lost men is included in the gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 15:1-4; Rev. 22:18-19; I Pet. 4:16; II Thess. 1:6-10). (2) All the apostles preached the same gospel. Peter did not preach one gospel and Paul another (Gal. 1:6-9). (3) All gospel preachers do the same today. (4) The pure, unadulterated gospel is God's power to save the lost. (5) Those who come to the Judgment having rejected the gospel through their disobedience are certain to be lost eternally (II Thess. 1:6-10; I Peter 4:16).

Furthermore, the gospel of Christ contains facts to be believed: The death, burial, resurrection of Christ for our sins (I Cor. 15:1-4). It contains command to be obeyed: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. Therein, we find promises to be enjoyed by those who qualify themselves to receive them: remission of sins, and the promise of eternal life. The gospel also contains threats to be feared by those who refuse to believe and obey the truth of God (I Cor. 15:1-4; Heb. 11:6; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16; I Pet. 4:17; II Thess. 1:7-9).

Does not the Bible say? "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Yes, it does! But we must not fall into that old Calvinistic trap which teaches (contrary to the Bible) that sinners cannot respond to the demands of God unless they receive first the direct enabling power

of the Holy Spirit. Such a theory is false because, since God is no respecter of persons, if He saved one He would be obligated to save all (Acts 10:34-35). If this conclusion is not correct, why is it not correct??

The gospel which equals the word of God possesses power to save the lost (I Pet. 1:22-25; Rom. 1:16). Observe, when the sinner needs light, it is the word of God that provides the light (Psa. 119:105); when one needs to be converted, it is the law of God that accomplishes this wonderful work (Psa. 19:7); when one needs to be quickened, it is the word of God that achieves this (Psa. 119:50); when one needs faith, it comes through the hearing of the word (Rom. 10:17); when one needs to be drawn to God, it is attained by hearing the word (John 6:44-45; Rom. 1:16); when one needs to be called in faith and obedience to God Almighty, it is the gospel by which God does the calling (II Thess. 2:13-14).

In our day many seem to be concerned about the new birth and sanctification; but the new birth and sanctification are not wrought in the souls of men, miraculously. They are accomplished by the mighty power of the gospel truth (I Pet. 1:23; John 17:17). The new birth is not bestowed in answer to prayer, or by faith alone, or by one's feelings, but through one's obedience to the will of God (Matt. 7:21-23; James 2:17-26). Verily, freedom from sin is achieved through obedience to the truth of God (John 8:30-32; I Pet. 1:22).

Just here we raise a significant question: Does what has been said above mean that the Holy Spirit has been excluded? Certainly not! Those who understand the Holy Scriptures know that the Holy Spirit wrote them! He did it through inspired men. In Ephesians 3:3-4, we have the words "revelation," "wrote," "read," and "understand." The thought

is: God's *revelation* of truth has been *written* in the Bible, and we may *read* it in order to *understand* what God requires of us.

Now for additional Bible proof. I Peter 1:12, states: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us 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." This preaching was done through the Holy Spirit working in the apostles as is shown in Acts 2:1-4. According to II Peter 1:20-21, certain inspired men spake from God; those who thus spake were moved by the Holy Spirit. Thus their teaching or preaching never "came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

Again, David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2). But what David spake under the guidance of the Holy Spirit was the Scripture. As proof of this statement, read Acts 1:16, where it is declared: "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake . . ." It is as clear as the noon-day sun that the Holy Spirit operates through his word. It is the Spirit's word that has power to convert the soul (Psa. 19:7); the word is the seed of the kingdom that produces subjects (Luke 8:11; I Pet. 1:22-23); it is the Spirit's word that begets souls (James 1:21; I Pet. 1:23), purifies souls (I Pet. 1:22), and sanctifies (John 17:17). It is the Spirit's word that sinners must obey to be saved (Rom. 6:17-18; Heb. 5:8-9). Lost men are saved by the proclaimed word, preaching, not by obeying some subjective feeling or emotion (I Cor. 1:21; Mark 16:15-16). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

ANNOUNCE OUR GOSPEL BROADCAST

6th Avenue Church of Christ not only publishes Words of Truth, but also has a daily radio program, that is about 40 years old.

Station WWWB (1320) and WWWB-FM (102.4) carries a gospel sermon daily, 7 days a week at 8 A.M. This 30 minute program is now video taped, as it is presented

and is shown on local cable vision outlet (Channel 4) at 9:00 A.m. daily.

Our Sunday Worship is also video taped and is shown on (Channel 4) at 1 P.M. with the Sunday night service on cable vision at 9 P.M.

"He Cannot Sin"

Continued From Page 3

tance and every child of God must remember that the Father loves him still; that Jesus experienced every temptation that can beset us, and overcame. Hence, he is able to feel our infirmities and makes intercession for us at the Father's throne. Never let the commission of a sin get us down or cause us to lose hope for "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." — 2206 21st Ave. Nashville, TN 37212.

Preparation

There are four steps to accomplishment: Plan purposefully. Prepare prayerfully. Proceed positively. Pursue persistently.

Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement.

A lot of people who are worrying about the future ought to be preparing for it.

Pride

Very often a person who boasts of having no religious prejudice has no religion either.

Maybe our teen-agers aren't maturing too fast, but it's a little frightening to find that a lot of them already have as many prejudices as they'll ever need.

Some folks are as proud of their ancestors as if they were responsible for them.



Words Of Truth

Festus; but speak forth

— Acts 26:25

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What Evangelism Has Done For Me

HARDEMAN NICHOLS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Seldom do we publish an article that is more than three or four pages in length. Due however to the widespread interest in the subject of church growth, and because of the excellent treatment of the subject in the following article, we are printing it all in one issue rather than dividing it into four installments.

What does any congregation of the saints want to accomplish? Every member with any ray of spiritual vision desires to see God's will performed by the church. But what does this involve? Broadly stated, every leader works and prays above all else to see the following things done faithfully in every church.

I. To proclaim the gospel of Christ to every creature.

II. To see each member building up the church.

III. To help each member to achieve spiritual maturity and excellence in true worship.

IV. To expedite growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

V. To fill each heart with constant praise and thanksgiving.

As desirable as is each of the goals, generally we do not seem to be accomplishing the dreams of our growth. We sometimes mount huge public relations programs, and some are even guilty of attempting every advertising gimmick, from Madison Avenue slickness to public amusement type, only to see our programs fail at a rate of speed equaling our inventive genius to plan them. Then we watch our enthusiasm seemingly wane and go with them down the drain.

Before good men's hearts despair and turn to some new message in the hope of finding "anything that works," let me urge each elder and deacon, all preachers, and every member to stop long enough to ask: "Is it possible that we have ignored some divine key that would release the satisfactory outcome we have been earnestly searching for?" I believe we have — perhaps not deliberately.

Of course, there are many factors which go into achieving these purposes. We all realize there can be no simplistic answer to the problems which often hinder our aims from becoming accomplishments; but there is no other factor more important in motivating a church to do all that it needs to do like *evangelism*.

THE MASTER KEY IS EVANGELISM

The master key to all church growth is *evangelism*. Dedicated members of the Lord's body who serve in any capacity of leadership should see that the work they desperately want to get done would be accomplished if the membership were involved personally in *evangelism* — with every member busy in bringing others to Christ. Now, we all know that realistically we will not get "every member" equally involved; but to the extent that we succeed in this, we also will succeed in every good word and work.

This is not an appeal for some particular method of evangelism. I have no "How-To" books to advertise. Choose the method with which you can do the most effective work. Or use several. But get the members busy bringing others to Christ—and you will also solve the problems in all other areas of the church's work.

Whenever a member becomes personally committed to *evangelism*, look at what happens to him! In each of the areas we mentioned, he becomes correspondingly dedicated. Let us enlarge upon those areas to include all of the specific aims of the church. There are at least twenty-four of these aims which can be arranged under those five categories. Every one of them would be overwhelmingly accomplished if the members were working in saving others. Let us examine *evangelism's* effect upon each of these. I can assure you that *evangelism* generated the energy I needed to accomplish all of these aims more effectively. You also will be led to believe that *evangelism* will produce these results universally.

AIM I: EVANGELISM CREATED IN ME THE DESIRE TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL.

It is proper that the great commission of Jesus Christ should be the primary work of the kingdom of God. He has ordained the church to be the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). So we have placed as each congregation's first priority: proclaiming the gospel of Christ to every creature. In working toward this, most leaders will include at least some of the twenty-four subordinate aims: (1) to have the gospel preached with all its power of truth and clarity; (2) to see the church use the most effective methods available in preaching the gospel; and (3) to influence as many people as possible

including ourselves—to be in heaven at last.

Who are the ones in the congregation who are most vitally interested in these aims? Obviously, it is they who are involved in evangelism. When people are trying to convert others, it will be important to them that the gospel is proclaimed with all its power. First, this will enable them to learn for themselves to use it effectively in teaching those with whom they study. Second, if their students are present, they want all the more that the preaching be done powerfully and in love.


An interest in soul-winning does more to promote good preaching than anything else the church can do. The same thing can be affirmed regarding the other two aims. The members who are involved in *evangelizing* want the church to use its most effective means in reaching the lost. They will never be the ones who stop missionary efforts by crying, "why this waste?" They know the importance of the task! They will also encourage every effort to save as many as possible. Paul was among those with this attitude because he was winning souls. Those who are involved in *evangelism* will say with the great apostle, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10). Those who are missionary-minded naturally encourage every missionary effort.

Evangelism has generated this kind of enthusiasm in me; and I am sure it will do the same in others. If we want the missionary efforts of the church to gain impetus, let us get the congregation involved locally in personal soul-winning—and with it will come an interest in evangelism everywhere.

AIM II: EVANGELISM HAS ENCOURAGED ME TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH.

There are specific aims in this category where the leadership seeks to get a positive response: (4); They want to get the members to spend more time in the work of the church; (5) they would like to have every member faithfully attend all services of

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

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What Evangelism Has Done For Me

Continued from page 1

worship; (6) they seek to encourage each member to attend all class sessions; (7) and to have more interest in the lost, particularly in inviting and bringing them to the services; as well as (8) to help the church to be ready to every good work.

If we want these things done, the answer lies in getting the members busy in evangelism. This will cause them to use their time and talents to accomplish all these, for they are all closely aligned with *evangelism*.

My interest in *evangelism* is one of the compelling reasons why I want to worship faithfully. Beside my constant awareness that I need God's help, I am also grateful that he has saved me and has used me as an entrusted messenger of the gospel to others; therefore I want to worship him. I also know that I cannot expect those I teach to attend the services of regular worship (to say nothing of gospel meetings and other special efforts), if I myself were not in constant attendance. Suppose those who are not members looked for me and found that I had neglected the worship: would they not conclude that since the church does not mean much to me, why should they listen to my teaching?

Nothing else will increase the attendance like evangelism! It creates a double effect: many of those who are invited will come; and surely all those who are doing the evangelism will be present, as well as encourage the other members to be there also.

What is true of worship attendance is true of the classes also. Every soul winner wants to learn more, because his involvement in teaching others points up his need to know more about God's word. If I am evangelistic, I will also work toward encouraging all the members to be in classes, so we can show our prospects by our examples how important Christ and his word are to the Church. The worship and class attendances grow wherever the members are working to save souls.

Evangelism has led me beyond the narrow confines of inviting and bringing others to worship and stopping with that. It has also opened up continuously-expanding opportunities to do good to all men. Where do our best opportunities of benevolence surface? Most often, they are associated with our efforts in evangelism. When we are teaching among the people, we will also find many occasions

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I Am Debtor

The apostle Paul wrote: "I am debtor, both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Roman 1:14-17).

The sentiment expressed by Paul should be characteristic of each Christian. All of us should be aware of how much we depend on others. In a revival at Jasper many years ago the late brother N. B. Hardeman preached a sermon on this truth. He pointed out that we rely on others to raise the wool, shear the sheep, card and spin the thread into cloth, cut out and sew together our clothing. For our food we are indebted to the farmers who raised it, the industrialists who processed it, and the shipper and distributor who make it available in our area. I am debtor to someone who raised the cow, to the slaughter-house where she was killed, and to the



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

tanner for preserving and making pliable the leather of which my shoes are made—then I am debtor to the shoe-cobber (or factory) who cut out the leather according to a pattern, and then sewed them together to fit my foot. Yes, I truly am dependent on others.

The apostle Paul not only recognized and acknowledged his indebtedness to others—he also stated how he would meet his obligations to them: "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also (Verse 15). He proposed to 'pay' his debt by preaching the gospel to them to the fullest extent of his abilities.

In my moving to Jasper, I am humbled by the realization of how much I am indebted to so many who have brought this great church to where it is today! Aside from my father, I am indebted to the other local preachers who have served here: L. R. Wilson, W. A. Black, and Bob Duncan. I am indebted to the present Eldership and Deaconship who serve the Lord in their functions, as well as those who similarly served in years gone by. I am indebted to the membership of today, plus those who previously have meant so much in building the congregation into what it now is.

I can never pay in dollars and cents this debt which I owe. I shall strive to be like Paul who said: "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." While I realize that the gospel deserves a far better presentation than I shall ever be able to give, I am "ready" in spirit to preach the same old Jerusalem gospel to all whom we may be able to reach. Please command me fully if I may be able to serve you personally, or the great Cause which we mutually love.

Denominational Disparities

(No. 1)

The Christian apologist, John H. Gerstner, in *Reasons For Faith* included a chapter on "Objections from the Shortcomings of the Church." He therein reminded all professed disciples that unbelievers find the weaknesses of Christendom as grist for the mill of their opposition to the claims of Christ. Notice the following particular which he adduced as an instance of such weaknesses:



PHILLIP GRAY

The world also finds fault with the Church in its internal relations, that is, its denominationalism. It is argued that Christians do not love one another but rival and divide from one another sometimes out of actual hatred. Furthermore, how could these churches have the truth of God and be so diverse in their understanding of it? Are there not several hundred different denominations in the United States alone?

This again is a partly valid criticism. The

existence of different denominations, especially so many of them, argues one of two things: either the Bible on which they are ostensibly based is not one but many and therefore not the Word of the one God, or there is something fundamentally wrong with the churches. We cannot entertain the first alternative if the Bible is the Word of God. We are, therefore, reluctantly driven to acknowledge that there is some serious fault in the churches themselves. (John H. Gerstner, *Reasons for Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967, pp. 218, 219).

New Testament Christians of today must agree with Dr. Gerstner. The present divided state of Christendom is deplorable. With such disparities among would-be Christians, how can we seriously expect the skeptical and irreligious submissively to unite with the Savior and the saints in his blood-bought body? Did not Jesus recognize this inherent danger of religious division in John 17:21 when, in prayer, he stated a purpose for unity? "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?" Is it not reasonable to say that the converse of this would be true, namely, that if Christians are not one as and the Father are one, then the world may not believe that Jesus was sent of God? (At least it will be

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What Evangelism Has Done For Me

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for service and benevolence. These are not particularly found as needs in those we are teaching; but we find the circumstances while we are finding our prospects.

As the church responds to the genuine cries of the poor, it gains tremendous respect among all the people, especially among those we are trying to reach with the gospel.

It is evangelism that has caused me to become a friend to every good work. And it surely can create this in all the church. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Benevolence has an evangelistic effect. God designed all benevolence to do this. It worked in the church in the first century. When Corinth saints gave to the poor in Judaea, Paul said their liberality caused honor to be given to God. "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; while by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you" (II Corinthians 9:12-14).

AIM III. EVANGELISM HAS SPURRED ME ON IN MY EFFORTS TO TEACH THE CHURCH TO ACHIEVE SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND EXCELLENCE IN TRUE WORSHIP.

Evangelism has helped the church to grow spiritually, and has stirred in me, as a member, a desire to see all the church increase in its excellence in worship, beginning with me. Examine the list of things in this area that churches are wanting to get done, and you will appreciate more fully how a greater interest in evangelism will bring with it the accomplishment of these also. Godly leaders throughout the brotherhood are praying and working to have the following: (9) Unity and brotherly love; (10) more capable leadership; (11) a genuine warmth in our hearts that will show itself in constant friendliness to those who attend the services, whether we know them or not; (12) to sing with all our hearts being stirred; (13) hospitality that embraces the newcomers and strangers; (14) generous, proportionate giving by all the members; (15) more visitation of prospects; and (16) more genuine love for a lost world.

It is certain that if I am involved in the evangelistic programs of the church, I will not contribute to any discord. That would cause those I am attempting to convert to Christ to turn aside in revulsion. When I am bringing others with me to worship, I want them to know that the church loves "one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22).

Our interest in evangelism has also spurred me to encourage and train others for more capable leadership. When I am inviting and bringing my friends, I want them to have the best teachers possible in the classes they attend. We do not want to be embarrassed by a sloven service, where those who lead the singing and prayers, and those who preach and serve at the Lord's table, are untrained and blundering. (That lack of leadership would fairly shout to a visitor, "God means so little to me that I have never taken the time to develop my talents to praise him"). The Scriptures urge that our worship must be led by those who "seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (I Corinthians 14:12). He says those who lead the prayers should pray so that all may understand and be able to say "Amen" (I Corinthians 14:15-17). The preaching should be of the nature that all, even the unbeliever who attends (I Corinthians 14:24), will be edified. Therefore Paul pleads, "Let all things be done unto edifying," and, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:26, 40). Evangelism has made me to know the need of singing from my heart. Can you imagine my slumping mutely into a pew and

letting the singing slide by without participating—when I have brought guests with me that I hope to win to Christ?

Underlying Paul's plea for excellence was, in addition to the reason that God deserves our very best, the warning that if our services of worship display confusion, and "there come in those that are unlearned, or unbleivers, will they not say that ye are mad?" (I Corinthians 14:23). But, on the other hand, if they are what they ought to be, even the sinner may be converted: "And so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (I Corinthians 14:25).

Who are the friendly ones in the congregation? Always those who are completely sold on evangelism. When we are bringing others, it makes us conscious of the need for the warm smile and the friendly touch.

These are the people who also know and practice ungrudging hospitality, who know the power of a kindly visit, and who give more generously because they see more fields that need to be sowed and reaped. In a word, evangelism gives us the sincere love for a lost world, and is doing something about reaching it.

AIM IV: EVANGELISM HAS BEEN A MAJOR FACTOR IN MY GROWTH IN THE GRACE AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Evangelism has a radiating effect upon the ones who become convinced of its supreme importance. It circles around our hearts with graces that bless us and help us to be a blessing. Accompanying my attempts to reach into the world with the gospel has been the consciousness that if I am to be effective, some other things must be done by me. These are also important aims that all leaders in congregations have been wanting to do: (17) Personal spiritual growth and dedication to a pure life; (18) genuine example in godly living and in loving service; (19) more knowledge of the Bible so I can be more effective in teaching others; (20) more faith in God; (21) more fervent in prayers; (22) more Christ-like in attitude; and (23) more joy in my heart and life.

Getting the church to do these things will be achieved as we get each member interested in evangelism. Paul knew the magnetic power that evangelism had in keeping his heart focused upon living a pure life. He said, "I buffet my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). He wanted his influence to be attractive. Knowing that an interest in evangelism had helped him to be daily on guard, he encouraged the saints! "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (I Corinthians 10:32, 33).

Evangelism has caused me to be more prayerful, and it has provided ample occasions to put the Lord to the test—and to see that faith is always victorious. Those whom Paul wanted to teach lay heavily upon

his heart. He says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:1-3). He requested the prayers of brethren in this work: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Colossians 4:3,4).

The members who are soul winners are praying members. They also are conscious of their need to follow Jesus' steps. Telling others to follow Christ has indelibly written this need into our own hearts. And without controversy, evangelism has made everyone who has given his life to it more joyous and happy. This is the joy that reaches the very heart of God and will reverberate into the chords of our own souls when any prodigal comes home. But there is also the joy of friends made around the world who share in Christ and his grace because we shared the message of salvation with them.

AIM V: EVANGELISM HAS BROUGHT ME TO GOD WITH CONSTANT PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

Evangelism has made me: (24) To see the goodness of God in my own life and in the lives of multitudes of others. It has made me thankful.

The joy of our salvation is due to the fact that someone cared enough to bring us to Christ. It is evangelism that nurtured us and helped us — it saved us! Others cared for our souls. How grateful and thankful we are!

But this joy must not be kept inside. That would be as fatal as holding the precious air we breathe inside our lungs. It is as we share, we live. Evangelism carried the gospel to Samaria. Luke records, "And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8).

Evangelism keeps us joyous throughout life and makes us happy at the hope of its reward. After Paul had been the evangelist who brought the gospel to Philippi, each time he remembered their "work of faith, and labor of love, an dpatience of hope," he thanked God. He said to them, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (Philippians 2:19, 20).

Evangelism is fundamental if we would answer the needs of the church, as well as the needs of the lost. It is the key that blesses us with an entrance into the fullness of church life and growth. Evangelism brings it all together. Nothing else so effectively influences so many good works. It saves us and those we teach. Paul said to young Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (II Timothy 4:16). — Preston Road School of Preaching, 6409 Preston Rd., Dallas, Tx. 75205.

Denominational Disparities

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much more difficult to convince them.) Without doubt this is strongly implied. Thus, in view of denominational divisions, Dr. Gerstner's second alternative must be correct: "there is some serious fault in the churches themselves."

The New Testament has much to say about the sin of division, sometimes explicitly and frequently by implication. As a case in point, one might look at denominationalism from two possible vantage points, neither of which is a scriptural concept of the church. First, one might view the various denominations as separate "churches," each a complete unit in itself. But, the obvious error in this thinking is perceived

when it is realized that Christ established but one church (cf. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4; Colossians 1:18, 24; I Corinthians 12:13). The church is exclusively his (cf. Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). Therefore, a person bound to the authority of scripture will recognize that only one church could possibly be Christ's, of which all should be members. This is a simple deduction, and an easy approach for disproving the first concept of denominationalism.

However, few would actually take the position that God recognizes more than one "church" in the

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Denominational Disparities

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complete sense. Many churchmen admit that there is but *one* true church of Christ, yet claim that it is variously composed of lesser sects or denominations. In writing about the early history of religion in America (18th century), Winthrop S. Hudson said that the denominational concept of the church, "elaborated a century earlier by the Dissenting Brethren in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. . . was to be of decisive future importance in American religious life." In describing a "denomination," Hudson said "it implied that the group referred to is but one member, called or denominated by a particular name, of a larger group—the Church—to which other denominations belong." Gilbert Tennent stated the concept with clarity and incisiveness when he declared: "All societies who profess Christianity and retain the foundational principles thereof, notwithstanding their different denominations and diversity of sentiments in smaller things, are in reality but one Church of Christ, but several branches (more or less pure in minor points) of one visible kingdom of the Messiah" (Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965, pp. 81, 82). This is the preponderate view among more informed religionists. It might be dubbed the "sliced pie" model of the church. Imagine the church universal as a pie. Each slice of the pie is a denomination. Yet, according to Webster, a denomination is "a religious organization uniting in a single legal and administrative body a number of local congregations." So, each slice of the pie comprises several local assemblies. This means that a denomination is larger than any local congregation, but smaller than the church in the aggregate.

Aside from the fact that denominationalism fosters and maintains doctrinal and practical disparities among churches, the New Testament provides no warrant for such a concept of the church. There are but two fundamental senses in which "church" is used in scripture: either the term designates the entire body of believers in heaven and earth (the church in the aggregate), or it refers to a particular local congregation(s). Its use in Matthew 16:18 is an instance of the former sense; its use in I Corinthians 1:1, 2 is an instance of the latter. However, one might point out that the word "church" is sometimes used to refer to more than one congregation in a general locality. For example, Luke wrote, "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied" (Acts 9:31, ASV). This regional usage does not constitute an exception to the general rule. It is to be construed in a local sense, referring to the several assemblies represented in those regions. The identification is only geographical, not doctrinal or organizational. There was no "single legal and administrative body" over the several congregations in those regions. Therefore, to speak of a denomination as a "church" that is larger than any local congregation but smaller than the whole collection of the saved is to go beyond what is written.

In addition to the lack of scriptural authority for denominationalism, the concept and practice is expressly condemned in such passages as I Corinthians 1:10-13, Romans 16:17, and Galatians 5:20 ("seditions"). Probably no passage is any clearer on this than I Corinthians 1:10-13 in which Paul wrote, "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. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Granted, the situation described here was confined to one congregation and is not therefore an example of "denominationalism" proper: but, it is a

case of religious division. And religious division is the very warp and woof of denominationalism. Thus, it is an example of "incipient denominationalism," or denominationalism in embryo, with a potential for having spread far beyond the Corinthian church. In fact, had its development not been checked, could it not have grown to such proportion that the Corinthian congregation itself would have been rent asunder? Separate local assemblies could have evolved from the tendency, each distinguished from one another by a distinctive name (and eventually perhaps by a unique doctrine or practice). The admonition in verse 10 to "speak the same thing and be of the same mind and of the same judgment" is indicative of deeper dimensions to the problem at Corinth than are normally supposed. Evidently, divisive dogmas were threatening to emerge—if not already present—from their undue exaltation of favorite preachers.

Therefore, it appears that the real difference between the Corinthian "contentions" and modern denominationalism is more a difference in degree than in kind. Remember the definition of "denomination" by Hudson quoted earlier: "It is implied that the group referred to is but one member, called or denominated by a particular name, of a

larger group—the Church—to which other groups belong." How were the Corinthian Christians making distinctions among themselves? This, then, is the essence of the denominational spirit—to erect walls of partition separating Christian from Christian by adopting different names reflecting disparate doctrines and practices. It was forthrightly condemned at Corinth! Why would God be tolerant toward it today, especially since our "contentions" are far more divisive than theirs? God disdains all denominational disparities.

However, in our next installment it will be in order to consider a prime objection by denominationalists against the position just defended. Often they aver that the issue resolves in the question of what is a "division?" Modern denominationalism is defended(?) on the ground that it is not the result of "divisions" in the sense of that which was condemned at Corinth. Rather, the difference of today are said to be inconsequential. We will see just how "division" is used in scripture. Along with that, denominationalism will be tested to determine if it is actually embraced in the term.— P. O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

Let The Church Go Forward

W. A. HOLLEY

"And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Exodus 14:15).

But the children of Israel did not always follow the demand of the Lord. Jeremiah the prophet makes a rather startling statement: "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imaginations of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward" (Jeremiah 7:24).

Truly, the church of Christ must go forward! It must be a going and a growing church! The New Testament church began with about three thousand in membership and soon grew into other thousands scattered through Western Asia, moving into Europe, going as far as Rome, then the capital of world (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; Romans 1:7, 15).

Unfortunately, some churches of Christ go backward rather than forward. What are some reasons that cause a church to grow? The church will grow when. . . .

(1) There is a will to work on the part of the entire membership. The walls around Jerusalem were rebuilt because "The people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6). Wishing is not enough; prayer alone is not enough. Jesus taught that "the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he may send forth laborers into the harvest" (Luke 10:2; Cf. John 4:31-38). What is needed are workers. . . not idlers (Matthew 20:1-16).

The devil, as adroit as he is, in his devices, will indeed have a difficult time defeating zealous, hard-working, determined servants of Christ (I Corinthians 15:58; James 1:25; Philippians 2:12).

(2) There are godly, humble, self-sacrificing men who will take the lead in promoting the church of the Lord. Those men who are chosen as elders and deacons are certain to determine the success or failure of the church! Let us recognize that such men are not perfect, but they must be trusted and respected (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). If they are little men, with little ideas, little will be done for the Lord. Brethren, let us work with these men, cooperate with them in every good work, and do our best to make their lot easier rather than more difficult. It should be borne in mind that we must account to God for our attitude toward them in that great Judgment Day (Acts 17:30-31; II Corinthians 5:10-11).

Also, there is a special place for women in the Lord's church. While they cannot usurp authority over the men, they can and must be faithful servants

of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:9-12; Titus 2:1-5). God's role for women is clearly outlined in the Holy Bible (I Corinthians 11:3). Christian women do not disturb the peace and harmony of the church; but, rather, they labor with other faithful members in the gospel (Philippians 4:2-3).

(3) The preacher sets a high spiritual tone, both in manner of life and in daily example (II Timothy 2:2; I Timothy 4:12-16). Yes, the preacher plays a key role in the failure or success of the church. A time-serving, back-patting, compromiser can prevent the church from going forward.

The preacher who will preach the truth of God without fear or favor, treat all members impartially, and sets a good example which they can respect, is certain to do the church good. We recognize that preachers are different and that brethren are sometimes unreasonable in their demands of them, but, if we are Christians, we would not wish to require more of the preacher than the Lord requires of him.

(4) There is a spirit of love, unity, understanding, mutual respect. Egotism, childishness, bitterness, and malice are but great stones in the path of progress (Ephesians 4:1-3; 31-32). "Only (behave as citizens worthily, foot note) let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27, ASV).

(5) When there are practical, realistic, useful plans for future growth of the church. The church that fails to look ahead, falls behind. God gives every bird its food. . . but he does not throw it into the nest. The church will grow when he we become workers together with God (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1). Hence, let us plan big, work hard, pray much, refuse to give up, remain faithful to our profession, and then we will grow, indeed!

(6) There is a willingness to commend the efforts for good on the part of all faithful members, and to condemn sin regardless of who the offender may be (James 5:19, 20; I Corinthians 5:1-17; II Corinthians 2:5-13; 7:7-12). It is altogether proper to give "honor to whom honor is due." Praise, and personal discipline, are virtues that march hand in hand up the rugged mountain of success!

(7) The church will grow when the plain, unvarnished truth is preached and when men and women believe it and obey it (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21). But, let us make certain that we speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). P. O. Box, Parrish, Al. 35580.



Words Of h

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

— Acts 26:25

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