



Words Of b

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 1984

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Happy New Year!



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS
first of October, 1983,

To all our readers we send sincere wishes for a New Year filled with success in righteousness, and with Christian joys. With this issue we begin Volume XXI. (Actually the first issue is dated December 6, 1963; but I suppose it is more convenient to change the volume number at the end of the calendar year). This issue contains an index to all the issues in 1983.

As our readers know, I became Editor of "Words Of Truth" the

although I did not move to Jasper until December 1. I count it a great privilege to serve under the supervision of the dedicated Eldership at Sixth Avenue church, and to be a fellow-laborer with this great congregation. Never before have my wife and I been more graciously received and made to feel welcomed than here.

Many churches send this journal to their entire membership list, plus friends whom they hope to convert. We urge other congregations to do likewise. We do not want a single reader to be lost! and pledge to all subscribers our very best. Yet we realize that the gospel — glorious as it is (II Corinthians 4:4) — deserves far more than we are capable of giving it. Aware of our shortcomings, yet with gratitude for your support and encouragement, we bid 1983 farewell, and eagerly look forward to 1984! Best wishes for the present season, and Happy New Year to all readers!

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What If Next Year Doesn't Come?

As I write this, another year is rapidly spinning its final threads. The year 1983 is now past history. This year has carried along in its tide much of all that has been carried in previous years. There is no new thing under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:8-11), although we think that our own time is very much unlike any times that have gone before. Fear of economic collapse, the dreaded anticipation of possible atomic war, the apparent indifference of some people to crime — all these things have been in our minds for quite some time now. And as we face a new year, we wonder what it will bring with it.

Religious sensationalists are increasing the fears of the untaught by peddling their "end-time messages." Every significant event of the day is proclaimed one of the sure (?) signs of the soon (?) coming of Jesus. Such exploitation has caused many anxious souls to worry about what our situation will be next year; the question, "What if . . ." rides in many minds. We propose, however, to submit another inquiry for this article: WHAT IF NEXT YEAR DOESN'T COME? What will that mean in view of all that we have said in this introduction?

If next year doesn't come, all our worry about next year will have been wasted!! "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). Jesus does not tell us not to "worry" about next year; he tells us NOT TO WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW!! He doesn't



JERRI MANASCO

even endorse short-range worrying, much less long-range worrying! If tomorrow doesn't come, then *next year* certainly won't arrive!! A person can be thoughtfully concerned about his family's future without being filled with anxiety over what might happen — but might not happen! Worrying about next year's economic status will not lessen inflation, nor head off a depression. Anxiety over one's bank account will not increase his balance by one penny, though wasteful spending might prematurely deplete the account. But if next year doesn't come, the bank balance will not matter!!

If next year doesn't come, we can do nothing about it. The Lord might indeed come back before this year is over; it will be over when he comes again! He will come as a thief in the night (2 Peter 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:1,2). No one can divert the Lord from that purpose. Death might overtake any (or most) of us before next year comes (James 4:13-17; Proverbs 27:1; Hebrews 9:27). If either death or the judgment comes, and thus prevents the arrival of next year, what can we say about it? All we can do is be prepared for either event. All we really have as far as earth-time is concerned, is the past and the present. We can learn from, be disciplined by, and find encouragement in the past. We can apply the lessons from the past as we endeavor to be better in the present. We can study the Bible, pray fervently, and serve God diligently *now* (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:11). Today is the day of work!!

If next year doesn't come, that fact will not hinder us from fulfilling noble ambitions and reaching for worthwhile goals right now. The Christian is ready if next year comes, or if it doesn't! Those who are interested in being eternally saved take each day as it comes; they grow a little every day (2 Peter 3:18; 1:5-11). The godly are always reaching as high as they can (Philippians 3:13-15; Hebrews 6:1-6). If next year

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does not come, it will have been foolish to "wait till some better time" to do what we need to do; how foolish to waste the stewardship which we have been given (Matthew 25:14-30). If next year doesn't come, we will be unable to do what we neglected this year! What if next year doesn't come? God is the Master

of time and eternity. He decides what is best in these things. Our job is to be doing what God put us here to do: "Fear God, and keep his commandments . . ." (Ecclesiastes 12:13). — Rt. 2 Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

"Hell's Unbeatable Foe"

SCOTTY HARRIS

Speaking of the unconquerable nature of the church, Jesus, the founder, said, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell *shall not* prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus affirmed that the church is a divine institution, and, in view of such, the gates of hell would *never* prevail against it. The church of Christ is indefeatable and invincible. It is hell's "unbeatable foe."

For over 1900 years, the church has stood — gloriously, mightily, prevailingly. Oh, there have been periods when it must have appeared to the saints of God as if the royal banner of Christ's kingdom would be hauled from its rightful place atop the masthead of the old "ship of Zion" and trodden under the feet of Satan and his emissaries. Yet, through all the attacks of all the ages, the church remains triumphant.

The story is told that a communist once said to a Christian: "We are going to destroy everything even remotely associated with Christianity. We'll pull

down the church buildings, topple every steeple, and rid the world of any idea of God." The Christian replied, "Well then, you'll have to pull down the stars also!" Indeed, one may as well attempt to dispel the twinkling glory of the stars as to extinguish the brilliant radiance of God's lighthouse — the church!

O, how privileged we should feel to be members of the King Immanuel's invincible empire! Yes, we should thus be motivated to greet each new day with a resounding "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), as we march bravely on to the conquest for Christ.

In view of the church's perennial power, Paul exclaimed "Unto God be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21).

The church of Christ is "HELL'S UNBEATABLE FOE!" No one knows this better than Satan (Revelation 20:2).

Let us rejoice! — 301 N. Cahill Road Albertville, Al. 35950.



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, my friends,
but speak forth
the Words of Truth as of old."

but speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1984

NUMBER 2

The Abortion Evil

Every year doctors perform 1.2 million abortions in the United States alone. This is one abortion for every 2.8 live births. Non-therapeutic abortion has become the second most common surgical procedure (behind circumcision). Abortion has become so prevalent, that population experts say that it has become in effect, a new form of birth control. But abortion should not be confused with birth control. Birth control prevents a new life from beginning. Abortion destroys that new life once it has already begun.



NOBLE L. MCKNIGHT

Is abortion simply an easy way to get rid of an annoying problem? Is it simply the termination of pregnancy? Or, is it murder? Dr. John Szenens has this to say about a woman having a saline abortion: "... she has nothing to worry about, she is not going to have a live baby." The doctor is right when he calls that which is killed a "baby." Many abortionists are not that honest. They prefer to talk about the P.O.C. (Product of Conception), or the fetus, or pregnancy tissue. Such language eases their conscience by allowing them to avoid the real issue, which is the taking of innocent human life. Dr. Szenens, continues, "... at the time of the saline infusion, there was a lot of activity in the uterus. It wasn't fluid currents. It was obviously the fetus being distressed by swallowing the salt solution and kicking violently through the death trauma. We just have to face it. Somebody has to do it. And unfortunately, we are the executioners in this instance."

Is the baby alive in the womb? Let us see what science has to say. It has been medically proven that the baby's heart starts beating from 14-28 days after conception, and by the thirtieth day almost every organ has started to form! He moves his arms and legs by 6 weeks; by 43 days his brain waves can be read. By 8 weeks the baby has his very own fingerprints, he can urinate, make a strong fist, and can feel pain. Science tells us that when the sperm and ovum

unite, they become a complete genetic package programmed for development into a mature adult. Nothing will be added except time & nutrition. The conclusion must be that life begins at the moment of conception.

What does God have to say about when life begins? "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:4-5). God recognized Jeremiah as a person while he was still in his mother's womb. He was sanctified and ordained a prophet while still in the womb. If this baby had been aborted, who would have been killed? The answer has to be: "Jeremiah."

God sent His angel to Zacharias to tell him that his wife would bear a son and even told him what his name was to be. Later, that same angel appeared to Mary and said unto her, "... behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). In those days, Mary arose and went to the house of Zacharias, "... and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb ..." (Luke 1:40-41). There can be no doubt that John was a live "babe" (or, baby) in his mother's womb.

Perhaps David has given us the clearest statement in the Bible about when life begins. He wrote, "For thou didst form my inward parts; thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are thy works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame

was not hidden from thee, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in thy book they were written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them" (Psalms 139:13-16). Clearly, God recognized David as a real person while he was still in his mother's womb. The only logical conclusion to be reached, from a consideration of these passages, is that life begins in the womb at the moment of conception.

May God help us all to awake to the fact that abortion is a great evil in our land. In Nazi Germany, a law was enacted which permitted the extermination of "useless" members of society. Now we have the same pattern emerging in our great nation. Right now we are slaughtering the unborn. Who will be next. Will it be the aged? the handicapped? the mentally retarded?

Let us all do what we can to protect the unborn. If you are considering an abortion, please don't go through with it. There is another way. You don't have to destroy the life in your womb to be able to live your own life. If you don't feel that you are capable of raising your child, then allow it to be adopted. There are good agencies that will help you place your baby in a loving grateful home. There are so many families just waiting and praying for the chance to adopt a child. If you have already had an abortion, then accept the forgiveness of God, upon the terms stipulated in His word, and go on with your life. — 1360 Brookneal Circle Mobile, Alabama 36609.

He Being Dead Still Speaks

ANCIL JENKINS


This is recorded of Abel in Hebrews 11:4. This verse came to my mind as I was looking through a stack of church bulletins that had accumulated on my desk. I came across a good article and noticed that the author had died several years ago. It is a tribute to him that his writing is still being spread.

What of our works? How much of our lives do we give for that which is not permanent? We

trade our time, which makes up our life, for money. We trade our money for things that will not last. Food, clothing, material goods are all temporary.

What will last so that our lives will speak after we are gone? Like Abel, our influence will remain. As the poet has said, we will leave footsteps on the sands of

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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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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

A Review

Reference was made in this column last week to the very first issue of this journal, dated December 6, 1963. Look with me at that issue: The front page article was entitled, "The Value Of Blood," by the late W. C. Quillen, of Haleyville. Page two contained "Pearls Of Truth," by Glenn A. Posey, then the second minister at Sixth Avenue church in Jasper; and, "George Is Not Going To Do It!"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS by Cordova's minister, Earl Barnett. The "Editorial Policy" by the founding Editor, the late Gus Nichols, of Sixth Avenue, Jasper, was on page three. The same page contained Franklin Camp's "When The Lord Commandeth." Articles by Harold D. Walton of Parrish ("There They Crucified Him"), and Flavil H. Nichols the present Editor ("Lord, Teach Us To Pray") were on page four, accompanied by a report on the new campus for Alabama Christian College in Montgomery.

There has been no need to change the Editorial Policy for *Words Of Truth*. The original statement of it was well worded by my father. From time to time I have re-read it, and expect to continue to do likewise in the future. Since it is customary for various businesses and individuals to take inventory at the beginning of a year, it is good for us to review the goals and aims, the purposes and intents, for which this journal was started, and to note the guidelines set forth by its founder. Here is his first Editorial, which charted the course this weekly paper should follow:

EDITORIAL POLICY Gus Nichols

This being the first issue of "WORDS OF TRUTH," it is thought good to say a few words about the policy by which our new paper is to be moulded and fashioned. Just as congregations are determined to know what kind of preachers they invite to preach in their meetings they have a right to know what kind of paper or literature they bring into the congregation for reading and study.

The following shall be the policy by which "WORDS OF TRUTH" is to be governed. Every writer should keep this policy in view in all his writings for the paper, so as to make his teaching and writing conform to this policy.

1. We want the truth, and nothing but the truth, taught in the paper. We want to make it true to its name "WORDS OF TRUTH" (Acts 26:25). We have no confidence nor respect for error and false teaching. Only the truth can make men free and build up the church (Jn. 8:32; Acts 20:32). We love people and shall always strive to please men in all things so long as no truth is to be compromised (I Cor. 10:33).

We could not ignore any truth to please men and be servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10). We claim no infallibility of our own, but we do believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God (2 Tim. 3:15-17). We propose to be governed by the word of God in all matters of faith. This was the basis of unity taught by the apostles and agreed upon by the pioneers of the restoration movement (Jude 3; I Cor. 16:13; 2 Cor. 13:5-6; Heb. 12:2; Phil. 1:27).

In matters of opinion, or of expedience, where God has left things to human judgment, we propose to leave men free to exercise their liberty of choice. Where God left something loosed, we shall not either bind it, or submit to any human law binding it. Neither shall we loose what God has bound (Mat. 16:19). We believe the word of God is all the religious guide needed in matters of faith. We propose nothing as terms of unity and fellowship other than faith in Christ and loving obedience to him in all things (Heb. 5:8-9). However, this includes much more than many have ever comprehended it to embrace.

2. It shall be the policy of "WORDS OF TRUTH." This will in itself be good training teaching, the subject matter to be determined by the need of our times and of any demanding occasion and circumstance. We want the reading of the paper to contribute to a well informed, happy and united membership in any church into which it is permitted to come.

3. We shall encourage our local preachers and others to write for "WORDS OF TRUTH". This will in itself be good training for them, and make the paper interesting to the friends of these writers. Mature Christians are quick to be patient with beginners and to rejoice in their visible progress. The crying need of the church is for an efficient leadership, and this can not be had without the training of experience and work. Of course, we solicit good, strong articles from brethren everywhere who are loyal to the truth, both in teaching and practice.

4. It shall be our guiding purpose to make "WORDS OF TRUTH" conform to the principles of good journalism. Therefore, we shall strive to be courteous and kind in dealing with sin and sinners, as well as in our discussion of all matters where prejudice and tempers may be involved. But this does not mean that the truth will be watered down and made ineffective. We realize the fact that the truth in its sown right and power is often blunt and painful as well as sharper than any two-edged sword. But we do not wish to get between the truth and the people and hinder its work of conversion and transformation by detracting from its power (Acts 14:1).

5. In our dealings with others, and in matters of controversy, we shall strive to be governed by the "Golden Rule" to treat others as we would like to be treated (Mat. 7:12). If our teaching of the truth provokes controversy, and the need arises for our defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17). We shall continue in

He Being Dead Still Speaks

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time that others will follow. In fact, we will influence people who will then present the same influence to others. Only the judgment will present the amount of good or evil that comes from our influence.

Life is short. We are on this earth only a short time. Yet the works we do and the words we say may last for centuries and affect people for eternity. — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Showing Respect For The Truth

Every faithful child of God knows of the all-sufficiency and power of the Holy Scriptures. We would, without reservation, admit that only the truth of the Word can make us free (John 8:32; 17:17). Christians often pray that the gospel truth will cover the world as the waters cover the sea. Devotees of the Master are deeply concerned with "a lost and dying world" that is decadent because of running roughshod



JOHNNY RAMSEY

over "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Disdain fills our hearts when error seems to be winning in the battle for men's souls, or when Satan gains the slightest advantage over us or anyone we strive to

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Denominational Disparities

(No. 2)

I heard a song on the radio the other day by Jerry and the Goffs. It was called "I'll Meet You on the Other Side of Jordan." One of the stanzas contained these lyrics, "... although our names are different, we're all purchased by his blood, through Jesus Christ we're one big family." Does this not express a typical denominational attitude toward the present woeful state of schism in Christendom? In our last installment it was demonstrated that the denominational concept of the church is unBiblical, and that division among disciples is explicitly condemned (cf. I Corinthians 1:10-13).

Is it true that "although our names are different, we're all purchased by his blood, through Jesus Christ we're one big family?" Many would argue, Yes! While allowing that the religious world is partitioned by partizan appellations and peculiar denominational dogmas, most would insist that the differences are not "divisions" in the sense of that which is condemned in such passages as I Corinthians 1:10-13, Romans 16:17, and Galatians 5:20 ("seditions"). Moreover, it is argued that the differences do not concern the basics, are perhaps easily reconciled, and at any rate are of little consequence. However, it will be the burden of this article to prove from the Bible that indeed such differences as are found between modern churchmen are fundamental, irreconcilable (so long as they are separately maintained), and consequential. These differences are condemned as "divisions" by the New Testament.

The English word "division" is translated in those passages relevant for our purpose from various forms of two Greek words, *schisma* and *dichostasia*. For example, in I Corinthians 1:10, "divisions" translates a form of *schisma*. Here, *schisma* is expressly prohibited. *Arndt and Gingrich* defines it as meaning, "division, dissension, schism" (p. 805). But, in Romans 16:17 and Galatians 5:20, "divisions" (seditions) is derived from *dichostasia*. This is defined simply as "dissension" (*Arndt and Gingrich*, p. 199). So serious is it to promote such division that one guilty of the sin is subject to church discipline (Romans 16:17). In Galatians 5:20, "seditions" ("divisions," ASV) is catalogued as a "work of the flesh." Thus, religious division is condemned.

Our procedure now will be to trace the use of these two Greek words for "division" in a few passages from the New Testament. Parallels will be drawn between the "divisions" that are descriptive of particular differences among religionists of the first century and some basic differences which now exist in Christendom.

I. A difference in interpretation is called a "division" in John 7:40-43. "Can we all see the Bible alike?" This was a question the Jews had to deal with, just as we. While teaching in the temple, Jesus provoked a controversy. "Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him." A *schisma* developed as a result of differing interpretations of the scriptures. The problem had to do with some who were isolating scripture and failing to consider the



PHILLIP GRAY

total teaching on that given subject. Incidentally, both interpretations were *not* equally correct.

Do not such differences in interpretation exist today? For instance, do not some argue that the Bible authorizes or permits the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, while others insist that it does not? Are there not those who accept a millenarian interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, while others flatly reject it? Yes, there are such differences today. These differences are "divisions." "Division" (*schisma*) is condemned. Therefore, such differences are condemned.

II. A difference of conclusion (or deduction) is called a "division" in John 9:16. This dissension followed on the heels of Christ's curing the man that was born blind. "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them." The miracle was a premise not denied. But, from it the Jews deduced different conclusions. This difference is called "*schisma*."

Is not such *schisma* still with us? For example, do not most religionists agree that salvation is by faith (Romans 5:1)? Yes, this is a given truth. But, what does this mean? Some insist that if we are justified by faith, then works of obedience are necessarily excluded. Others argue that faith is inclusive of such works, and that such works are essential to justification by faith. Surely we are still plagued with "division" (*schisma*). It is wrong!

III. An outright contradiction of beliefs is called a "division" (*schisma*) in John 10:19-31. When Christ had finished his "Good Shepherd" saying, "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" One side affirmed; the other denied. Some said, "he has a devil;" others said, "he does *not* have a devil." Directly contradictory beliefs are the source of "division" in this context.

What about now? Do we not have among us many directly contradictory beliefs? One group says that immersion is the exclusive mode of baptism, while another says that it is not. Some affirm that babies are born with sin-stained souls, while others vehemently deny it. There are churches which hold that Saturday is the only scriptural day of worship while others meet on Sunday (practically contradictory). Such a contradiction of beliefs is *schisma* (division). It is condemned.

IV. A difference in doctrine is a source of "divisions" described in Romans 16:17. Here, "divisions" is from a form of the Greek word *dichostasia*. Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Dogmas contrary to the apostles' doctrine are a source of division.

Today, many doctrines contrary to the apostolic teaching are promulgated in the name of Christ. One denomination may hold to the idea that election is unconditional. However, the apostolic doctrine set forth definite conditions with which man must comply for pardon (cf. Hebrews 5:8,9; Titus 2:11,12; Acts 2:38). Those who teach otherwise are divisive, and should be marked. But, so many do teach otherwise. Thus, those who hold to the apostolic tradition will necessarily be in conflict with the false teachers who abound. The difference between the apostles' doctrine and human error amounts to religious division. It is therefore condemned!

V. A difference in the choice of religious leaders is called "division" in I Corinthians 1:10-13. Some were saying, "I am of Paul; others, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." There were "divisions"

among them (3:3) because of their preference for certain preachers over others. Was this just the natural, innocent human inclination to be attracted toward certain personalities, especially those charming, charismatic figures with whom we may happen to share common interests, cultural or regional backgrounds, etc., more than with others? or, was it something more? I believe more was involved. The situation was so serious that Paul was compelled to ask, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul" (1:13)? This, then, was not a harmless matter of simply liking Paul more than Cephas or Apollos. It was the grave matter of choosing Paul or Cephas or Apollos as occupying a quasi-religious leadership position over Christ. As such, it was condemned.

And so it is today. Are there not those who say, "I am of Luther?" or "I of Menno Simons?" or "I of Wesley?" etc.? This preference for one man over others as our ecclesiastical leader is liable to the same charge of "division" as that levelled against the schismatic Corinthians.

VI. A difference in religious names is called "division" [*schisma*] in I Corinthians 1:10-13. The human appellations which they had adopted were divisive. The names separated Christian from Christian. However, Christ prayed for unity among his disciples (John 17:20-23). Paul pleaded for unity (Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2; 3:16). Wearing human religious names derived from popular leaders or distinctive doctrines or practices is decisively divisive and therefore condemned!

Thus, we have learned that modern Christendom is indeed "divided" in the very sense in which that term is condemned. From the examples analyzed, we can better understand what scripture means by "division." Division is the result of error's clashing with truth. It is an unrealistic idealism, and even an outright mockery of the New Testament concept of unity, to say that "although our names are different, we're all purchased by his blood, through Jesus Christ we're one big family." The truth is, though Christ has but one family, the religious world of today is many different families of which the New Testament knows nothing! Our greatest desire therefore should be to become and remain a part of the family of God while calling the world to repentance and submission to God's plan for Christian unity.

(In our next installment, we will examine at length just what the Bible means when it enjoins "unity" among believers.) — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441.

A Review

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its defense long enough to get the job done, and then return to the main line of teaching the truth in a positive sort of way.

6. We shall ever keep in mind the only scriptural objective in publishing such a paper, and that is, to do all the good possible, and no harm whatsoever. We shall strive to make the paper a real blessing to all who may read it. We actually believe it will build up members of the church so that they will give more, pray more, and live more nearly like Jesus lived, and if it does this, it will more than pay for itself, even in dollars and cents. The teaching program of the Lord for his church is the greatest program in the world (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; I Tim. 3:15). The farmer who is too stingy to plant enough seed will pay

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Showing Respect For The Truth

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lead "out of darkness and into light" (Acts 26:18). There are various ways that men can show respect for the Bible or disrespect. Sometimes we may be guilty of veiling the will of Heaven through faulty concepts or poor attitudes. Since no one really desires to aid and thus encourage the Devil in his fiendish work, we need to take careful inventory lest we be in that sad number that hinders the work of the Lord.

One glaring way that many show disrespect for the Bible's message is the apparent desire to spare their relatives and friends from plain gospel teaching. Some folks shop around for a soft preacher, as they look for bargains at the Supermarket! If only the Truth can free man's imprisoned souls, then the sooner my loved ones hear it, the better. Rather than *apologize* for straight teaching, we ought to earnestly thank God for those few preachers still willing to uncompromisingly proclaim it. When we start looking for an evangelist with a dull point on the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) we have forgotten the value of the soul-stirring rebuke of sin. We need more men to stand in the middle of the battle with swords unshackled and spirits undaunted and determination on fire for the lost souls of humanity. *We do not need watered-down pronouncements, but fired-up proclaimers!* And, yes, we also need honest souls to receive the message, and fearless brethren who shout "AMEN!"

We also greatly hinder Truth when we want "our pet sins" or weaknesses tip-toed around or soft-pedaled. One lady, who is supposed to be a Christian, actually stated: "We are all allowed to have one or two weaknesses." That language of Ashdod is a perfect reflection of *catering* to our shortcomings, instead of *correcting* them. In every congregation of any size, one can find members who had rather the preacher "hush up" on social drinking, dancing, immodesty, attendance, denominationalism and perhaps even baptism (lest a neighbor get offended). Oh yes, I forgot to mention *giving*, and *spreading the gospel*. Just any subject is taboo when we are

A Review

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dearly for his lack of vision and unwillingness to invest. He must sow bountifully in order to reap bountifully. Brethren will do more, live right and do better when they are taught better. To this end we launch our paper in earnest, fervent prayer and solicit your confidence, your influence and support.

7. The paper will be printed and mailed directly to each home in the subscription list furnished by congregations taking the paper, and be published only four weeks per month, the bill to be paid by the church on the first of the following month after the paper is received.

As editor I would like to increase the circulation of this religious journal.

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unwilling to let the Lord have "full speed ahead" in our lives.

We manifest a very poor attitude toward Truth when we allow our sympathy for those in error to overwhelm our love for the exclusiveness of Christ's church. All of us desire that all men everywhere be saved. But we cannot extend the borders of God's kingdom to include accountable beings who refuse to be born again (John 3:5; Acts 8:12). God keeps the roll

It seems as though I am forever defending gospel preachers against something. Perhaps it is because I hate to see any good man blamed for something he is not responsible for; or, if I do not say anything I may fear nothing will be said. Neither can I defend everybody who preaches and has been treated badly. Some preachers whom I know may need a good firing. You see, they make themselves so obnoxious or disagreeable others can't work with them. But Elijah's thousands still live, and over that good numbers' plight we dedicate this lamentation.

The problem is simply this: Many brethren complain about how much work the church could get done if preachers would just quit moving around at its expense. It is a terrible cycle. A preacher encounters a terrible problem; after a lengthy time of dealing with it without resolving it, he thinks he must move — and does. Upon arrival at his new place he soon finds a problem very similar to the one he left, if not an identical one. So he must move on again, while behind him other preachers move in, stay a while, and then move on, too — and often over the same unsolved problem. If the preacher is the problem he should move. Often he is not, but is unjustly accused of being a troublemaker. After a congregation has gone through one good man per year for some six or more years, one starts to wonder: is the problem with the preacher? or with the brethren?

While the preacher-moving cycle is lamentable, the blame for the majority of it has been placed at the wrong place. Let's talk about the recurring syndrome good men face many times, unusually, as they continue to preach — that often encountered cause of preacher packing. It has contributed more to preacher-moving than any other single factor I

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ROGER JACKSON

book; the Lord adds men to the church. We dare not even try to exercise the prerogatives that belong to Heaven alone. *If we sincerely love the truth* we will get busy and teach it plainly to our loved ones. That is far more practical than trying to have them saved while they are still lost. It is also more honest than blaming a preacher for "running people away" when he is only proclaiming the GOSPEL OF CHRIST. — Box 235, Rowlett, Texas 75088.

Syndromes — Cycles: A Lament

know. It is the practice of so many elderships and "family-ties" brethren who handle the justice of the word of God with respect of persons. Along with it, and often in order to hide it, the elders are willing to take some steps in the right direction of church discipline (Romans 16:17, 18; II Thessalonians 3:6)? but the truth of the matter, if it were really known, is that they have no intention of withdrawing from those home folks. If you press them so that they have to make a clear-cut decision, you will find out what is dispensable. Oh, sometimes they will find some old reprobate who quit the church years ago and isn't related to anyone, has no money, and holds no political office: and they will make him an example to appease(!) the preacher and a few of the faithful brethren who are crying out. But you just let the ball roll at the feet of anyone else! Instead of admitting they have no intention of withdrawing like the Bible commands, they will (1) start a discussion on the "interpretation" of II Thessalonians 3:6), (2) confuse the issue by bringing up the fact that a hundred others have some faults, (3) caution not to move too fast, (4) consult other congregations to see how they handle the issues, etc. Finally, the local man gets tired of seeing a simple passage of scripture abused and denied, so he objects — sometimes from the pulpit. That will move him. The boot may come like this: "Now brother (whoever) we know him/her much better than you do; we had this problem when you came and we will have to live with him after you are gone. He is indispensable; but you are not." Thus the preacher is out, tagged with holding up the church's work by a moving expense, when the only thing he did was to try to get the truth practiced. Sound familiar, brother?

Every now and then a preacher finds it! No, not the proverbial "tub of butter," but a congregation of true New Testament Christians who have selected real, and qualified elders who will do what God says, regardless. They are sick of that old syndrome of sorry oversight instead of capable leadership. They will go ahead and fight sin wherever it may be found, without fear or favor! Then and there is where you will find your forty-year man who doesn't care if the tooth does hurt to pull just as long as we are heading toward pulling it for sure. If we had more qualified elders we would have more forty-year men, and fewer moving vans on the road. And all the people shall say AMEN!—940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 36203

Some preachers are so sad of voice and countenance that they should apply for membership in the embalmer's union.

Preachers find more sleeping sickness than does the physician.



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 21

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 1984

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Parental Tracks

Brother B. C. Goodpasture, illustrious editor of the *Gospel Advocate* from 1939 till his death in February of 1977, and one of the greatest preachers ever to adorn the pulpit of the Lord's church, used to tell the story of a father and son who were walking in the snow. The father was ahead; the boy lagged behind. The son said to his father, "Daddy, don't take such long steps." The father responded, "Why, son?" The youngster replied, "Because I'm walking in your tracks." As parents we are leaving tracks in our pathway through life. Will they be worthy or unworthy tracks for impressionable sons or daughters to tread? Let us note both with brevity and yet with a degree of profit for all in the awesome role of parenthood.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

UNWORTHY TRACKS

Cain left the tracks of substitution, modernism, rebellion, envy, murder, hatred of righteousness, evil works, etc., before his descendants. And that is the lifestyle they chose, as the early chapters of Genesis testify with fulness of force (Gen. 4:1ff; 5:1ff; I John 3:12; Jude 11). Achan left the tracks of coveting and theft before his children (Josh 7:16-26). Eli left the tracks of no discipline before his sons Hophni and Phinehas (I Sam. 2:12-36; 4:11). Ahab and Jezebel left the tracks of treachery and rebellion for their children to follow, as the latter part of I Kings and the early chapters of II Kings set forth. So did the various Herods mentioned in the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts.

WORTHY TRACKS

Enoch left the tracks of walking with God for at least three or more centuries (Gen. 5:21-24; Heb. 11:5; Jude 14,15). Abraham left the tracks of faith for Isaac to tread (Gen. 12-25; Heb. 11:8ff). Joshua left the tracks of declaring that he and his house would serve Jehovah (Josh. 24:15). Jonadab, son of Rechab, left the temperance tracks of no wine-drinking for his descendants -- and for centuries they were steadfast in retaining such a sobering lifestyle (Jer. 35:1ff).

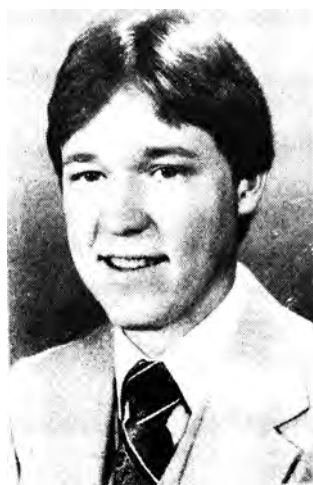
Zacharias and Elizabeth left the tracks of righteous and blameless lives for John's feet to tread (Luke 1:6). Lois and Eunice left the tracks of an unfeigned faith

for Timothy to tread (II Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15).

As parents which category claims our tracks? — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Allying With Sin

Surely all of us have been threatened at one time or another by a force much larger than we. Children go to their parents; teens go to their friends; adults go to each other; or face it alone. Such was the case with King Hezekiah when Isaiah wrote. He was being threatened by Assyria, against whom he had revolted (2 Kings 18:7). Knowing that Assyria planned to take Egypt, and that if those plans were carried out



BARRY FIKE

Israel would be attacked along the route, Israel's king faced a great decision: Where do I go for help? Isaiah (31:1) says that they went to Egypt.

What did God think of their plans? God states (Isaiah 30:1-7) that Israel, his people, trusted more in Egypt than they did in him. While it is true that they took counsel, the directions were given by men, not God. Thus God referred to them as rebellious, adding sin to sin, and foretold that Egypt would not enter into an alliance with them.

Isn't it ironic that the Israelites would travel through the same desert that their forefathers were led out of captivity-- and go running back to Egypt to seek help?

God further describes them as being unwilling to listen to him (Isaiah 30:8-11). Did not their forefathers say that they would choose God and follow his commandments (Joshua 24:15-24)? But it seems this generation was more interested in entertainment than instruction. They wanted some smooth, flattering thing said to them. They would rather put themselves under false teaching than the truth. Of

course, they could have known it was false if they had investigated, but that took effort. "Get out of the path" they told Isaiah. "Don't trouble us with the Holy One of Israel; adopt another course that isn't so hard to follow."

The Lord's reply to these people states that like a cracked wall and a broken clay pot, so they are about to be broken up and captured (Isaiah 30:12-18). But this is not what God desires. "Return to me," he pleads with them. "Turn from your self-chosen way and self-confident work. Leave your proud carnal ambition behind you and follow me." "I will wait," says God to rebellious Israel. "I will spare you and, like a loving parent, accept you back if you will come to me."

Does not this description fit the Lord's people of today? How many members of the Lord's church put their complete trust in God and not in money, their job, or family? Do we find people that prefer *other* things to the commands and advise of God? Do people listen and follow the law of God? or do many members want a smooth, "social gospel" that pampers rather than instructs? Would some prefer to listen to false teaching rather than to the pure, plain teachings of the Bible which might demand they change their way of life? Do many act as if they would rather not be bothered with the truth?

It is still going on today the same way it always has. And yet God still stands at the door of our heart and knocks (Revelation 3:20). Knowing that none will escape the final judgment (Revelation 1:7) we all ought to strive to do what our mission is. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort will all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2).

Let us not be threatened by the forces of the world but be led by the mercy and love of God. To do anything short of that will ally us with sin. — W. Hickory church of Christ, 349-33rd St., SW; Hickory, N.C. 28601.



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

“When Ye Read Ye May Understand.”

Long before Jesus was born, David wrote: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalms 119:11). He recognized that all sins are “against” God. Even sins against another person (Genesis 39:10) as well as our “secret sins” (Psalms 90:8), are also sins against God. He was aware that the best preventive against sin is a knowledge of, and reverence for, God’s word.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Later our Lord himself demonstrated this, for he, when tempted by the devil, rebuffed Satan by declaring forthrightly: “It is written . . .” and “It is written again . . .” (Matthew 4:1-10). Each time he was tempted, he recited to the old devil the sacred

scriptures!

To the Ephesians the apostle Paul wrote that “when ye read ye may understand . . .” (Ephesians 3:4). One good way to grasp the meaning of any selection is to break it down into units of thought, and analyze them one by one, little by little. This is also an excellent aid to memorization.

Sister Peggy Fyfe of Birmingham has arranged in short thought-units the book of Philippians, without regard for chapter-and-verse divisions. Her isolation of ideas makes for the greatest of ease in reading. The flow of thought is greatly augmented, and memorization should be very simple. This week please read aloud the first page of her published book entitled: *Philippians: No Chapters Or Verses*. She did print the King James text by verses in the margin; but this is omitted from *Words of Truth*.

Read this week’s selection aloud. Read it to your family. Drink deeply of the ideas, and let the meaning of each clause or phrase sink into your heart. See how easy it is to memorize this first selection which is printed below by special permission of Miss Peggy Fyfe.

Leadership

CARLOS GUNTER

Show me an educational director of a Bible School in any church who can’t spare the time to stop and talk with the young people and teenagers, and I will show you a group of young people that will be interested in any thing and every thing except Christianity.

This same thing is true about elders of any congregation. The teachers of Bible classes should be some of the most friendly persons in the congregation.

The bond of friendship and love must be ever present for those who have not grown up spiritually. If any one has not the time to stop and pay attention to any and all children and young people, he or she is just “too busy” to be a teacher of this age people. The soul is worth much more than that few minutes you would spend with the child (Matthew 16:26). It is worth much more than anything else you could accomplish in the same length of time.

If all we older ones have to say to the young people is, “When are you going to be baptized?” or “When are you going to obey the gospel?” we need to learn something else to talk about. For surely they need to do this; but let us not “founder” them on this until they comprehend that faith in Christ must lead to repentance and baptism. Yes, they do need to obey the gospel; but they need also to know the love, care, concern, and respect that we have for them. They need to know, not only that they are welcome, but that they are wanted and needed. An invitation to them to visit in your home would do an untold amount of good.

People are very much like a vine, especially young people. A vine can be trained to climb a tree, a pole, or run a trellis-- but if you never train it, it will grow just the same--somewhere. It may not be what you would call a beautiful thing, but it will grow. So will a child--with whatever love, care, sympathy, and training we give it. If you don’t have any time for this young generation of people, they will not have any time for the church when they are grown-up.

How long will it take to rear and educate a man to the point where he fills all the requirements of the Bible to be an elder of the Lord’s church? It looks to me like it is time to begin. We will be needing elders, deacons, preachers and other teachers and leaders till Jesus comes. — Route 2, Hohenwald. TN 38462.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

Arranged By Peggy Fyfe

**Paul and Timotheus
the SERVANTS
of Jesus Christ**

To

**all the SAINTS
in Christ Jesus
which are at Philippi
with the**

**bishops
and
deacons**

Grace and peace
be unto you
from God our Father
and
from the Lord Jesus Christ.
I thank my God
upon every remembrance of you,
always in every prayer of mine
for you all
Making request with joy,
for your fellowship in the gospel
from the first day
until now:

Being confident of this very thing
that he

Which HATH BEGUN a good work in you
WILL PERFORM it until
the day of Jesus Christ;
Even as it is meet
for me
to think this of you all,
because

I have you in my heart. — 1202 S. 34th Street No. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205

Denominational Disparities

This series is considering the problem of religious division. A Biblical and practical solution is being sought. Our first installment dealt with the basic concept of denominational theory in contrast with the Biblical view of the church. The second demonstrated that the root cause of denominationalism is doctrinal and practical disparities among religionists in the sense



PHILLIP GRAY

of the "divisions" that are condemned in scripture (cf. I Corinthians 1:10). What can we do to rectify this lamentable condition in "Christendom?" This is the question now to be addressed.

Unity among his disciples was Christ's passionate plea in his prayer recorded in John 17. This sentiment was particularly expressed in verses 20-23: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Just how "united" are all disciples to be (to what degree)? In what sense would Christ have us to "one be?" The answer is found in the prayer for unity itself: "that they may be one, even as we are one." Thus we ask, in what practical, applicable sense must we be "one" as God the Father and God the Son are one?

I. We must be one *in testimony*? The testimony of Christ and his Father was unanimous (as in a court of law). "The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me" (John 8:13-18). Is it not safe to infer that when Jesus prayed that we all "may be one," as he and the Father are one, he desired that we too might be one in testimony ("judgment")? Paul admonished the Corinthian Christians to be "of the same mind and of the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). While it is true that "judgment" here does not translate the same word in the original as that so translated in John 8:16, there is little, if any, practical difference in meaning. Thayer said that *krisis* (i.e., "judgment") in John 8:36 means, "judgment; i. e., opinion or decision given concerning anything" (Thayer, p. 119). Hence, as Christ's and the Father's judgement is one, so our judgment is to be one.

Would this not mean then, for example, that

when we opine, decide, judge, or view the question of baptism, that we all should bear the same testimony? When we decide or view the scriptural plan for church organization, should it not be the same decision or viewpoint among all? Should not our expressions of worship be decided or viewed in only one manner? Ought it not be the correct manner? This presupposes, of course, a single, common and authoritative standard of judgment, the Bible. Christ prayed that we "may be one" as he and the Father are one.

II. We must be one *in doctrine*. "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that this commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49, 50). So said Christ in words that remind us of the exhortation of I Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Christ and the Father spoke or taught exactly the same thing religiously. Modern "Christendom" is not united in this sense. But this we must all become to please God! We must teach the same thing with reference to the origin and nature of God's kingdom. We must speak the same thing in relation to the plan of salvation, the possibility of apostasy, the parousia of Christ, etc. Christ prayed that we "may be one" as he and the Father are one.

III. We must be one *in practice*. Our works should be uniform. Concerning the man that was born blind, Jesus observed, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:3,4). Jesus and the Father were "one" in the sense that he and the Father worked the same works (cf. John 5:36; 10: 32, 37, 38). They were one in practice.

Are we? When we actually become "one" as Christ and the Father are one, then will we not all observe the Lord's Supper on the same day? with the same frequency? will we not all recognize the same so-called "mode" of baptism? and the same subjects of baptism?

will we not practice it for the same purpose? will we not be one in the method of financing God's church? Yes, we will do all this and much more when we are "one" as Christ and the Father are one.

IV. We must be one *in identity*. Christ and the Father are one in identity. Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." He also said in John 14:9, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Earlier, he had said, "And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me" (John 12:49). The Hebrew writer was on firm ground then when he said about Christ, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person . . ." (Hebrews 1:3). Accompanying this is Paul's description: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:5). This all corroborates John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." They are one in identity.

Could it be said truthfully that when you see one religious institution, you have seen all others? is the denomination next door in the "express image of Christ's church?" are all the many schisms in "Christendom" actually in the form of the one church? are these warring sects and parties all equal with Christ's body? are they equal with each other? are they identical? is it so that "in the beginning were the sects, and the sects were with the church, and the sects were the church?" No! In no sense can it be said that the sects and the church are "one" as Christ and the Father are one.

Therefore, because we are to be one as Christ and the Father are one, we must be one in testimony, one in doctrine, one in practice, and one in identity. It is only when the religious world at large seriously comes to grips with these requirements in our relation to one another and to God that we may be united as Christ prayed (John 17-20-23). In our next and final installment, we will give thought about how it would be possible to effect such unity. We will ask, in view of the truths we have established on behalf of unity, what should any conscientious denomination (or denominationalist) be willing to do for the sake of such unity?—P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441.

A Plan For The Day

"Tomorrow, we must get organized . . ." How often have we jokingly said this? Have you ever realized there is a Biblical exhortation for us to make plans for our day? This is found in Romans 13:11-14.

We are told to *WAKE UP* (verse 11). We are not to waste time in idleness for the time is short. Our salvation is nearer than it has ever been. The emphasis of the Bible is on "Now!" Time is short and fleeting.

The end is certain, but the time of the end is not. Do not delay the necessary obedience or plan to make use of opportunities at a later time.

We are told to *put off the deeds of darkness* (verse 12). These are comparable to the clothes in



ANCIL JENKINS

which we sleep. Night wear is certainly appropriate for sleeping, but not for the works of the day. Since the night is past, there are things a Christian must lay aside. Paul states six sins that belong to the past of a Christian: carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, sensuality, strife, and jealousy. These are all the clothes of darkness and are to be put aside since the day is at hand.

Negative goodness is not enough, however. The life of a Christian is not merely putting things off, or not doing things. One must *put on the clothes of the day*. The clothing put on by the Christian is Jesus Christ. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not a provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (verse 14). Just as one cannot put on the clothes of the day over the clothes of the night, so one cannot be a Christian without putting off the old man.

How is Jesus Christ "Put on?" Paul reminded the Galatians that those who had been baptized into Christ had "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

What are your plans for the "day?" — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Some Will Get Mad

VICTOR M. ESKEW

The demand has been set forth by our Lord that the gospel be preached to all individuals. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16). Therefore, each and every child of God has the obligation to warn the sinner, or else, be charged with the blood of that individual: "And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have made thee a watchmen unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 3:16-19).

When sinners are confronted with their errors, there will be various reactions to the word. Some will be glad that their wickedness was manifested to them, for they want to be right in the sight of God. Others will be sad, for they see their iniquity, but are unwilling to change. And still others will get mad because of the truth presented to them. It is this third reaction which we would like to examine.

Men throughout all ages have become wroth when God's word was presented to them. Naaman, the leper, upon being told to dip in the muddy Jordan seven times in order to be cleansed became angry with the words of the prophet: "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage" (II Kings 5:11,12). In the days of Jesus, many became angry with His words and sought to kill him: "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet" (Matthew 21:45,46). Stephen was another who enraged the multitudes by his teaching. His preaching resulted in his being stoned by the angry mob (Acts 7:51-60). Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, also excited his hearers to the point that on many occasions he suffered persecutions and hardships: "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me" (II Timothy 3:10,11).

In each of the above instances, the truth was faithfully proclaimed by men of God. This *we* must do regardless of the reaction of the hearers. The truth on such topics as marriage-divorce-remarriage, the operation of the Holy Spirit, unity-in-diversity, (under specific authority), the authority of the elders, the modern versions, gimmicks and gadgets, baptism, instrumental music, faith only, miracles, predestination, premillennialism, and numerous other subjects must be proclaimed. Only in this way will we be free from the blood of all men (Acts 20:26,27).

The responsibility rests upon the spokesman of God to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Love is exhibited when we go to one about whom we are concerned to warn him of the error of his way. After this, the obligation is upon the hearer to receive what is said. James wrote of the hearer's obligation when he said: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of

truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:18-21).

The exhortation is to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, and *slow to wrath*," when hearing the word of God. The purpose of this statement is seen in the verse which follows: "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

People who must raise money for the mission fields have been known to try many different methods in which to solicit funds for this important necessary work. We are commanded to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15). The field is truly "white for harvest," whether it be overseas or here in the states. But there is a right way and a wrong way to go about raising this money.

Men sometimes arrive in town unannounced on a Saturday afternoon, and expect all of the elders to be available to hear the important news which they have to tell. And according to Paul (I Timothy 3:2), they should make every effort to give some time to this. However, it would be nice if they could be notified in advance that they might make themselves ready to offer their hospitality.

When all have arrived at the building, the missionary might choose to go with the "Make-them-feel-guilty" approach. He tells them how lucky they are to be attending church in such a luxurious building! Central heating and air conditioning is nice! Wouldn't the monthly payments on those cars out on the parking lot go a long way if applied to spreading the gospel? Some even go so far as to suggest that all of the members in the congregation stop drinking "Cokes" for one year! Just look what could be done with this money toward spreading the gospel! We know that all this could very well be done; but we are made to wonder if *he* also makes the same sacrifice? The fact that a congregation is strong at home is what makes it able to help in other parts of the world, seems not to enter his mind. But we know that if we were not strong, then he would have no business here with us, anyway.

Thoughts Of An Unborn Living Baby

JOHN W. ROBERTSON

I'm so tiny, so helpless, so dependent on mom, perhaps she cannot hear me as I express my feelings. I want so desperately to live, to love, to be loved, to prove, to be proved. I am worthy of all the pain and effort put forth for my existence; yet, I have been sentenced to an untimely doom.

I'm so tiny no one can hear my voice, only a little babe in my mother's womb. What a great moment to have been born, to see the light of day, to cry to get attention, to laugh, to share. The crying of others for concern, the laughing of others for joy, the marble of God's planned birth will not happen.

I'm so tiny, I've cried for my existence, so eager for my future destiny. Unwanted, unloved, can it be, no

It is easy to become discouraged when our proclamation of the truth makes men angry. It becomes more disheartening when others will blame us for turning another away by our preaching of the plain, simple truth. But let us remember, that if we have preached the truth out of a heart of love toward those to whom it is being preached, then, the reaction to that truth rests upon the hearer. One of these reactions will be anger, and that soul may never be saved; but our soul will not be charged with the blood of that man. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). — 600 W. Sadosa #28, Eastland, TX 76448.

Where Are The Other Nine?

WINFREY HENNESSEE

Many of these people, after being assured of monthly support, do not take the time to send a report on the work. One man, when questioned on this matter, replied, "It's too time-consuming" apparently forgetting that it was also time-consuming for the elders to meet with him in the first place.

Men who would raise money in order that others might hear the gospel preached should give some serious thought to the problems mentioned here. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Brethren, don't blow this great opportunity.

Some sister congregations also come asking for financial aid in carrying on mission work; but they too often are neglectful in showing appreciation, or giving a progress report.

A close check on this subject will show that those who handle their work in a courteous, efficient manner are those who continue to receive support year after year. All others are dropped from the budget. Thank God we still have some who are excellent mission workers.

Of course we are not to expect praise when we do things for the cause of our Lord, nor should we try to capture the glory of men (Matthew 6:2). If we do, then we have our reward. But encouragement builds up a Christian. We read (Hebrews 10:24) that we are to exhort one another. Is it too much to ask that brothers in Christ, working for the same cause, be considerate of each other-- that we have good manners? This even caught the Lord's attention (Luke 17:17) when only one of the ten lepers returned to thank him when he had cleansed them, prompting him to say, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" — P.O. Box 185, McMinnville, TN 37110.

minister to say a word of comfort, no prayer, not even a decent burial?

Mom, if anyone can hear and understand, it is you! Please give me a rightful place in this world. Can you hear me, mom? Are you that heartless and cruel? I need to be wanted, I need a kiss, I need to be hugged and I need this now!

I'm sorry for you mom, because all these things that are rightfully mine, I will never receive. You will never receive the joy of my being. You will never hold me, squeeze me close; you will never see me. You have chosen abortion! Mom, I'm sorry for you. — 1751 Damon Street, Tarrant, AL 35217.



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 21

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Supporting Student Preachers

The future of the Lord's church is being shaped by the preachers we train today. When our present generation of leaders is gone, who will lead God's people? and which direction will they go? These are crucial questions.

Several hundred men are now in training in schools of preaching operated by local congregations. Our *East Tennessee School of Preaching* has some 20 men presently enrolled in



JOHN WADDEY

preparation for full-time gospel preaching. The Karns congregation provides the education without charge to the students. Sister churches are asked to help support students for their two years of study. Occasionally the question is raised, "Is it *right to support a preacher student while in school?*" The following lines address that question.

Paul reasons that the gospel "laborer is worthy of his hire" (I Timothy 5:18). Men who are training to be preachers are laboring in the gospel. Therefore, they are worthy of their hire or support.

Again Paul says, "They that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:14). But our students are involved in preaching. They frequently preach for churches. They are daily studying to that end even as do we who are employed as preachers. Therefore, they should be able to live of the gospel.

Paul asks how can the lost "hear without a preacher? How shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14-15). A logical extension of that reasoning is, how shall they preach unless they are trained? and how can they be trained unless they can live? (i.e., have food and shelter)?

Where would you personally be without a gospel preacher? Most of us were led to Christ by a preacher and taught much of what we know by the same. Where would your congregation be without the gospel preachers who have taught and led in days past and present? Just look at those congregations

which are struggling along without a gospel preacher in their midst. If preachers are part of God's plan for the church and for the salvation of the lost, where are they to come from? All agree we can support them after they have been to school; some would question helping a man during his studies. It is like saying after you swim the river, if you survive, we will give you a life jacket. Men need funds for housing, food and clothing while in training, as well as after.

To object to the support of a young preacher while pursuing his studies is inconsistent. Actually all good preachers will be perpetual students as long as they preach. More of their time will be spent in the books by far than in the pulpit and classroom. Since we approve of supporting preachers who are studying many hours per week, on what grounds do we oppose the student preacher?

To those who object, I ask how they would propose that the church train her future leaders? Would the objector be willing to give up his secure job and home to serve God as an evangelist — with no income for the first two years? The golden rule would suggest that he not expect it of our students (Matthew 7:12).

If we conclude not to help in training future preachers, what will the future of the church be? who will take the gospel to the millions of lost souls around the world? who will teach the church in the coming years?

Jesus taught us to pray that the Lord of harvest would send forth reapers to harvest the souls desiring salvation (Matthew 9:38). Shall we expect a miraculous act to spontaneously generate a new crop of preachers? Rather we should expect to get more preachers just like we get food when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). We pray for God's provision and then go to work to do our part to bring it to pass.

Churches commonly employ young men fresh out of school to work in apprenticeship roles. We classify them associate ministers, assistants, or youth ministers. Yet any such man is in a "continuing education" project. Elders realize that the young man is not yet ready to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a preacher. They place him on payroll while he is learning and growing through "on the job training," with an older, experienced preacher. If he can be supported while in training as an assistant minister, surely he can be supported the months

before as he studies God's word.

A student in a *school of preaching* is in a unique learning situation. He studies only the Bible and courses related directly to preaching the gospel. His course work is provided *without charge by the Lord's church*. Churches are not being asked to provide for secular training for this student; only to feed, house and clothe him while he receives spiritual instruction.

We would encourage every congregation that is able, to designate a portion of their income to the training of "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Luke

Written primarily to reach the Greek mind, the gospel according to Luke emphasizes the world-wide inclusiveness of the message of Christ.

Whereas Matthew presents Jesus as the Son of David (Matthew 1:1), thus indicating his Jewish ancestry, Luke shows Jesus to be the Son of man: (Luke 5:24; 6:5; 7:34; 9:22; 11:30; 12:8; 17:22). As the Son of man, Christ "grew" (Luke 2:52); was "subject to" his parents (Luke 2:51); "wept" (Luke 19:41); "sweat" (Luke 22:44); and ate (Luke 19:1-10).


Too, in Luke's gospel account, Christ is more than a Jewish Saviour; he is the saviour of the world! Hence, there are no social or national barriers; Jesus came to "... seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

According to Luke's account of the gospel, Christ's message of salvation includes: Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56; 10:30-37; 17:11-19); women (Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Martha and Mary, the woman who went



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

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

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Where Is... Thy Brother?"

Long ago God asked Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" (Genesis 4:9). Cain's response was dishonest, and indicates a desire to shirk responsibility for his brother. He replied: "I know not" when in reality he did know; then he added: "Am I my brother's keeper?" God's awareness of what had transpired is revealed in his inquiry: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Then God measured out to him punishment for his crime.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Suppose God were to ask you, individually, "Where is thy brother?" I do not refer to his geographical whereabouts, nor to his social, political, nor financial status; but where is your brother

spiritually? Many who read WORDS OF TRUTH have brothers and sisters with whom you have never discussed seriously their standing before God. Is your brother "in Christ," where salvation is (II Timothy 2:10)?

No one can be saved outside of Christ, for "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby ye must be saved" (Acts 4:12). And no one is "IN" Christ unless he has been baptized "INTO" Christ (Romans 6:3-4). Where is your brother?

It is also true that many who "have been baptized into Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:27) are not now faithful in the service of Christ, but are backsliders. As unfaithful members of the church, they are not in fellowship with those who are faithful. Such members need to be restored by repentance, confession of sins, and prayer (Acts 8:22-24; I John 1:7-10; James 5:16). Have you ever been to talk with your brother or sister who is not faithful to the Christ he or she once obeyed? Wait no longer, but today be actively your brother's keeper! Show him you do love him, and want him to be saved!

"Where is . . . thy brother?"

The Shame Of Profanity

The shame and degradation of any society can in a very large measure be seen in the profanity and pollution of its speech. It is a sad commentary on this nation that profanity and evil speech have become so commonplace that our young children cannot any longer distinguish between acceptable speech and profanity. No longer is there any discretion used in television programs, no barriers to the use of foul language, and no forewarning given of what is to be broadcast. We have become a society so bent upon freedom and license in every regard that all standards of decency and respect are fast becoming passe. One can no longer attend a sports event of any kind, including the local High School ball games, without being constantly bombarded with vile obscenities from a host of half-drunk, emotion-crazed, foul-mouthed spectators. I have long since ceased to attend such events because our society no longer requires decency and discipline of its spectators; and decent people have no choice but to suffer the indignities and insults of their vile and filth. Is this not a national shame? Is there no longer any such thing as shame and disgrace?



ROY FULLER

Profanity is not a new problem for mankind, it always has been; and it has never been pleasing to God. As a prerequisite to our spiritual growth these worldly tendencies must be laid aside. Peter said: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and ALL EVIL SPEAKINGS, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:1-2).

Evil speaking is symptomatic of an evil heart. It is an outward expression of the inward man. It would be well for all of us who claim to be children of God to examine ourselves regarding this sickening social

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Needed!

Literature For The West Indies

ROGER DICKSON

The *International School of Biblical Studies* is making an effort to accumulate and ship by Ocean Shipping Container (8'x7'x20') several thousand pounds of literature for West Indian churches. If you have any of the following pieces of literature in either ENGLISH or SPANISH please send it to *Roger Dickson, International School Of Biblical Studies, P.O. Box 2000, West Monroe, LA 71291.*

Send only: Sound Religious BOOKS, Evangelistic TRACTS, Unused BIBLE SCHOOL MATERIALS, or

Bible School Supplies.

All materials must arrive at the above address before May 31st. The cost of shipping will be approximately \$1000. If you can help with a \$15, \$20, \$25 or greater contribution to defray shipping cost, please send these funds to: Whites Ferry Road church of Christ at the above address. Please earmark all funds for "Literature for the West Indies." — P.O. Box 2000, West Monroe, La. 71291.

Luke

Continued from page 1

before the unrighteous judge); children (8:41-42; 7:12); and Gentiles (4:25-27; 7:9; 13:29).

Sinners of every sort were drawn to Jesus. "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:1-2).

It seems that the Greek world of Christ's day was more universalistic in it's approach to society than were the Jews and Romans. Hence, in Luke's gospel narrative for the Greek, we find a "universal Christ

embracing in his saving grace all humanity."

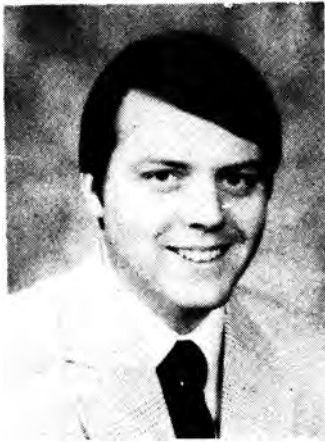
We should all rejoice in the fact of Christ's universal love for all people. Because Christ died for all, all may receive the benefits of his shed blood. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Yes, the gospel according to Luke was written with a view toward reaching sinners of every nation under heaven. Praise God! His grace reaches even me and you! — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

Denominational Disparities

(No. 4)

Who would deny that disparities among religionists now abound? Although so many hold to the general truth that Jesus is Lord, it is apparent that this proposition means different things to different people. A common assent to that basic truth is not an assurance that those aspiring to follow Christ will be united. Yet, in previous installments in this series we have seen that God disdains denominational



PHILLIP GRAY

division and urges all disciples to be united in doctrine, practice, and organization (cf. I Corinthians 1:10-13; John 17:20-23). Honest Bible students will with one accord confess that division is condemned in scripture. However, of what use is our investigating the differences now prevalent unless some scriptural, workable plan for resolving them is suggested? Realizing that we all must "be one," as Christ and the Father are one, we ask: What is the solution to all denominational differences? What should any conscientious denomination (or denominationalist) be willing to do in order to achieve the unity God desires? With gravity should we grapple with this issue in view of the importance attached to it by God. But, before considering some positive steps to be taken, a truth-seeking denomination should be cautious of some things it should *not* do to effect unity.

First, a concerned religious institution which sincerely seeks unity with all saints will not *defend division*. Most important of all is the realization that God cannot countenance our promoting or preserving these schisms (Romans 16:17). It will not do therefore for one to thank God for the many denominational choices, as some well-known religious personalities are reported to have done publicly.

But second, a conscientious fellowship of believers will not *simply ignore* the disparities among us. Paul described one who walks worthy of the vocation wherewith he was called as "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Is your congregation seeking to "give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (ASV)? Then it will not shrug its shoulders in indifference toward division.

Third, no denominational body or assembly (or individual) which supports the plea for unity will simply *invite everyone else to join with it* in order to eliminate the differences. True, if all disciples served in one particular denomination only, there would be a sense in which we would all be "united." Quite apart from the obvious fact that God does not condone unity for the sheer sake of unity (it must be unity in truth, not unity in error), this proposal is not acceptable for the following reasons: For one thing, seriously to suggest this would be sheer arrogance. Why should I select your denomination over others? What commends your denomination and makes it superior to your neighbor's denomination? Surely, no denomination would be so conceited as to think that the entire body of believers should owe allegiance to it.

For another thing, this proposal is not acceptable because the wearing of human names is itself divisive and unscriptural (I Corinthians 1:10). Yes, if all Christians wore just one particular denominational name, perhaps in a sense that name would not be divisive. But, to wear such a name would not be divisive. But, to wear such a name, a name

unauthorized in scripture, brings dishonor to God. Suppose the Corinthians had not been divided between allegiances to either Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ. Suppose they had *all* agreed, "I am of Paul." They would have been united in name, true—but united in error! Paul was not crucified for them, nor were they baptized in his name. Thus, we must wear the name of Christ (James 2:7). Very few denominations describe themselves by scriptural appellations.

But in addition to these problems, the proposal that we all unite in one denomination is not acceptable because it is neither theoretically, scripturally, nor practically possible. For were we to do so, the favored denomination would at that time cease to be a "denomination" and would thereby arrogate to itself the title of "church" in its universal sense. A "denomination" by definition is merely a part of the whole (as its adherents conceive it); one segment of the "church" in the aggregate (the body of all saved persons). Thus, if all believers were in one denomination, it would no longer be a denomination. According to Winthrop S. Hudson, denominationalism is "the opposite of sectarianism. A 'sect' regards itself alone as the true Church. By definition a 'sect' is exclusive" (Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965, p. 81). What reasons are there for thinking that any one "sect" is the true church? Few denominations would be willing to make such a pretentious claim.

Furthermore, the proposal that all Christians unite in one denomination is unacceptable, not only because its name would most probably be unscriptural and because it is a definitional impossibility, but also because the founder, date and place of founding of any denomination is different from the founding of the true church of Christ. Christ founded the New Testament church on Pentecost in Jerusalem, Judea. A given denomination we might select may have been founded by, say, Martin Luther in 1520 in Germany, or John Smythe, 1607, in Holland, etc. Hence, it would be unacceptable to make any one denomination the body in which we will all unite. Christ has but one true church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4). Surely, no one would seriously propose unity in one human denomination. If we had such unity, the resultant body would no longer be a "denomination" but a "sect" competing on the level of Christ's true church.

Incidentally, many accuse those churches of Christ that are seeking pure New Testament Christianity of such a sectarianism. Even some New Testament Christians of today conceive of the church of Christ in just such a sense. "Oh, I know 'we' are not a 'denomination,'" many say to others, perhaps because this is what they have been 'taught' to say. But many fail to see the significance in this. Even those who say this sometimes seem to think deep down, "Well, I think this is all a semantic quibble. I believe that in a sense 'we' really are a 'denomination,' but we happen to be the 'right' denomination, or the more nearly perfect denomination than any other." Yet, this is a woeful misapprehension of the restoration plea. Those who seek to restore pure New Testament Christianity for today do not plead that all join in one particular "denomination," or "sect." Our plea is just the opposite: It is the plea that is to be found below in the positive answer to our question: What then should a conscientious denomination be willing to do to promote true unity on earth?

The answer is to lay aside all denominational names and descriptions and be "just Christians," and "Christians only." Let none any longer promulgate any denominational creed, but take the Bible, and the Bible alone, as our guide. We must realize that truth is one; truth is coherent. All the many conflicting beliefs and practices simply cannot

be right. These many doctrines are sources of division itself. Thus, we must all seek to find the one truth; and, embracing that, be one in Christ. It cannot be denied that we are not all now teaching the one truth. "There is something fundamentally wrong with the churches," as John Gerstner put it.

Hence, let us go back to our round tables, with open Bibles and closed creeds, and take a fresh look at God's one truth. Since we have learned that differences in interpretation are sources of division (cf. John 7:40-43), then it is implied that only one interpretation is correct and should be our basis for unity. Let us realize then that the correct rules of interpretation must be applied, freed from all vain tradition, freed from all prejudice. The Bible is written in human language. As such it is propositional truth. Ordinary rules of language and logic apply to it. In it we learn that we must "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11) if we speak at all. This means speaking where the Bible speaks, being silent where the Bible is silent. This dictum will compel us to do away with every belief or practice for which we may find no Bible authority. We will not take it upon ourselves to add to, or take away from, the Word of God when we genuinely begin to seek unity (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19). Thus, we will obey the gospel, and be added by the Lord to his one church (Acts 2:47). A congregation having thus dismantled all denominational machinery, having withdrawn from every human religious organization, and having purged its worship of human innovations, will then be a simple church of Christ.

Oh, if only all denominations would be willing to lay aside the swords of schism, pull down all partisan banners, and jettison every human name, belief or practice in order to become pure, New Testament churches -- how wonderful it would be! But, until (or

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The Shame Of Profanity

Continued from page 2

malady. Here are some appropriate questions: (1) If I am a Christian, does my speech betray my claim? (2) Do I still find profanity and evil speech offensive to my spiritual ears? (3) Do I protest and teach against this evil in our society? It has been said: "Evil men rule when good men do nothing." As God's children we cannot stand silent on this matter. We must wage open spiritual warfare against this violent assault upon our language and our morals.

We can take comfort that others before us have also seen this shame and moral corruption in their time, and had the courage to stand up against it. Our beloved first president, General George Washington, issued the following General Order to the Continental Army in the month of July 1776: "The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the Officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it; and that both they and the men will reflect, that we can have little hope of the blessing of heaven on our arms, if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it." Amen, Mr. President! Would 'o God that Presidents and leaders of our day were also like-minded. Let every one who shares these same sentiments be heard, and let our society know that there are some who care! — Rt. 4 Box 479, Elba, AL 36323.

Extremes: Our Common Malady

The man was probably right who suggested that if there were a law against being foolish, we all would be in jail. A mark of our folly is our seemingly incurable determination to move from one extreme to another. Like children playing in the streets, some in the time of Christ found it difficult to retain balance in their approach to spiritual matters. Of John's ascetic life-style they said, "He hath a devil!" But of Jesus' more gregarious manner they said, "A glutton and a wine bibber . . ." (Matthew 11:16-19).

The issues, promotions, gimmicks, and how-to ideas that have arisen within our ranks over the past several years reflect this tendency to move from one side of the road to the other. While we may detect a degree of soundness in some of this, indicating a



R. W. GRAY

willingness to change as opposed to stagnation, there is an even greater danger that we will loose ourselves in a sea of uncertainty.

One scarcely completes the reading of the latest book on how to reach the masses with the message before another is on the market to expose the folly of the first. We once stressed the need to be distinct and different; but now the emphasis is on similarity and sameness. We once felt the need to explain the difference between sound teaching and sectarianism; but such is now considered unloving and unkind. We have moved from "tell them what they need to hear" to "tell them what they want to hear." We once talked of their real need; but we now seek to find their "felt" need. From a stance of seeking the mote in our brother's eye we have moved to a position of ignoring the beam in any body's eye. We who once prayed, "Lord, bless this little flock," are now praying to be like the BIG CHURCH down the block!

It has always been wise to establish some common ground with those we seek to teach. It is never right to appear superior, or to be a know-it-all. The surgeon does not use a "blunt" instrument to remove the diseased portion that threatens his patient's life. We had much to learn in this regard, and it is good if we

have learned it. But we do not solve the problem, nor do we save the patient's life, by laying the knife aside and leaving the fatal doctrine undisturbed.

Sportsmen speak of using a "balanced attack" in their effort to move the team down the field. We need some of that common-sense approach in our evangelistic efforts, as well as in many areas of our religious life! If we care (and we say we do), our greatest desire is to reach the lost with the truth. But we will never impart the truth while we seek to conceal the truth. We must remember, as our forefathers knew, that a zeal for truth that is not coupled with knowledge will not suffice (Romans 10:1-4). "Balance" means that we will seek every permissible way to advance the truth; but a "boot-leg play" is not a method that God would have us use. Let us not be ashamed of Christ or his church. Let us not become guilty of masking the "name" of our Lord because we know that some have attached a stigma to it. We run the risk of running out of bounds when we insist upon playing on one side of the field, or the other. The middle of the road is not a bad position when we consider the alternate extremes. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, GA 30344.

"Nobody Ever Visits Me"

Occasionally some member of the church remarks, "Nobody ever visits me!" It is almost always a complaint, sometimes uttered in bitterness. I have heard people say it almost as if they believed there was a black list of "people who should not be visited" hidden in the minutes of the elders' meetings! Let me offer a few observations on the "Nobody ever visits me" syndrome.



DUB McCLISH

1. If you had suffered some tragedy in your family, such as a death or serious accident or your house burning, you would surely have had a visit. Or, if there had been some serious illness, you would have been visited. Or, if you had become involved in some kind of open, shameful sin, you would have certainly received a visit. So, if you have not been visited, perhaps you ought to be *thankful!*

2. I assure you that no one is intentionally ignored or avoided. It is unfortunate that elders, deacons, preachers, and others who are involved in planning visits are less than perfect and sometimes they make mistakes. It is also unfortunate that some brethren have little sympathy for the human limitations and failings of their elders, deacons, and preachers in these and other matters. Some who make this complaint need to grow up and quit licking imaginary wounds. Yes, we sometimes fail to visit someone when they really needed visiting; but we do our best to avoid such.

3. It is most often the case that those who do the loudest fussing about not being visited are those who do little or no visiting themselves. Their idea of visiting is for someone to always be visiting *them!*

4. Some people are not visited very much because they have scared people away. They never have a good word about anybody; they are always griping and complaining about something, or telling how they have been mistreated. Or, perhaps they pride themselves on always saying what they think. Some are compulsive talkers. Then they wonder why the brethren don't beat a path to their door to visit them!

5. When some say, "Nobody ever visits me," what they usually mean is, "The preacher or elders haven't paid me enough attention lately." Some people conceive of the preacher's work as "nothing to do

Monday through Saturday except visit the brethren." Sorry, but you are dead wrong! Please think twice (at least) before you make this complaint. — 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201.

1984 Voice Of Freedom Breakfast Set For February 8 At FH-C Lectureship

ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

For fifteen or more consecutive years we have had a VOICE OF FREEDOM Breakfast at the Freed-Hardeman Lectures in Henderson, Tennessee. Many outstanding preachers and Bible scholars have spoken. The present editor of WORDS OF TRUTH, Flavil Nichols, spoke last year. Bobby Duncan, former editor of WORDS OF TRUTH, spoke earlier in the 1980's at one of our breakfasts. For many, many years WORDS OF TRUTH has been kind enough to carry an announcement about this annual breakfast. So has the GOSPEL ADVOCATE. Each speaker, without exception, has been a friend and supporter of VOICE OF FREEDOM. Each speaker has exalted the paper in his speech.

The 1984 Breakfast will be Wednesday morning, February 8th, at 6:30 a.m. in the East Room of Gano Dining Hall. Curtis A. Cates, Director of the Memphis School of Preaching, will be our featured speaker. He is an excellent preacher, great writer, competent Bible scholar and is doing a superb work as the new Director of the Memphis School of Preaching, having succeeded brother Roy J. Hearn in March of 1983. His speech title is, "What Is the Daubing Wherewith Ye Have Daubed It?"

Consider this to be your special invitation to attend this breakfast and aid a truly great work -- the publication of VOICE OF FREEDOM. — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Denominational Disparities

Continued from page 3

unless) such a time should come, what ought the individual, sincere believer in Christ want to do? Let him obey the true commands of God, being added thereby to his church (Acts 2:47). Then, he should be willing to identify and labor with others of like precious faith in an undenominational congregation. Or, if the pure commands of the gospel he has already obeyed but has subsequently joined some denomi-

national body, then as a wayward child of God let him return in penitence to the Lord's only plan. Denominationalism is condemned! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17). — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 69)

—
speak forth

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1984

NUMBER 5

Instrumental Music

(No. 1)

C. C. Crawford, well-known preacher of the Christian Church, once wrote: "My conviction is that their use" (the use of mechanical instruments in worship, DK) "is to be determined by the custom of the community and the majority vote of the local church, which decision should be concurred by the majority." The larger segment of the religious world agrees with Mr. Crawford that the issue of instrumental music in worship is one, not of doctrine, but of personal preference. And this does not surprise us: denominationalism is distinctive in its failure to respect divine authority. Inspiration provides no authority for denominationalism itself; neither does it authorize the various conflicting doctrines and practices of the various and many denominational bodies.



DALTON KEY

What does surprise us is the changing attitudes within the church itself with respect to this issue. A few years ago Brother Guy N. Woods estimated that fifty percent of our brotherhood was ignorant as to why churches of Christ do not use the instrument in worship. He further stated that thirty-five percent of that fifty percent would not oppose using the instrument in worship. At first glance, these figures seem unjustifiably high. A closer examination of the state of our brotherhood, however, and an open ear tuned to the opinionated voices of various elders, preachers, and other members throughout the church, tend to substantiate the charges leveled by brother Woods. This apparent loss of conviction is both evident and alarming.

The absence of an instrument from our assemblies has nothing at all to do with personal preference: it is a matter of biblical authority! There is every bit as much authority for Dr. Pepper and sweet rolls on the Lord's Table as there is for instruments of music in the song service. When the Lord specified the proper emblems to be used in the Lord's Supper he

automatically excluded anything else. Likewise, when the Lord commanded singing in worship he eliminated all other forms of music, be they pianos, organs, cow bells or Jew's harps. Had the Bible said to "make music" and left it at that, we would be authorized to make music in any way we desired. If scripture had just commanded the general act of making music, the manner of making music would be nothing more than a matter of opinion. But the Bible commanded, and still commands, the specific act of *singing*, thus eliminating all other forms of music in worship. No other music but vocal music --singing-- is

authorized by the Lord to be used in our worship to him.

Take a close look at the following scriptures: Matthew 26:30; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Acts 16:25; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13; Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 13:15. This is all the New Testament has to say about music in our worship. You'll not find even a hint of an instrument in any of them. The issue is not preference, but doctrine; not taste, but divine authority! Let us not ever forget this! — P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

They Yielded No Ground

(No. 1)

There is an interesting principle that came out of the Jerusalem Conference more than nineteen centuries ago concerning which I wish to write in WORDS OF TRUTH for some four or five lessons. It concerns the fact that the apostles and others therein convened refused courageously and adamantly to yield ground to the false teachers of their era. Before referring specifically to the actual statement that will undergird




ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

these lessons, some background is appropriate and surely in order. There are two chapters in the Bible which tell the story of this important conference or gathering. Luke relates the happenings in greater detail in Acts 15. Paul gives the second account in Galatians 2 and is much more brief than is the beloved physician. The Jerusalem Conference occurred approximately seventeen years after the church of our blessed Lord had begun on that memorable Pentecost in Acts 2. The year would have been around A.D. 50. The Conference was occasioned by a group within the

early church who were determined to bind the law of Moses on the new Christian converts. Luke prefaces the fifteenth chapter of Acts with these words: "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question" (Acts 15:1,2). When they arrived, Luke says "there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5).

Being an inspired apostle, Paul knew what was wrong with such teaching on the part of his former Pharisaic colleagues. He knew such false teaching was designed to undermine the Christian religion and thus to bring back into bondage those who had been made free by Christianity. Paul states in Galatians 2:2 that he "went up by revelation" regarding this momentous matter. This simply means that the Lord told him to go. It was the Lord's full intention that the crucial matter be settled ONCE AND FOR ALL! The coming together of the apostles and the elders was to seek for this very solution. At all times the apostles

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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— Acts 26:25

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They Yielded No Ground

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were under the inspired and infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit in their various deliberations. In addition to the apostles, the elders and such people as Barnabas and Titus, there appeared a group of people within the early church who were still under the strong prejudices of Phariseism. They were determined that the law of Moses was going to be perpetuated that it was not going to be abolished in the hearts of their devotees. They were determined to make Christianity simply an extension of Judaism, an added room if you please. Paul speaks of the gravity of the occasion when he wrote in Galatians 2:4,5, which also forms the foundation for this short series of studies, and wherein he states; "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

The clear implication of all this is that if they had yielded ground, the truth of the gospel would not have been the continued possession of the early Christians. They took a stand for the liberty of the gospel that was militant in every sense of the term. Reader friends, are you reading with care? Do you not admire greatly the powerful posture of their position, the courage of their convictions? Against this encroaching error they stood like stone walls. They did not yield that first inch of truth. There was good reason for their not yielding. The false teachers were promoters of error; the apostles were the proponents of truth. The false teachers were seeking to hang on to something that had ended at Calvary; the apostles were holding up the sacred truths of the newly-begun religion of Christ Jesus. The false teachers were seeking to bring the Christians into bondage again; the apostles were the spiritual custodians of true liberty and the champions of freedom in the faith of Christ Jesus. The false teachers sought to thwart truth in the Christian movement; the apostles were determined that the religion of their blessed Redeemer was neither going to be hampered nor hindered.

Reader friends, this was not only their posture in this crucial and critical case but throughout the first century. They were firm and unyielding when it came to the upholding of ALL truth. They were just as firm

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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

A Tribute To Two Gospel Preachers

Brother Ira North and Brother Robert Witt died the same day. Brother North has doubtless been among the most influential men in the Lord's church for several decades. A teacher at David Lipscomb College, and minister of the Madison church, he also served as Editor of *The Gospel Advocate*, and each week conducted *The Amazing Grace Bible Class* on television. He helped the Madison church grow to become the largest congregation among us -- but he also helped countless others to grow as well! His zeal for lost souls, his concern for the poor, his love for homeless children, and his care for the aged gave him many occasions for serving the great Cause of Christ. He was an encourager of every faithful worker and a booster of every good work. He radiated enthusiasm to all those about him. He lost his battle with cancer, but we believe he won a crown of life (II Timothy 4:1-8).

Brother Robert Witt was a teacher at Freed-Hardeman College, and preached for many years among the small congregations surrounding Henderson, Tennessee. His knowledge of the Bible was not a mere 'smattering,' but he was thorough in his studies. He had a multitude of talents, and was one of the best informed men on more subjects whom I have ever known. Whatever he did, he did well. After he was no longer a young man, he taught himself to play the electric organ, and became an accomplished musician. His home has been my home for practically every FHC Lectureship since 1951, as well as during



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

gospel meetings and other occasions when I was in that area. His home was the ultimate in hospitality, and he had the knack of making people feel wanted in his home, for which his wife shares the honors. After his retirement from the faculty at Freed-Hardeman, this fine Christian couple went to Trinidad where they intended to spend three years in mission work. (God's providence caused them to return earlier.) He was an Elder in the church at Henderson, and will be missed in the Lord's work.

Read with me from the Bible: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalms 115:16). When a Christian dies, we should strive to have the same attitude toward his death as God does; we should see it as "precious." Solomon said, "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). We thank God for these two servants whose influence and blessings linger after them.

It is impossible to OVERESTIMATE the value of our Christian college lectureships. Each speaker has given many hours to preparation for his message. My brother Hardeman, for example, spent more than four hundred hours in research and study on a topic assigned him perhaps twenty years ago! While few spend that much time, still each hearer or reader reaps the benefit of all the preparation that goes into the speeches. Congregations will be the ultimate beneficiaries if they will send their preacher to Freed-Hardeman's lectureship, or others. By paying his travel expenses plus his room and meals while he is away, the church enables him to absorb and digest some topics which he may never have studied, and may give him new insight into some topic which to him may be 'old.' See if he does not come home with his spiritual 'batteries' recharged, and more zealous than ever before!!! The lectureship date for Freed-Hardeman is next week -- February 6-10, 1984. It is always the first full week in February.

The Name "CHRISTIAN"

W. TERRY VARNER

The name CHRISTIAN is used only three times in the New Testament. We read that "... the disciples were called CHRISTIANS first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Agrippa replied to the apostle Paul's persuasive sermon, "... almost thou persuadest me to be a CHRISTIAN" (Acts 26:28). Peter states, "yet if any man suffer as a CHRISTIAN, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:16).

The question often arises, "how did it happen that the early disciples in Antioch began to use the name Christian?" This is a good question. Some, within and without the church, contend that since the disciples were followers of Christ *they assumed or took upon themselves* the precious name CHRISTIAN. Others reject this reasoning and credit the name CHRISTIAN to the non-Christians who *spoke in derision* of the early disciples. It is the author's belief that neither of these answers is correct, but that the correct answer to the question is that God called the name CHRISTIAN upon them.

The name CHRISTIAN is the new name of Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 56:5 and 62:2 are two Old Testament prophecies that discuss the Messianic

kingdom. In Isaiah 56:5, the prophet says, "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a memorial and a NAME better than sons and daughters; I will give them an EVERLASTING NAME, that shall not be cut off." In the context Isaiah is speaking of the coming Messianic kingdom and shows that the "strangers" (foreigners) and "eunuchs" (56:3) will be able, by virtue of his "covenant" (Isaiah 56:4; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13), to worship God in his "house" (the church, cf., Isaiah 56:5; I Timothy 3:15).

In Isaiah 62:2, the prophet says, "and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all the kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a NEW NAME, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Isaiah says that God is going to glorify Zion and all the world shall see. The prophecy was fulfilled in the Messianic kingdom and continues to be so. The Old Testament prophecy concerning the NEW NAME was fulfilled when the early disciples were called CHRISTIANS (Acts 11:26).

Acts 11:26 ("and the disciples were called

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They Yielded No Ground

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and unyielding in the exposure of ALL error. They must have recognized rather deeply in their hearts that love for truth means hatred for everything that rises up to challenge that truth. A man's love for truth is not much if he condones the various errors of the day. In fact such is proof positive that he has NO real love for truth. It is affirmed of Jesus in Hebrews 1:8,9: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119. This whole chapter is a uniform tribute to the greatness and goodness of Jehovah's will. The inspired writer exalts and extolls the truth in nearly every verse of this majestic and marvelous chapter. Yet he sees no inconsistency at all in expressing in this same chapter his absolute

disdain and adamant contempt for all error. In fact he wrote in Psalm 119:104,128: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." The greater our love for truth is, the greater will be our hatred for everything that arises to challenge that truth. Reader friends, do you and I really believe this? We must if we are going to please the God of high and holy heaven!

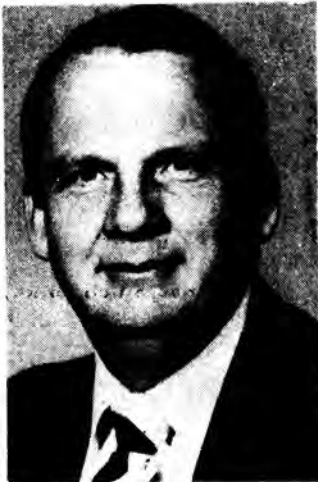
In the first century Christianity frequently came into conflict with the various errors and -isms of the day. Judaism fought a desperate battle with the infant Christian movement during the apostolic period of the first century. The apostles and early evangelists gave no ground to the forces of Judaism. Later in the first century they battled such mighty movements of maliciousness as idolatry and paganism. Again their uniform posture was to yield

NO ground. They defended with their energies and their very lives every truth of Christianity. Theirs was a relentless exposure of every vestige of error and falsehood from Judaism to Paganism to Gnosticism.

The manner in which Paul dealt with the many errors that threatened to engulf completely the Corinthian congregation, his courageous confrontation with the fickle Galatians, and the immediate manner in which he met head-on the Colossian heresy fully exhibit Paul's adamant, courageous refusal to yield ground to any movement designed to lead the saints of God Almighty into error and away from saving truth. Theirs was a constant posture of yielding NO ground to the forces of ruinous error. Should this not be our uniform attitude today? Verily it SHOULD be and MUST be if we expect to please God the Father, Christ the Son and the Spirit of Holiness--the Beautiful and Sublime Three. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Approving Of Sin

We should be thankful we have not yielded to the temptation to enter into some of the more hurtful sins. Although we are sinful creatures and sin in many ways, most have been able to keep from gross sins such as drunkenness, fornication, stealing, etc. These seem so distasteful and harmful, they have little appeal to most Christians.



ANCIL JENKINS

A passage of Scripture that should admonish all of us is Romans 1:32: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Paul here places the judgment and wrath of God on those who commit the above sins

and similar ones. We must be impressed that he also passes condemnation of those who do not practice, yet approve of, such sins.

Have we come to the place that we approve of sin? Probably we do not consciously approve of them, yet, how do we feel about:

- the comic who mocks religion and blasphemes God? do we continue to watch him on TV? or buy his records?
- the politician who is dishonest and lacks integrity? do we continue to vote for him?
- the entertainer who disregards the marriage laws of God and the moral customs of people? is he or she still our favorite? do we talk with others of their activities with no sense of shame?

Most of us would not openly give encouragement to such activities. Yet, if we do not *disapprove* in whatever way we can--are we not giving our approval by silence? What can we do?

--We can withhold any encouragement by not spending money to support such people. Most entertainers get a percentage of the "gate." By not supporting, we do not approve of their activities.

--We cannot give any approval of their actions in our conversation. If your children hear such approval, there is a danger they will see this as approval of the actions of the person, instead of approval of ability.

--We can protest when possible. A letter to complain to the television stations, or networks, or sponsors may seem like a little thing; yet enough of them will make a difference!

The Lord's words to Isaiah long ago are appropriate for us: "Cry loudly, do not hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet. And declare to my people their transgressions, . . ." (Isaiah 58:1) — 1701 Gold Avenue S.E. Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.

Are We Missing The Kernel?

Many Jews of Paul's day failed to embrace the grace of God provided through His Son because they possessed their "own" righteousness. They were very religious folk, to be sure; but their religious zeal of itself did not guarantee a right relationship with God. From this we learn that it is possible to be a very religious man or woman and yet be separated from our Creator both now and in eternity. We also learn from these



R. W. GRAY

religious Hebrews that religious zeal may become a barrier to our receiving the truth. When one is so "caught up" in his or her "church" that obvious fatal error advanced by "their" church does not seem to matter a great deal, serious consequences follow.

Those who read their New Testaments have

guessed already that the observations in the foregoing paragraph are derived from Paul's own description of his Jewish neighbors in the tenth chapter of Romans, verses one through four. Many who read these lines will remember having heard these matters pointed out numerous times by those who sought to teach their fellow man that error is dangerous, that religion is safe only when it is centered in Jesus Christ and derived from the Bible. This, and other texts like it in the New Testament, provide inspired illustrations of the need to "prove all things" that we might "hold fast that which is good." They should be used as a means of helping honest souls realize the need to measure their religion with the doctrine of Christ as revealed in the New Testament.

But has it occurred to us we may have missed Paul's main thought in his Roman epistle? Paul begins chapter ten in somewhat the same manner as chapter nine, a feeling that is tearing his very heart out. He very much desires that his neighbors know something of the extreme heaviness he feels on their behalf: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, . . . that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my

heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh . . ." (Romans 9:1-3). Again: "Brethren, my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). This is the first thing in Paul's mind that he wanted to have understood. First, and foremost, an unbearable burden for the lost. This accounts for the tremendous success of the great apostle in evangelization.

We must learn not to be ashamed to admit and express our sincere, heart-felt love for dying men. We must help them comprehend what we are feeling on their behalf. In this way their attention is arrested, and the truths we want to convey are so much easier for them to consider. The cliché, "Men do not care how much you know until they know how much you care," is obviously correct. But to realize this fact, or to write of it, lecture about it, and discuss and admit it to ourselves in our training for evangelism sessions, does not inform the lost of our concerns. We observe that Paul expressed that concern in very strong terms. He was anxious for his readers to feel what he

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Are We Missing The Kernel?

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was feeling.

May we learn from Paul not only to love the lost, but to inform the lost of our love. Many times in our own experiences we observe the value of this fact. Haven't we realized how easy it is for us to receive instructions, suggestions, corrections, or even rebukes, from those who have assured us of their love for us? Many of our precious friends have viewed us as a people desirous of a debate, an argument, a forum that would provide an opportunity to flex our

spiritual muscles, flaunt our superior knowledge, and to put our prospect to shame. That image desperately needs to be changed! The rank and file of God's people are loving, warm, friendly, caring human beings. Some, to be sure, do not manifest the love that should characterize a child of God. But most do, and we are not making that known as we ought. One need not be "soft" with the truth in order to show by our love that we are Christians. But we must learn to

handle others "softly and gently." Their souls are precious! Many of them can be won to the truth and save their eternal souls. Our aim, we must remember, is not solely to expose their error, but to win them to "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Let us learn to get the kernel of Biblical texts as well as the shell. Let us learn to love men first, and correct them secondly. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga., 30344.

The Name "CHRISTIAN"

Continued from page 2

CHRISTIANS first in Antioch") certainly fulfills the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 56:5 and 62:2. The NEW NAME of the Old Testament prophecy - "CHRISTIAN" - was to be given in his "house" (56:5), and the church of Christ in Antioch was indeed the "house of God" (I Timothy 3:15). The NEW NAME of Old Testament prophecy - "CHRISTIAN" - was given after the Gentiles (Isaiah 62:2) entered into the kingdom in Acts 10 in the conversion of the household of Cornelius.

The Greek verb *chrematizo* translated "were called" (Acts 11:26) carries the force of a divine command or oracle. The same Greek word translated "were called" in Acts 11:26 is also used in: (1) Matthew 2:12 and is translated "having been warned" to describe God's divine command in a dream to the wise men not to return to Herod in Jerusalem after they had found the Christ-child; (2) Matthew 2:22 and translated "being warned" to describe God's divine command to Joseph to

withdraw to Galilee upon his return from Egypt; (3) Luke 2:26 and translated "was revealed" to describe God's oracle to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah; and (4) Acts 10:22 and translated "was warned" to describe God's command to Cornelius to send for Peter. The force of the verb used in all of these Scriptures is a divine command or oracle. The force of the verb in Acts 11:26 is the force of a divine command or oracle and fulfills the Old Testament prophecy of our Lord in giving his people a NEW NAME and AN EVERLASTING NAME "which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isaiah 62:2; 56:5). We reject the statement that "the idea that the new name is 'Christian' is fanciful and ignores the context" (John T. Willis, *Isaiah* (Austin: Sweet Publishing Co., 1980), p. 458). James states that wicked men "... blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called" (James 2:7), which indicates the name CHRISTIAN, as stated in Acts 11:26, had been divinely called upon the early disciples. A Bible with a marginal reading has "which was called upon you."

One cannot say the word "CHRISTIAN" without saying the word "CHRIST." The suffix "-ian" means "a sense of belonging to, pertaining to." The Christian belongs to Christ by virtue of his having redeemed us from sin with his blood (I Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:12; I Peter 1:18-19; Acts 20:28). The new name, "CHRISTIAN," symbolizes a new relationship with God in which everything is to be new (II Corinthians 5:17).

Since the name "CHRISTIAN" is the "EVERLASTING NAME" (Isaiah 56:5) and the "NEW NAME" (Isaiah 62:2) that inspiration foretold the Lord "shall name" (Isaiah 62:2; literally, "shall fix upon them;") dare we wear a man's name religiously? — 102 Laramie Street, Marietta, Ohio, 45750.

A New Mission Effort For Georgia

R. W. GRAY

Many of the smaller churches throughout Georgia are finding that isolation and the absence of prospective growth in the immediate future to be more frustrating than anticipated when their efforts were begun. Men of great courage seek to work with these struggling groups and they, too often, become discouraged, feeling they have been all but ignored in the dedication they have shown. Many of these are young men who richly deserve to be commended and assisted in the tremendous task they have assumed.

There is a pressing need for periodic assistance for these men and the churches they seek to serve. A larger number of them would be encouraged to remain long enough to be effective if they receive special training and on-the-job assistance.

Under the sponsorship of the East Point, Georgia congregation, this writer plans to provide at least some of these pressing needs for as many of these churches as time and conditions permit. The church at East Point feels that a great deal of money and man-hours will be saved through this ministry. It is extremely costly both in money and in the loss of talent when men come and go on a regular basis in many of the mission areas of Georgia. My wife, Betty, will be active in this program also, as she will lead in ladies development and teacher training courses.

The program is designed to provide needed services to the churches at no cost to them. Training in personal work, teacher training, gospel meetings, special lectures, VBS, and song-leading skills are a few of the services we hope to provide. We plan to work door to door with the local preacher and/or members, assisting where needed in home Bible studies. Special campaigns will be encouraged and organized in areas where these promise to be effective.

This new effort is not designed to compete with other mission activities throughout the State, but is designed to assist and complement what others are doing. Together we can build the cause in the State of Georgia, and with the help of God this will be done.

The East Point Church is unable to underwrite all the cost of this project. Assistance is being sought from sister congregations. All funds will be received and used by the East Point Church as the needs arise.

We sincerely feel this to be an urgent need for Georgia. It is our hope that elders reading this report

will investigate this proposal by communicating with the East Point Church of Christ, P.O. Box 90236, East Point, Ga. 30344.

The initiation and success of this mission proposal depends upon adequate support from those interested in the mission fields of Georgia. Will you help us by your support and prayers to get this new mission effort underway by the early spring of 1984? — 3046 Church St., East Point, GA 30344 (phone 404/761-2481).

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

Both IN MY BONDS
and
IN THE DEFENCE and CONFIRMATION
of the gospel
Ye are all partakers of my grace.
For God is my record,
How greatly
I long after you all
in the bowels of Jesus Christ.
And this I pray,
THAT YOUR love may abound yet more
and
more
in knowledge and in all judgment;
THAT YOU may approve
things that are excellent;
THAT YOU may be sincere
and
without offence
till the day of Christ:
BEING FILLED WITH THE
FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
which are by Jesus Christ,
unto the glory
and
praise of God.
But I would
ye should understand, brethren,

that the things which happened unto me
have fallen out
rather
unto the furtherance of the gospel
So that
my bonds in Christ are manifest
in all the palace,
and
in all other places; — 1202 S 34th St., No. 2,
Birmingham, Al. 35205.

**Freed-Hardeman
Lectureship Is
February 6-10,**



Words Of

(USPS 691-7)

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

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 6

What Is The "Radical Right?"

We have a strange, self-contradictory element in the Lord's church today. They pretend to despise what they describe as "labels" and those who are "guilty" (as they view it) of "labeling" their brethren. They say that such labels as "liberal" and "conservative" unfairly categorize and polarize brethren. They further say that such labels create unnecessary prejudices against brethren.



DUB McCLISH

I am willing to grant that such is true if a label is incorrectly applied. However, if a descriptive or identifying term (Webster's definition of "label") is correctly applied, we fail to see what is wrong with using it.

The argument is often offered that we do not have the terms "liberal" and "conservative" in the Bible and we therefore ought not to use them. It is true that these specific words may not be found in the sense that they are commonly used today to identify one's doctrinal or moral stance. However, the ideas inherent in these words are most definitely in the New Testament. When Paul wrote that we should "... learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (I Corinthians 4:6), he was in effect saying, "Do not take liberties with the written word; rather, conserve the things taught in it." Likewise, I Thessalonians 5:21, I Timothy 1:3, II Timothy 2:2, Galatians 1:6-9 and many other passages teach us to conserve the revealed truth and to oppose any liberal handling of it. I am not the least bit ashamed to be given any other label. A liberal and loose handling of divine law is always condemned in scripture. It is worthy of note that conservative brethren don't mind being so labeled. It is almost always those who are of the "liberal" bent toward scripture and doctrine who prate against "labeling." I don't blame them! Knowing what the word says about such an attitude, I would not want it noised abroad that I possessed it, either. If brethren don't want to be called "liberals,"

let them leave their liberalism -- and it will make the Lord and all other conservatives happy!

The liberals are really great labelers themselves. Their favorite label at present for those who are determined to stand fast in the faith is "those of the radical right." That sounds rather bad. The ironic thing about it is that some of those who are using this term to damage others, were themselves ten or

fifteen years ago right where those of whom it is used are now! In fact, what some doctrinally-soft brethren are now calling the "reactionary and radical right" is where all but a tiny handful of liberal misfits were twenty years ago. Just where was that? Right on the solid rock of truth! I would to God that all who have left it would come back! — 312 Pearl St. Denton, TX 76201.

Some Problem Verses In First Corinthians Explained

Paul's first letter to the saints in Corinth dealt with a number of problems and disorders that had surfaced in that young church. Someone had written to Paul asking his advice on a number of questions (7:1). The material in this epistle is yet relevant for God's people. We shall briefly review four problem sections.

Paul's Opinions

In the seventh chapter, the apostle responds to questions having to do with marriage. In so doing, he offers three kinds of answers:

1. That which the Lord Jesus said while here on earth (7:10);
2. That which the Lord did not speak, but which the Holy Spirit had given to Paul as a divine commandment (7:12);
3. That which was not a matter of divine command, but to which Paul gave his opinion as a wise man of God (7:6-9);

Before one can properly understand Paul's lengthy response to these several questions he should note a qualifying factor that colors each statement. "I think



JOHN WADDEY


wherefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, namely that it is good for a man to be as he is" (7:26). While we are uncertain as to just what this distressful situation was, it was clearly one of persecution and hardships for Christians; and in view of that, Paul gives his advice.

God ordained marriage as the ideal state for man (Genesis 2:20-23). The Hebrew writer states, "Let marriage be had in honor among all . . ." (13:4). Paul later wrote that those who deny man the privilege of marriage teach a doctrine of demons (I Timothy 4:1-3). Yet to the Corinthians, Paul declared that "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" (I Corinthians 7:1). He urged them to remain single (7:8); yet he did not do this because he thought celibacy superior to the married state, but in view of the present distress that confronted them.

Responding to their question, "Should one marry?" Paul argued that in view of the "distress" it would be better not to marry; but if they were not able to live the celibate life, they could take a mate. In either case it was "not a commandment." Rather, it was a concession to make their own choice (7:7-9).

When asked if "virgins," i.e., the never married, should marry, the apostle responded: "I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy; I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, namely that it is

Continued on page 3



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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Train Up A Child. . ."

Long ago Solomon wrote: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). We recognize this at least as the norm, admitting there may be exceptions to this rule, as there are to others.

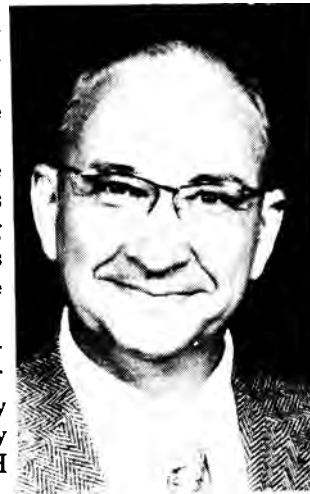
In religion, the influence of parents over the children is very clearly seen. One survey reveals that where BOTH parents are dedicated, faithful Christians, actively involved in the church and its work, 93 percent of their children remained faithful also.

Where only ONE parent was active in the program of the church, only 73 percent of their children remained faithful.

If father and mother were only nominally interested, or "reasonably active" in church work, only 53 percent of their youngsters maintained their faith.

Where BOTH PARENTS seldom or infrequently attend church services, only 6 percent of their children remained faithful.

This is shocking, isn't it? It should 'wake up' some parents to the realization that their example comes across loud and clear to their children! Parents, your lives are being read in your home, and probably by



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

others also. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7). Will it not intensify the horrors of being lost in hell to know that those we love most were, by our example, influenced to abandon God, and were lost because of us?

Surely, all Christians want their own children to go to heaven!!! Perhaps the one most important factor in their salvation is THEIR OWN PARENTS! Some parents, unwilling to accept their personal responsibility, try to shift the blame. They cry for more youth programs, more youth rallies, more special functions, and lament: "The church is losing our young people!" Without excusing any mistakes congregations may have made, may I respectfully suggest that such parents need to face reality, and recognize that it is not the CHURCH that has lost them, but the *parents!*

I long for the time when every family in the church attends every service! I wish every family in the church to pray together on a daily basis. Some of the most precious lessons I learned in my own childhood were learned in the family devotions. Our parents never decided on a week-to-week basis whether we would attend services of the church or not. That was decided when they became Christians -- that they would attend every possible service. How can it be otherwise with any truly-converted parents?

Joshua's resolution three millenniums ago should be the resolve of each Christian father and mother: "... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Parents, by setting out on this course, may "save both thyself and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16).

John

The gospel according to John may be summarized in three words: signs, belief, life. "And many other SIGNS truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have LIFE through his name" (John 20:30-31).



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

According to John, Christ worked many miracles, or "signs." Jesus turned water into wine (2:11); he healed the nobleman's son (4:54); he gave strength to the impotent man (5:7-9); he fed the five thousand (6:11); he gave sight to the blind man (9:7); and he raised Lazarus from the grave (11:43).

As a result of the signs performed by Jesus, many people believed on him. Testimonies of faith are given by: John (1:29); Andrew (1:41); Philip (1:45); Nathanael (1:49); Nicodemus (3:2); the Samaritan woman (4:19); the people of Samaria (4:42); those who received the loaves and fishes (6:14); Peter (6:69); Martha (11:27); and Thomas (20:28).

Because of their faith, those who witnessed the signs of Jesus, received life. Christ is able to give life because he is the "bread of life" (6:35); the "light of the world" (9:5); the "door of the sheep" (10:5); the "good shepherd" (10:11); the "resurrection, and the life" (11:25); "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6), and, the "true vine" (15:1).

Even though we have not seen the miracles of Jesus, we believe in them because of the testimony of those who did see them. Today, if we do believe on Jesus, we too, may receive eternal life from him.

Friend, if you would like to increase your faith, carefully study the gospel according to John. John's gospel is the gospel of faith! — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

"The Amazing Grace Bible Class"

GEORGE GOLDTRAP

The elders of the Madison Church of Christ have announced that Jim Mankin has been named to replace the late Bro. Ira North as the regular teacher of the "Amazing Grace Bible Class" TV program.

Brother Mankin has been the speaker on the program since November, 1982, when brother North became critically ill with cancer. He will assume permanent responsibility as host of the program.

A graduate of David Lipscomb College in Nashville, and Emory University in Atlanta, Mankin is completing doctoral work at Fuller Theological School in Los Angeles, California.

Amazing Grace Bible Class is produced under the direction of the eldership at the Madison Church of Christ, the largest congregation among churches of Christ worldwide. Madison pays all production costs



JIM MANKIN

and gives the program free of charge to any group of churches who wish to air it in their city. It is seen in about fifty markets across the nation.

Congregations interested in having Amazing Grace in their area should contact George Goldtrap, Executive Producer, at Christian Productions, 106 Gallatin Rd. North, Madison, Tennessee 37115, or call 615-865-6362.

It is the secret ambition of every loyal American to discover the stream in which a president should never be changed in the middle of.

The best ammunition to fight poverty is a load of ambition fired with effort toward a definite goal.

The world has too many cranks and not enough self-starters.

Some Problem Verses In First Corinthians Explained

Continued from page 1

good for a man to be as he is" (7:25-26). He had no command expressed by Christ on this topic, nor had he received a divine revelation on this matter. "He was inspired or led by the Spirit, in this matter, not to command, but to advise. His advice, however, was worthy of great deference" (Charles Hodge). Lenski observes, "This is not a mere personal preference, it is the weighty judgment and advice of one who is in every way qualified to render it."

The fact that this is advice but not a command that demanded conformity is demonstrated in verse 28. After having advised against marriage, he plainly states: "But shouldest thou marry, thou has not sinned . . ."

Again, when asked about Christian widows' remarrying -- he responded that such could marry a Christian; but he observed: "she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment; and I think that I have the Spirit of God" (7:40). Under normal circumstances, Paul wrote, "I desire therefore that

the younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household . . ." (I Timothy 5:14). Charles Hodge writes ". . . it was an opinion founded, as he says, on the peculiar circumstances of the time, and not intended to bind the conscience or to interfere with the liberty of others." He continues, "The meaning here clearly is, that the apostle was led by the spirit to give advice in question, so that his advice is, so to speak, the advice of the Spirit. But is not the advice of the Spirit obligatory? Certainly, if he meant it to be so. But if he meant simply to lay down a general rule of expediency and to have everyone judge of its application to his or her peculiar case, then it leaves all concerned free."

Those who read this chapter from the perspective of the Corinthian saints will have no problem distinguishing between Paul's authoritative commands, versus his opinions which were not binding. The problem arises when the man with a low

view of the Scripture grasps at Paul's concession as a handle to question the whole of inspiration. The skeptic views all of the Bible as the uninspired opinions and philosophies of the authors. This we reject in toto. Rather than disclaiming inspiration, Paul "insists that he has 'the Spirit of God' . . . in the expression of his inspired judgment on this difficult, complicated, tangled problem of marriage. But he has discharged his duty and leaves each to decide for himself" (A. T. Robertson).

David Brown sums it up well: "When the apostle thus sharply distinguishes between what he utters by authority-- under immediate inspiration-- and what in the exercise of his own Christian wisdom, he judges to be right and recommends to be done, we may be sure that wherever no such intimation as this is given, he is to be understood as speaking authoritatively, both in the expression of truth and in the giving of commands" (Philip Schaff). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

They Yielded No Ground

(NO. 2)

Paul and his apostolic friends yielded no ground during the Jerusalem Conference. Luke so affirms in Acts 15 and so does Paul in Galatians 2:4,5. Such was their stance relative to all errors they faced in the first century. Such must be our posture in the twentieth century as we face the Herculean errors of the day. David had his Goliath to meet three thousand years ago, and there are still Goliaths of error and falsehood to be met and defeated thoroughly in our age also. The remainder of this four or five-part series will delineate some of these errors. Relative to all of them we MUST not yield an inch of truth.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO GODLESS, CHRISTLESS, AND SPIRITLESS EVOLUTION

Though evolution has been taught and accepted by some since the days of ancient Greek philosophers who lived centuries before Christ came to earth as the Babe of Bethlehem, yet the movement has come into its heyday since the time of Charles Darwin, who wrote in its defense during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Evolution is basically a system of philosophy (not science) that seeks to uproot the teachings of the Bible in regard to the question of origins. Instead of accepting reverently and completely the Genesis account as touching origins, the system in its atheistic form eliminates Jehovah and the Mosaic account in Genesis 1 completely. The theistic brand of evolution is NO better, and in reality is really more dangerous to the faith of many people than is atheistic evolution. Theistic evolution apes so much of the atheistic brand that the entire movement is, in reality, simply a "Johnny-come-lately" theory. Theistic evolution seeks to harmonize the atheistic evolution with the teaching of Moses in Genesis 1 and 2. That the entire effort has been a miserable flop is quite evident to every keen student of the evolutionary hypothesis. Atheistic evolution rules out any Maker such as God and looks to Chance and Time as being responsible for all that we behold within our marvelous universe. Give the evolutionist enough TIME and he is confident his CHANCE

system has been all powerful in bringing about both the inorganic and the organic. But time and chance are not originating powers whether they have thousands, millions, billions or even trillions of years in which to act.

Theistic evolution simply suggests that God is the WHAT or POWER, but evolution is the GRAND "How." Evolution teaches that man has evolved; but the Bible teaches he was made. Evolution teaches that it took the system hundreds of millions of years to get man here. The Bible says God made man and woman (a full human unit) in one day, the sixth day of creation. Jesus styles this as "the beginning" (Matthew 19:4,5) and as "the beginning of the creation" (Mark 10:6). Theistic evolutionists class Jesus as a liar in the making of these statements. They must, in order to remain loyal to their infidelic system relative to origins. The sixth "day" in which man and woman were made, like the five that preceded it in the week of creative activity, consisted of TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. Evolution teaches that life began with the very simple, some one-half billion years ago and it took the system nearly five hundred million years to produce man in all his complexity. Thus they have the first forms of life on earth and man separated by hundreds of millions of years; whereas the Bible has them separated by only a very few hours -- three days, to be exact. Plant life came into being on day number three and man and woman were here day number six. Animal life and human life are even closer than that. Fowl life and water life were made on day number five and human life was made on day number six. Evolution, in the last analysis, says that man bears the impress of his lower animal progenitors that produced him. Quite to the contrary, the Bible teaches that man was made from the dust of the earth and bore the impress of his Heavenly Maker. The Bible teaches that the first woman was made from the rib and flesh of Adam. Relative to the making or creation of both man and woman we read: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . . So God created man in his own image in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them . . . And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of the ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man" (Genesis 1:26,27;2:7,21-23).

Reader friend, are you reading with care? There is NOT the remotest ground of affinity between evolution and creation. One is a system that came from God. The other is a system with the devil as its primary founder. Evolution is a system of dense darkness; creation is a system of luminous light. It is high time that we stop apologizing for Genesis 1 and 2. We need to believe these two majestic chapters. We need to defend the teaching of these two introductory chapters of God's eternal volume. In a very real sense we must uphold every truth of the Genesis account of creation, and expose with relentless and persistent courage anything that attacks truth. Toward evolution, whether atheistic or theistic, we must not give place, no not for so much as an hour. Any yielding of ground in this strategic realm is fatal to one's faith in the remainder of God's word. Toward evolution we need desperately to adopt once and for all the posture of the apostles and elders toward the Judaizing forces in the Jerusalem Conference. This is the ONLY posture that will enable us to STAND approved in the presence of Jehovah God.

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO PERNICIOUS PREMILLENNIALISM

One of the most popular, persistent and perplexing "-isms" of our day is *premillennialism*. This theory says that Christ came to the earth nearly two thousand years ago for the express purpose of establishing his kingdom -- a kingdom long prophesied of within the pages of the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament era. Yet due to the fact that the Jews rejected him, both he and the Father discarded their plans for the immediate establishing of the *kingdom* at that time, and set up the "church age" to serve in the interim period. According to the theory, *the kingdom* has not been established to date: -- it will be established at the second coming of Christ, and Christ will then reign literally on David's throne in the city of Jerusalem for a literal thousand years. Premillennialists separate the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust by a thousand years. *Dispensational premillennialists* believe there will be a short but very intense period of suffering upon earth just prior to the Lord's coming to begin his reign on earth. They call this the Tribulation. During this time the saints of God will be "raptured" with the Lord and will thus escape this period of intense

Continued on page 4

They Yielded No Ground

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tribulation.

In answer to a few of the many errors of premillennialism I simply point out that John the Baptist (in Matthew 3), Jesus Christ (in Matthew 4), the twelve (in Matthew 10), and the seventy (in Luke 10) all taught that the kingdom of heaven or of God was near. Jesus said that it would be established in the lifetime of some who lived in the first century (Mark 9:1). The writer of Colossians said they had been translated into it (1:13). The sacred scribe of Hebrews said they had received it (12:28). John on Patmos described himself as being in it (Revelation 1:9). Peter declared (Acts 2) that Jesus was already upon the throne of David. That is why God raised him up -- to sit on David's throne. The resurrection of both

the good and evil will occur within the same hour (John 5:28,29). To stretch that "hour" into a thousand years is to engage in too much stretching! Instead of our Lord's reigning for a thousand years when he returns, the Bible teaches that this earth is destined to be destroyed at his second coming (II Peter 3:10-14). There will be NO earth for him to rule upon when he comes back. The Bible does not offer that first shred of support or warrant for the intense Tribulation period and the Rapturing of the saints just prior to the Lord's coming for a so-called reign on earth. In fact his reign ENDS -- not BEGINS -- at the second coming! (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

The foregoing aspects of dispensational premillennialism are but wild figments of man's

imagination that has been allowed to run rampant within recent years. Yet I am reliably informed that about 70 percent or more of what is commonly called "Christedom" believes in some phase of persistent, pernicious premillennialism. Toward this grievous "-ism" we must do as the apostles and elders did in the Jerusalem Conference: we must yield no ground. We must not give place to it, no not so much as for an hour. Premillennialism is a resorting back to the old relics of materialistic Judaism -- the very thing the Jerusalem Conference opposed so persistently and forthrightly. Our posture toward its propaganda must be just as decisive as was theirs in the first century. Then and then only can we stand approved. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The Rich Man And Lazarus

BARRY CUNNINGHAM

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is recorded in Luke 16:19-31. This glimpse into the after-world was given by Jesus, who is certainly able to speak in regard to eternity.

We can accept Christ's word that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a true picture of what happens to the lost and saved after death. Christ is the Son of God -- an eternal, omniscient being!

Jesus never called this a parable. If it is a parable, it is the only one in which names are given to its characters. So, be it a parable or not, this story tells what DID happen or what COULD have happened. The truth is taught, regardless.

The Bible has much to say about material possessions. They are not wrong per se, yet there are certain dangers connected with them. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25). Riches can be "deceitful" (Matthew 13:22); the love of money is "the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10).

The rich man of Luke 16 wore "purple and fine linen." His garments were the clothing of kings. He "fared sumptuously every day." His life on earth was characterized by "good things" (Luke 16:25).

Lazarus was a beggar. He could not even walk. His body was full of sores which the dogs licked. His life on earth consisted of "evil things" (Luke 16:25).

Lazarus died and was carried by the angels into paradise. In life, dogs were his "attendants;" in death, the angels of heaven!

Just as Lazarus, the rich man died. All his wealth could not prevent his death. He was buried, and no doubt was mourned as a great and wonderful man. In hell, however, the rich man lifted up his eyes.

The rich man was conscious of his environment while in hell or "hades." He could see (v. 23); he could feel (v. 23-25); he could hear (v. 24-25); and he could taste (v. 24).

He did not lose his identity in "hades" or hell. The same man who wore purple and fine linen on earth, lifted up his eyes in hell. The same man who was buried, rose up in flames.

He retained his memory in hell. He knew Lazarus (v. 24); he knew of his past life (v. 25); he remembered his brothers (v. 28); and he knew of Moses and the prophets (v. 29).

He was without hope in hell. A great gulf was "fixed." There was no possibility of escape or release.

Why did the rich man go to hell? He did not go to hell simply because he was rich. Abraham was wealthy, yet he was in paradise. Job, Solomon and David were very well off financially -- yet they were saved!

The rich man was lost because he was indifferent to his fellow man. He violated the second great commandment (Matthew 22:39).

Too, he was lost because he was indifferent to God. He lived in violation of the first great commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). No man can be saved who lives in violation of these great, all-encompassing command of God.

Why was Lazarus saved? He was not saved simply because he was poor. Poor people are not necessarily more righteous than those who are not poor.

Lazarus was saved because he obeyed the will of God. If he had not obeyed God's will he would not have been saved (Matthew 7:21). Yet, he evidently did obey God's will; so he was saved.

Finally, there are great lessons taught in the story of Luke sixteen. First, death is no respecter of

persons. All die - rich and poor, alike (I Corinthians 15:20-22; Hebrews 9:27). Second, health and prosperity are not signs of God's approval. Consider the rich man. Third, sickness and adversity are not signs of God's disapproval. Consider the poor man, Lazarus. Fourth, the gospel is powerful enough to enable all to be saved from the flames of hell (Romans 1:16). We need no miraculous warnings, nor should we expect any. Consider the rich man's plea in behalf of his brothers.

So, as we live upon the earth may we all resolve to seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). Let us place spiritual things above material possessions. And, may we ever be sensitive to every "Lazarus" who may be outside our gates. — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

And many of the brethren in the Lord
waxing confident by my bonds
Are much more bold
to speak the word
without fear,
SOME indeed
preach Christ even
of
envy and strife
and
SOME also of good will.
THE ONE preach Christ of CONTENTION,
not sincerely,
supposing to add affliction
to my bonds
but
THE OTHER of LOVE Knowing
that I am set
for the defence of the gospel.
What then?
notwithstanding every way,
Whether in PRETENCE
or
in TRUTH, Christ is preached;
and
I therein do REJOICE,
yea
and will REJOICE.
For I know that
This shall turn to my salvation
through your prayer

— 1202 S 34th St., No. 2, Birmingham, AL 35205.



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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Job's Three Friends

The greater part of the book of Job is a record of the conversations between Job and his friends. It was a time of great mental, physical and spiritual suffering for the patriarch. In swift and sudden blows Satan had robbed him of all his children, all his wealth, and his health. So bewildering were the turn of events that his own wife despaired, and urged him to curse God and die (Job 2:9). Driven from his home, his friends, and his community, he was quarantined to the ashes of the refuse dump (2:8). Without funds for doctors, he took broken pottery and scraped the angry boils that covered his body.



JOHN WADDEY

Job had three friends of long standing, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They were men of high rank, philosophers, and wise men like Job. Hearing of their friend's misfortunes, they came to comfort him and bemoan his sorrow (2:11). They came with the best intentions, but with faulty knowledge and zeal. Job desperately needed friends in his hour of sorrow, but he was forced to say of them: "miserable comforters are ye all" (16:2). Tragically those who came to help fell into Satan's hands, and were used to further harass the poor victim and to multiply his misery. Like David's familiar friend, they lifted up their heel against him (Psalm 41:9). From them we can learn many valuable lessons for life.

His name meant "refined gold," but that he was not to Job. He hailed from Teman. Temanites descended from Esau, Jacob's son (Genesis 36:9-11). Teman was a part of the land of Edom. Her citizens were renowned for their great wisdom down through the years (Jeremiah 49:7). Eliphaz was a true patriarchal chieftan — grave, dignified and intellectual.

His method: Eliphaz was a man of eloquence and politeness. He began his conversation in a kind way

but grew angry and harsh when Job defended himself and did not accept the simplistic solutions offered. He poured alcohol rather than balm on Job's wounds. He thought he knew all the answers, but in reality he knew none. He presented some obvious truths and undisputed common knowledge that had little to do with Job's case. Being dogmatic and of strong prejudices, he sought to press Job into his own mold. His approach was cold and heartless, lacking that pity and compassion which Job desperately needed. Eliphaz spoke with that presumptuous assurance of a man who has never experienced the problem.

See Eliphaz's claim to authority:

"Now a thing was secretly brought to me,
And mine ear received a whisper thereof.
In the thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,
Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones to shake.
Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still, but I could not discern
the appearance thereof;
A form was before mine eyes:
There was silence, and I heard a voice . . ."
(4:12-16).

Eliphaz's logic: He claimed that a spirit had spoken to him in a spine-tingling night vision. Thus, he was relying on uncertain human experience. Eliphaz reminded Job, "With us are both the grayheaded and the very aged men" (15:10). He felt that his great age gave him the wisdom to perceive and the right to judge.

He reasoned, "Who ever perished being innocent?" (4:7). Obviously Job was perishing; therefore, he could not be innocent, but must be guilty of some great, albeit unknown, sin. Frustrated that Job did not concede his point, Eliphaz heaped wild accusations of moral evil upon his old friend (22:5-10). He felt insulted that Job had not bought his analysis (15:7-8). In a word, his advice to Job was, "to accept his chastisement as a gift from God that he deserved and needed" (5:17). In his mind it was for Job's own good that disaster had come (5:27). Eliphaz was magnificent -- but mistaken!

A Shuhite (of which we know nothing), Bildad was descended from Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:2). Bildad was a scholar, wise in the wisdom of the fathers and learned in the lore of the past. His speech was full of proverbs and wise sayings.

His method: The record suggests that Bildad was loud, insistent, and even boisterous in his declarations. Little or no love was reflected in his words. They were blunt and he gave no thought to the pain inflicted or the wounds he opened in his friend. Bildad was the kind of "man who has a text for all eventualities - prefabricated solutions for all problems and perplexities of life" (Blallock). He used truth as a bludgeon rather than as a balm. Insults were his chief tools to gain his point. He accused Job of being a windbag (8:16).


For his authority, Bildad relied upon human tradition. He appealed to the "former age" and that which the fathers had sought out (8:8-9). Proverbs and maxims he loved to cite. His logic was: "God will not cast away a perfect man" (8:20). But evidently God had cast away Job. Therefore, Job was imperfect; i.e., a sinful man. Bildad was the champion orthodoxy, but he had the wrong "doxy."

Zophar

This man was a Naamathite. Perhaps he was from the city of Naamah in southwestern Judah (Joshua 15:41). His name meant "twittering bird." The Septuagint calls him "King of the Mineans." He speaks as a man of the streets, a practical man who depended on his common sense.

His method: Zophar appealed to human experiences and wisdom (Job 20:2-5). He was blunt to the point of being violent and offensive with his words. He represents the prejudiced, narrow-minded bigotry of men who think they know it all. Zophar presumed to know all about God; what he would do in a given situation; and why. He dealt with profound issues in a light and frivolous way. Being self-righteous, Zophar could not tolerate questions or doubts in a troubled saint. To Zophar's kind, religion is a plain system of material rewards and punishment. Such folk experience no difficulties or perplexities because they are unable to grasp the issues which cause such emotions. "They are adamantly self-

Continued on page 3



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The Editor's Pen

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Judgment To Come"

Since "the Lord knowth" (note the present tense) "them that are his" (II Tim. 2:19), it must be admitted that some judgment for man takes place in this lifetime. However, there is some judgment in the future, for before Governor Felix the apostle Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts 24:25). That same apostle wrote: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

This "judgment to come" will be after death, for "it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). And this "judgment to come" after death will be at our Lord's second coming: "the Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall judge the quick (living) and the dead AT HIS APPEARANCE . . ." (II Timothy 4:1).

The certainty of the judgment is guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ: "The times of this ignorance God winked at" (or "overlooked," A.S.V.); "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). From this text we learn that by raising Jesus from the dead, God the Father assured mankind that Jesus Christ will judge the world. We also learn here that the "day" of judgment has

already been set or "appointed." However, it is known only to God, for Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Mark (13:32) tells us that even the Son did not then know the day, although it has been "appointed" (Acts 17:31).

Christ will be the Judge, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). Paul referred to Jesus as "the Lord, the righteous judge" (II Timothy 4:8). He also wrote of "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16).

This judgment will be universal, for "Before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matthew 25:30-46). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

Every man on earth who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 3:36; Acts 8:37), and obeys him (Hebrews 5:9) will be saved. The one hundred and one scholars who translated the American Standard Version of 1901, translated John 3:36 to read as follows: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Thus it is the obedient believer who will be saved.

We sing:

There's a great day coming, a great day coming,
A great day coming bye and bye
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left:

Are you ready for the judgement day?

Are YOU saved? Or, does the wrath of God abide on you? You ought to know, for YOU are the one who determines this matter. Read John 3:36 again, and obey Christ without delay.

"Into Our Hands..."

According to II Corinthians 2:14, God "maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." God is looking to the church of Christ for the communication of his saving knowledge to an unbelieving world! If the church doesn't communicate this saving knowledge, it will never be communicated.



SCOTTY HARRIS

Certainly, the denominations and religious sects with their "doctrines and commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9) will not impart the true knowledge of the gospel to sinful men; thus, again, if "we" don't do it, it won't be done!

Unquestionably, every member of a local congregation needs to be a flame of fire in evangelizing the community. Opportunities abound for each of us to reach some lost soul with the gospel of Jesus. As the Lord himself said, "The fields are white already unto harvest" (John 4:35). There is no shortage of sinners, but there is a grave shortage of soul-winners!

When properly understood, the New Testament reveals that every Christian is a "minister" who is indispensable in reconciling the world to God (II Corinthians 5:19-21). Since the word "reconcile" has to do with "becoming friends again," then every Christian is to be involved in the grandest and noblest work -- pleading with sinners (God's "enemies," Romans 5:10) to become God's friends by obedient trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:11).

The present affords no time for excuse-making as to why you aren't qualified to win souls. Believe me, when it comes to excuses, God has "heard 'em all." But still the Lord commands, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark

Membership In The Church

Since the days of Martin Luther, the need to be a part of the church has been downgraded. Luther looked upon the clergy of the Roman church as the church. He affirmed one can be saved by faith only. Therefore, he concluded that one can be saved without being a member of the church. The truth is the church of Christ is not the clergy, but the saved (Acts 2:47). Luther was right in rebelling against ecclesiasticism.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

However, it is like throwing the baby out with the wash to throw away the church with the clergy.

WHY SHOULD ONE BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH? First, because Christ purchased the

church with his blood (Acts 20:28). To be a member of the church is to be a part of the institution which the blood of Christ purchased. Second, Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:24-25). Since Christ saves the church, we ought to be a part of that which is saved. Third, Christ reconciles all men to God in one body, the church. Paul said concerning Christ, "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:16). The word "both" refers to the Jews and Gentiles. For centuries the Jews were God's chosen to bring the Messiah into the world to save men. Christ came and shed His blood that all might be saved. All the saved are reconciled in the one body, the church. When men submit to Christ though his word, all hindrances to unity are destroyed. Fourth, all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). The church is the "fullness" of Christ (Ephesians 1:23). To be in Christ is to be in his church. The church is his body (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Job's Three Friends

Continued from page 1

righteous, usually of sound constitution and good health; always comfortably situated, not infrequently affluent. They are useless in the dark hours of the soul, a peril in the sick room, and a menace in the pulpit" (Blalock).

Zophar reasoned that "the triumphing of the wicked is short" (20:4-7). He falsely accused Job of oppressing and neglecting the poor (20:4-7).

The Conclusion of the Matter

After endless rounds of caustic speeches by these friends, God intervened. "Jehovah said to Eliphaz . . . My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right . . ." (42:7). To their chagrin, they were ordered to approach Job for forgiveness (42:8-9). They had been wrong in their assumptions, sinful in their attitudes toward Job, and had falsely misrepresented God.

Lessons to Remember

These men were not cold-hearted hypocrites, they were good and sincere men whose chief defect was that suffering had not yet unlocked the door for them into Job's thoughts. They were well-intentioned,

thoughtful men who spoke too soon, said too much, and spoke of things they did not understand. We could wish that they had extended their seven days of silence (2:13). That would have been their greatest gift to Job.

Everyone needs friends of the right kind. We cannot have too many. Sadly, not all friends are of the helpful kind. A misguided presumptuous friend can be destructive and painful. An old English proverb says: "God save me from my friends; I can take care of my enemies." Zechariah's words fit Job's case: "I was wounded in the house of my friends" (13:6). A true friend will help a sufferer rather than oppress him. Friends need to know when to listen as well as when to speak. Solomon wrote "A friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17). "Life is fortified by many friendships. To love and be loved is the greatest happiness of existence" (Sydney Smith). Euripedes wrote: "Life has no blessing like a prudent friend."

From Eliphaz remember that an experience preached as "gospel" will always do great harm. Dreams must not be confused with God's word

(Jeremiah 23:28).

From Bildad we are reminded that what has been passed down from past generations is not necessarily true. Such a man as Bildad can be the church's worst friend in times of crises and conflict.

We must learn never to speak of matters we do not comprehend - no matter how great the temptation.

All these men had much truth, offered much good advice, were thoroughly sincere; yet all three were "dead wrong" in their conclusions.

Satan used these men in his attempt to destroy their own friend. Beware lest Satan use you as his agent to hurt a good soul.

In these friends we see the disastrous results of holding a faulty view.

We should thank God daily that Jesus is a friend who will never fail nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

"Into Our Hands..."

Continued from page 2

16:15). In the words of Ivan Stewart, "Go ye, means Go Me!" **THERE IS NO FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN WHO IS NOT COMMITTED TO SOUL WINNING!!** Thus, let us be compelled to speak of Christ to our neighbors, friends, relatives, associates, yea, to

"every creature."

Let us seize every opportunity, brave every hazard, resist every deterrent and conquer every foe in order that the lost of our respective cities might hear the gospel of Jesus.

Remember the words of the song: "Into our hands the gospel is given." Heaven is depending upon you! Lost souls cry out for your assistance! Can you refuse them? — 301 Cahill Road, Albertville, AL 35950.

Membership In The Church

Continued From Page 2

In Christ we are made nigh by his blood (Ephesians 2:13). We are reconciled unto God in one body by the cross (Ephesians 2:16). Fifth, names of church members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:22-23). If one leaves the living not being enrolled, it equals eternal death. John wrote, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). Sixth, to be a faithful member of the church till death is to gain eternal life in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH? Sectarianism teaches the church is "joined" as one would a civic club. The expression "join the church" is not a Bible term. Membership in many religious groups depends upon a "vote" of their members. These terms blind one to the truth. There is no New Testament command or example for joining or a vote of membership before one can be a member of the church of Christ.

The truth is that the Bible teaches **THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FAMILY** (I Timothy 3:15). One must be born into God's family (John 3:3-5), be born of water and of the Spirit. He is begotten by the Spirit through the agency of the word (I Peter 1:22-23). The word of God, the Bible, was revealed by the Holy Spirit through the inspired writers (John 16:13; I Corinthians 2:12-13). The inspired word commands one to be born of water by being baptized in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 10:47,48; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). Therefore, to be born again is to believe Jesus is the Son of God and to be baptized to be saved.

Let us emphasize the church is the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:20; Ephesians 1:22-23). We are baptized into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13). Acts chapter two demonstrates entrance into the church. Peter stood up with the eleven. He convinced his

hearers they had crucified the Son of God. They also were to accept the facts of his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. Then Peter stated, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). His listeners' guilty conscience caused them to cry out with the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:37-38). Three

thousand responded and were baptized (Acts 2:41). Verse forty-seven tells us, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

In conclusion, let us state the process that saves and puts one in the church. (1) Faith and baptism equal salvation (Mark 16:15-16). (2) Faith and baptism equal putting one into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). (3) Faith and baptism cause God to "add" one to the church (Acts 2:41-47).

One is not saved and then join the church. — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

Some Popular Sins — I

Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). God's law involves his moral, spiritual and physical or health regulations. Since the days of Adam and Eve, sin has been in the world (Romans 5:12-14; Genesis 3:6). Sin, apparently, has been very popular throughout the ages, since "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

What are some of the more popular sins of our age? We shall note . . . (1) The use of tobacco. In spite of frequent warning from government agencies, the use of tobacco continues to weave its deadly web.



W. A. HOLLEY

Heavy advertising through national magazines and daily newspapers, together with strong pressure from lobbyists, make it almost impossible to resist the temptation to smoke cigarettes, chew tobacco, and dip snuff. There is a health hazard here. For example, lung cancer rates for American women have soared by more than 450 percent in only three decades. The American Cancer Society puts the blame squarely on more women smoking in response to social and job pressures. An editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* said 34,000 American women are projected to die this year from lung cancer -- giving it a close second place behind breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States. What is the cause? Megan Wright, an authority on these matters, said: "Since the women's movement and women entered the work force, they've taken up smoking at a faster rate."

A Birmingham doctor (*The Birmingham News*,

Continued on page 4

Some Popular Sins — I

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January 16, 1984) said: "One who smokes a pack of cigarettes daily is twice as likely to have a heart attack as a non-smoker. A two-pack-a-day smoker is three times more susceptible. It has been estimated that each cigarette smoked shortens the average person's life by five and a half minutes." Again, he says, "Smoking is our most preventable cause of disability and death, killing more than 300,000 of us yearly (six times the number of those who died in Vietnam) and it disables millions more. Recent estimates put a \$38 billion annual price tag on smoking, which includes the cost of lost productivity and of providing health care for smoke-related illnesses." The Public Health Service identifies smoking as "the most important health issue of our times." (Cf. I Corinthians 6:15-20; II Corinthians 7:1; III John 2).

(2) The drinking of alcoholic beverages. More effort

is being made to "sell more Liquor, and hike profits," according to reports in *The Birmingham News*, September 4, 1983. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board already operates 137 state liquor stores, wants to open 28 more stores, and establish hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Also, these stores are to be open on eight state holidays, when traffic is heavy, and expand the operation of all but four stores to six days a week. ABC Administrator Jeff Mims says "his aim is not to increase the consumption of liquor . . . but sell more merchandise." How foolish!!

Old men, old women, teenagers, even children are being victimized by alcohol. Three million, three hundred thousand women are heavy drinkers today, and alcoholism is claiming more victims each year. It is estimated that if current trends continue, women will make up a full fifty percent of the nation's 15

million alcoholics by the year 2000.

Is the consumption of alcohol a problem? Take a look at some chilling facts: One out of every two of us will be involved in an alcohol-related accident sometime during our lives. Last year alone, more than 25,000 people died in such accidents; an additional 1.5 million were injured. A disproportionate number of those killed were under 25 years old.

Is the consumption of alcohol a real problem? Yes, it certainly is! There are 70 million social drinkers in the United States: some drink occasionally, some drink frequently, some daily. In 1960 the intake of alcohol began to rise, and by the early seventies it was 2.5 gallons a year per person, an increase of 25 percent in just 10 years. Today the average annual consumption is approximately 2.8 gallons per person--- an increase of 40 percent since 1960!

The cost of drunk-driving staggers the imagination! It is said that the cost of drunk-driving amounts to over \$24 billion every year in property damage, loss of wages, medical and legal fees; not to mention the emotional pain to the victim's families and friends. Furthermore the consumption of alcohol by pregnant women can lead to learning problems, border-line mental retardation, and hyperactivity in their babies. Various agencies are very concerned about the dangers of saccharin, but show little concern about the dangers of alcohol. (Cf. I Kings 16:9; 20:12,16; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:22-24; 28:7-8; Galatians 5:19-21). (To be continued). -- P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

What Kind Of Light?

Paul described the Philippians as "lights in the world" in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Philippians 2:15). In Paul's time I suppose there was only one kind of light, the light that provided useful and necessary illumination. However, there are many kinds of lights in the world today and it seems that we sometimes become the wrong kind of light.



DUB McCLISH

There are the *flashing signal lights*. While they serve a useful function, they hardly provide illumination. They are constantly going on-off-on-off. They don't stay on long and they don't stay off long. The "signal-light" Christian runs hot, then cold. He is unsteady and unpredictable. He may readily, even zealously accept a responsibility, then quit suddenly with no warning. The good he does while he is "on" is offset by the harm he does when he goes "off."

The *red light* is a stop signal. There is surely a place for its function; but, again, it provides no real light. The Christian who has a "red light" complex will always be trying to stop someone or something. This fellow is totally negative, looking for flaws. There is a time and place when we must be red lights or betray the Lord; but not all of the time.

The *green light* says, "Go ahead." There is an appropriate function served by this light, but it is terribly unbalanced. Likewise, the "green light" Christian would throw away all restraints, emphasizing freedom, and ignoring false teaching and sin as though they were innocent matters. Christians ought to be generally positive, but one is wrong to remain positive about things that God has condemned.

Neon lights are often used to make that which is unattractive and base appear to be wholesome. The liquor and gambling interests probably use them more than all other users combined. Such is utterly hypocritical. It is sad that some of the Lord's people are sort of "neon Christians," pretending to be something on the outside that they do not intend to be on the inside. This is surely not the kind of light Paul urged us to be in the world.

The light this world needs for the darkness of sin and error is not just one that produces a signal, or advertises; but one that gives a steady, bright

illuminating light. Such a light produces positive and negative illumination as they are needed. This is the light that will help our world (Matthew 5:14-16). — 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX76201.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

According to MY earnest EXPECTATION
and

MY HOPE that in nothing
I shall be ashamed

But

that with all boldness
as always, so now also

Christ shall be magnified in my body
whether it be
by life

or

by death.

For to me

to LIVE is CHRIST,

and

to DIE is GAIN.

But

If I live in the flesh

this is the fruit of my labor;
yet

what I shall choose

I wot not.

For I am in a strait betwixt TWO
having a desire TO DEPART

and

to be with Christ

which is far better:

nevertheless

TO ABIDE In the flesh

is

more needful for you.

And having this confidence,

I know that I shall abide

and

continue with you all

for your furtherance

and

joy of faith,



Words of T

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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What About "The Rapture"?

One of the most widely accepted doctrines of the day is that of "the rapture." Most of the popular nation-wide TV and radio evangelists teach this idea. Several best-selling religious books have been written about it. Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* was even made into a movie which was shown at most local theaters. This book, which was first printed in 1970, was so popular that by 1976 when my copy was printed it had already gone through forty-two printings!



JOE E. GALLOWAY

The result of this "blitz" of teaching is showing up in many areas, and is alarming. Several times in the past year the news media have mentioned world events as possibly being connected with "Armageddon," and some have even used the term "the rapture" as though it were a commonly known and established future event. In home studies I am finding more and more prospects who believe this idea, and who therefore have an overall view of the Bible and God's plan for man that makes it difficult for them to understand and accept the truth. So, it often becomes necessary for us to first combat this false teaching before we can begin to successfully teach other basic truths. Due to the current emphasis and acceptance of this false doctrine, I have devoted one sermon to answering it in each gospel meeting the past two or three years, and I speak on it recurrently in my local work. Following such sermons many have expressed appreciation for the information, and have shown concern that more teaching is not being done on this topic. Some members have told me that they had, themselves, accepted parts of this teaching as being Biblically true. Brethren, we need to preach the truth on "end times" and answer this false doctrine.

The idea of "the rapture" is that Christ will soon appear and snatch away from the earth all who are

saved, while leaving the unsaved on the earth for a period of time. Most of us have probably read articles or heard hair-raising narrations of what they say will occur when Christ "raptures" the saved. These tell of men awaking and finding their wives and children gone. Others at work will suddenly disappear from their machines and desks. Some drivers and pilots are to suddenly vanish, causing many wrecks and crashes. Those not "raptured" supposedly will panic, not knowing what has happened. They will jam the phone lines as they call the police and other authorities. Generally, chaos is pictured as resulting. Finally, remembering what they have been taught, some will begin realizing that the "rapture" has taken place and they were not ready, so were left behind. So teach the rapturists.

Too New To Be Biblical

As popular and common as "the rapture" teaching has become, few people realize how relatively new it is. Although "historic" premillennialism has been around longer, dispensational premillennialism (from which comes the rapture idea) is usually dated as beginning with John N. Darby in about 1830. This was the beginning of the Plymouth Brethren movement. One writer claims the two-stage idea of Christ's coming to have been started by Miss Margaret MacDonald in Port Glasgow, Scotland a few years earlier, but none seem to be able to trace it back before the 1800's. This should be sufficient to show this doctrine to be unscriptural. It started over 1700 years too late to be from God!

The Dispensational Premillennial Theory Explained

Dispensationalists generally teach that all human history falls into seven divisions, or dispensations. Although they disagree among themselves on the designations and the exact periods covered in the first five dispensations, all of them seem to agree that we are now living in the sixth dispensation, called the dispensation of "Grace" or "The Church Age." In common they expect the final, seventh, dispensation to be a thousand years in duration and refer to it as "The Kingdom" or "The Millennium."


According to dispensational teaching, the dispensation of Grace (or Church Age) is ready to end. It is to end with the supposed "rapture." At the rapture the righteous dead will be raised and, along with the living righteous, will be caught up to meet

Christ in the air. There will then be a judgment of the righteous in the air, which is to consist mostly of the pronouncing of rewards to them. They are to be kept in that raptured state for seven years (the claimed "final week" of Daniel's prophecy). On earth during this seven-year period is to be what they call "the Great Tribulation." During the first part of this period the Jews in Palestine are to make a covenant with "the Antichrist," rebuild the temple, begin anew its rituals and sacrifices, and be influential in converting a great number of people. In the middle of this seven-year period the Antichrist is to break this covenant and demand to be worshipped. Great persecution is to ensue, resulting in the death of many of these "tribulation saints." At the end of this seven-year period Christ will come with the raptured saints (in what they call "the Revelation") and fight "the battle of Armageddon," destroying the Antichrist. There is then to be a resurrection of the dead tribulation saints and "the judgment of the nations." This is to then begin "the Millennium," during which time Christ rules on David's literal throne in Jerusalem. At the end of this thousand years Satan is to be loosed for a little while, then the wicked are to be resurrected and judged in what they term "the Great White Throne Judgment." This brings us to the eternal condition of mankind (in their thinking).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 a Proof Text?

Often those who teach "the rapture" idea will claim that their theory is clearly taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. You are encouraged to read this for yourself to see if it can be found there. They particularly claim that verse 17 teaches it: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This does speak of the living saved being caught up along with the resurrected saved to meet the Lord in the air. This, though, is speaking of what will occur at the end of time when all the dead are raised and judged, not of a secret "rapture." That a secret "rapture" of the saved is not taught here can be seen by two statements: 1) In verse 16 the Lord's coming is anything but secret. He shall descend from heaven

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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Family Ties



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Perhaps no one of us preaches or writes about the kind of families God wants his children to have and to be part of. To combat the false ideas and doctrines regarding easy divorce, we need repeatedly to teach what God says about marriage and its permanence (Matthew 19:3-9). We also need to teach again and again the need for full and free communication within the marriage. Both husbands and wives must be honest with each other, and strive to promote each other's happiness and welfare. The application of the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) in every home would solve most of the problems within families today.

The Bible has much to say about God's arrangements for the family members. I was recently asked to write an article on the relationship of brothers and sisters in families. "God setteth the solitary in families" (Psalms 68:6), and established close ties between brothers and sisters. Many studies have been made of the sibling rivalry so prevalent in our world, and some psychologists have written volumes on that theme.

"A brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17) implies that there should be a close tie between brothers and sisters in times of adversity. God specifically proscribed hatred of one's brother, saying: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart" (Leviticus 19:17). The apostle John wrote: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John 3:12,15). Strongly implying that it is good to have a brother nearby, Solomon wrote: "Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother afar off" (Proverbs 27:10).

Our Lord declared that "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:22; note that the American Standard Version omits "without a cause"). John, the beloved disciple, wrote: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? By this commandment love we one another, that we may love God, because love is the love of God, that we may love one another as we love God. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? By this love, as well as several other commandments which I may refer to, we shall know that we have obtained the word of truth." (I John 4:7-19). This includes, of course, family ties.

Under the law of Moses an Israelite was required to show special consideration to his brother, which may not have been limited to his fleshy father's family (Leviticus 25:25-55). If one's brother borrowed from him, but by the seventh year he was not able to repay it, the brother's debt was to be "released" (Deuteronomy 15:1-3). God demanded: "Thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his

need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land . . . Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day . . . It shall not seem hard unto thee . . ." (Deuteronomy 15:7-18).

With this background, the Jews could read in the New Covenant that one who "loveth not his brother" is "not of God" (I John 3:10). The truth is clear: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17).

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again" (Deuteronomy 22:1-4).

The ties of family affiliations were expected to be so strong that God put in the old covenant a caution lest his people be partial in enforcing his will when it came to brothers and sisters (Deuteronomy 13:6-11). Israelites were not to charge interest, at least not high interest, on loans made to their brothers (Deuteronomy 23:19,20). Today God's people are to "love the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17), and to add "brotherly kindness" (I Peter 1:7). We are to be on guard lest we "sue so against the brethren" (I Corinthians 8:1-13), and must not do "any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:15-21). God calls one "wicked" who "sitteth and speakest against thy brother, (or) slanderest thine own mother's son" (Psalms 50:16,18).

For all this, it is possible that brothers who have been wrong, as were Joseph's brothers when they sold him, to repent and change! (Genesis 37-50). The younger son (or "prodigal") changed, although his brother had an unforgiving heart (Luke 5:11-32).

Aren't you glad that "God setteth the solitary in families" (Psalms 68:6)?

Militant Christianity

The radicals and liberals in our society of late have put the term "militant" in bad company for many of us. In their militant campaigns on college campuses and in street demonstrations, their nasty tactics, sometimes resulting in bloodshed, have caused saner souls to shrink from anything that resembles their temperament. However, it is never right to use the abuse of a principle to deny the principle itself.



DUB McCLISH

As a matter of fact, the New Testament is loaded with military figures and terms designed to inspire Christians to be militant servants of Christ. Perhaps a brief study of them will increase our courage and valor.

The Christian life is compared to a "WAR" in which we seek to overthrow spiritual, rather than material, fortresses (II Corinthians 10:3-4). Timothy is urged to "WAR THE GOOD WARFARE" (I Timothy 1:18). One of the great enemies we face is "fleshly lusts, which WAR against the soul" (I Peter 2:11).

Combat is to be waged in "STRIBLING" (I Timothy 3:15). We must be ready to "FIGHT" (I Timothy 6:12). We are to contend; a "SOLDIER" (I Timothy 6:12) will suffer the loss for Christ's sake. A "SOLDIER" (I Timothy 6:12) will not be a soldier who seeks to "FIGHT" (I Timothy 6:12) and defend himself any remaining attacks that would "FIGHT" this purpose (I Timothy 2:17). Paul considered himself a SOLDIER of Christ and named Trophimus and Archippus as "FELLOW-SOLDIERS" (I Timothy 2:17; Philemon 2).

We are not participants in mock battles, but the "FIGHT" is real. The Christian SOLDIER is on the side of all things good and true and must "FIGHT" the

They Yielded No Ground

(NO. 3)

Each of us as readers of WORDS OF TRUTH surely should be giving serious and solemn heed to the various messages from the Bible which appear in each weekly edition of this great journal. Let us not forget that the acid test of any sermon we hear orally or any article we read is seen in the application we make of its principles to our thoughts, motives, language and daily deeds. Hearing the gospel preached or reading of its precious, proclaimed truths in gospel papers, tracts, books, etc., is NOT an end of itself. It is an important means to a desired end. That end is to glorify God by a life of faithful obedience and thus be permitted to come home to him on high in that sweet by and by. These are among the strongest of reasons for the continuation of WORDS OF TRUTH across the years of its literary publication.



At this time I continue with our studies of a principle as illustrated in the proceedings of the Jerusalem Conference. Toward the Judaizing teachers who were determined to make of Christianity an extended Jewish sect or an annex to the old covenant the apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:4,5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

These false teachers had an entirely wrong motive in being present for those proceedings. They advocated a theory, that if such had been accepted, would have brought to a quick end the liberty of the Christian converts. It was their driving ambition to bring the disciples back into the bondage from which Christ, Calvary and Pentecost had delivered them just a few short years earlier. Paul vividly described the apostolic posture toward this invasion of religious spying and spiritual sabotage. They (the apostles and elders) refused to yield that first inch of contested ground. The apostles realized rather deeply that victories for the Lord are not won upon the battlefields of compromise and surrender. They refused to be intimidated by the Judaistic forces. We need soldiers of Christ today who will arise in the strength of spiritual manhood and refuse to give any ground to the encroaching forms of error and flagrant falsehood. In the previous article I suggested that this should be our constant attitude toward such modern evils as godless evolution and the spineless compromise of theistic evolution. This must be our spiritual posture toward the emerging error of pre-millennialism. This is one of the most popular errors of the day.

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WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO MODERNISM AND LIBERALISM

The Christian today who wishes to stand approved in the sight of God must refuse to yield ground to the deeply entrenched forces of modernism and liberalism. We are living in a world of modernism. Modernism is basically a denial of the supernatural or of the miraculous. Liberalism is a tampering with the word of God and the supreme authority that undergirds the Book of books. Modernism and liberalism are determined forces against the Bible. They are opposed to the God of the Bible. The "god" of modernism and liberalism is just a man, nothing more. He is not the Christ of the Scriptures. They remove the Scriptures in the Old Testament that

prophecy of his coming. They do not allow for his virgin birth. To them he never performed a miracle. They have neither time nor sympathy for the atonement he wrought so wonderfully for lost humanity on Calvary. They do not believe in his resurrection, his ascension or in the great Bible Doctrine of Final Things in which he will play such an important role. The Bible of modernism and liberalism is not the Bible I have preached from all these many years -- now more than a third of a century. It is not the grand old Book that Brother Gus Nichols (who founded WORDS OF TRUTH) preached from for so many years and what a tremendous job he always did in exalting, extolling the Book of God. When they are finished with the Book it is not inspired save in their limited way. It is not free of errors and contradictions -- to hear them tell it. They deny its supreme authority, its finality, its inerrancy and its power to save men from the awful consequences of sin. In reality, modernism and liberalism do not really believe man is lost or that there is any real thing such as sin on earth. Toward modernism and liberalism we should have the very same posture today as the apostles and elders did in the Jerusalem Conference -- the concept of yielding NO ground. To yield treasured ground to the evil forces of modernism and liberalism is fatal indeed.

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Many religious leaders and entire religious bodies have long ago given up the spiritual emphasis of the gospel in the salvation of the soul. They no longer recognize the gravity of sin. Yet the Bible teaches in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; . . ." Paul again teaches in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The ultimate end of the life of sin is seen in Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 wherein we read, "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; . . ."

The inspired James also traced sin to its ultimate conclusion in James 1:13-15 wherein we read, "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."

It was this very realization of what sin will do ultimately to the souls of mankind that, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16,17). It was for this very cause that Jesus came to save men. He

himself declared his mission to our earth in Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." That is why he came to earth. That is why he died on the brow of painful and humiliating Calvary. That is why he arose again. That is why he established the church just a few days after his return to the Palace of the Universe.

Yet the social gospel is not really interested in man's salvation from sin. It seems very unlikely that the proponents of the social gospel even know much about the nature of sin and less about the nature of the soul. To them the gospel should apply exclusively to man's *now*. They are but little concerned about what they call "pie in the sky." Social concern and not soul concern is their primary emphasis. Their primary interest is in better clothing for man, a nicer roof over his head, finer food for his stomach, a better environment in which to rear his children and the guarantee that all his political rights are safe and intact. They seek and cry for a better here and now and not for a sweeter by and by. Their whole trust is aimed toward the materialistic concerns of life. The spiritual aspect of the Old Jerusalem gospel with its doctrinal emphasis upon becoming saved and remaining saved is just not their cup of tea. They have long vacated the spiritual aspects of Christianity and the gospel of atonement.

Some of our brethren are traveling rapidly in this very direction as they have come to emphasize entertainment more than edification and recreation more than redemption. Some of our congregations have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars from their church treasury to build gymnasiums and other sports centers while mission work goes begging, young men who want to prepare to preach cannot find support while they are in training, and many other good works are minus necessary funds. The work of the church is redemptive in nature -- not recreational or entertainment in nature. In an exceptionally fine editorial for the GOSPEL ADVOCATE in 1948 the late and lamented B.C. Goodpasture wrote, For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. It is to degrade its mission. Amusement and recreation should stem from the home rather than the church. The church, like Nehemiah, has a great work to do; and it should not come down on the plains of Ono to amuse and entertain. As the church turns its attention to amusement and recreation, it will be shorn of its power as Samson was when his hair was cut. Only as the church becomes worldly, as it pillows its head on the lap of Delilah, will it want to turn from its wonted course to relatively unimportant matters. Imagine Paul selecting and training a group of brethren to compete in the Isthmian games/ (GOSPEL ADVOCATE, May 20, 1948, p. 484.) Toward the foregoing I say WELL WRITTEN AND A TRIPLE AMEN!!!

Toward the social gospel we must yield no ground. To do so is to invite sure destruction to the supreme interests of our immortal souls. -- P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

What About "The Rapture"?

Continued from page 1

"with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." This is one of the "noisiest" verses in the Bible! 21 Verse 17 ends by saying concerning those who are "caught up": "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The "rapture" doctrine teaches, instead, that they will only be caught up in the air with Christ for seven years. Then they are to return to earth with him in "the Revelation."

Regarding the idea of a secretive coming of Christ in "the rapture," the argument is often made that the Bible, itself, pictures Christ as being like a thief. So,

they say, this is in character with the idea that he will sneak in and snatch the saved from the earth, secretly, like a thief does his work. The Bible, however, does *not* teach the *act* of Christ's coming to be "as a thief." Instead, it says "the day of the Lord" is what is similar to a thief (see I Thessalonians 5:2 and II Peter 3:10). This does not teach that Christ will be sneaking in and back out, secretly, like a thief, but shows that we cannot know *when* Christ is coming. -- 204 Creek Trail Columbia, TN 38401.

Identifying With Ezekiel

Ezekiel was truly a preacher who identified with the people to whom he carried God's word. Although not guilty of their sins he suffered as a result of the wrongs of another. And while he faithfully proclaimed God's message of doom upon Jerusalem, Judah, and the nations near her borders, there was pathos in his delivery. Much like Jeremiah, Ezekiel lamented the conditions occasioned by man's refusal to walk in



R. W. GRAY

the law of the Lord. But there was no hint of compromise, no giving in to the false prophet who would soothe the conscience of a sin-laden people.

Even though this man of God was true to the message assigned him, he was not rewarded with a proper response from his hearers. In an effort to encourage the preacher, yet within the scope of reality, the Lord laid before Ezekiel the attitude of the people, and the consequences of their indifference to his message: "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak to one another, every one to his brother, saying, 'Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord! And they come unto thee as the people cometh, as they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do not do them. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them'" (Ezekiel 33:30-33).

While the people were talking "of" the preacher, and while they encouraged attendance at the preaching service, even presenting themselves before the

preacher and the congregation as God's people, the message went unheeded.

The congregation obviously enjoyed the preaching style of Ezekiel. He was "easy to listen to," and they soothed their conscience by hearing his words of warning, even though they had no intention of following his counsel. So far as the sermon's moving them to repentance, Ezekiel could as well have brought his musical instrument and sung to them a "song of love."

Ezekiel enjoyed the pretended appreciation of his audience. His congregation "loved" their preacher. But having expressed their appreciation for the sermon the congregation continued in the path of destruction. "But they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain" (Ezekiel 33:31 - New ASV). The outward expression of love for the messenger and his message did not manifest itself in genuine repentance, but in total indifference, and in a determination to continue to live as they had before hearing the word from the Lord. The pleasures of sin, and the pride occasioned by worldly gain and applause, meant more to them than the warnings and promises of Almighty God.

Even though God who gave the message and the preacher who delivered it found "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ezekiel 18:32), their failure to "turn from their sins" would demand that all the

man of God has said about their doom would surely come to pass. And only then -- after having sinned away their days of grace -- would they come to appreciate the word spoken by Ezekiel: "Then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them" (Ezekiel 33:33).

Like Ezekiel's predecessor, Isaiah, Jesus found a people who would draw nigh unto God with their mouth, and honor him with their lips, but whose heart was far removed from him (Matthew 15:7-8). And when Jesus, the master teacher, pointed up their hypocrisy, they were greatly offended (Matthew 15:12). They enjoyed the relative comfort of a pretended religion. They did not wish to be awakened from their spiritual lethargy and doctrinal discrepancies.

Do we find the disposition of those who hear the word today far different from those of Ezekiel's day? or of Jesus' day? Is there not a great deal more *hearing* than *doing* (James 1:22)? Do we demand of our preachers that they "proclaim the word faithfully" that we may "hear the word from the Lord," then like those of ancient times refuse to do them? Are we satisfied with the rebukes, salving our conscience in the realization, "I have heard the word?" Think on these things. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, GA 30344.

Militant Christianity

Continued from page 2

good fight of the faith" (I Timothy 6:12). Paul, ever one to practice what he preached, could say at the close of his life, "I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT" (II Timothy 4:7). If we fail to "RESIST THE DEVIL" (James 4:7) we will become part of his "SPOILS" (military booty) of war (Colossians 2:8).

Our COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (I Timothy 6:14-16) has equipped his army very well. We have "WEAPONS" (II Corinthians 10:4; I Peter 4:1) and "ARMOR" (Romans 13:12; II Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 6:11). Our "ARMOR" includes "TRUTH," "RIGHTEOUSNESS," "THE GOSPEL OF PEACE," "FAITH," "HOPE," and "PRAYER" (I Thessalonians 5:8; Ephesians 6:13-18). This is the "WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD" and we cannot dispense with any part of it if we hope to "STAND" (Ephesians 6:11). Our mighty offensive weapon is the all-sufficient "SWORD OF THE SPIRIT," the word of God (Ephesians 6:17; II Timothy 3:16-17). — 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

That your rejoicing
may be more abundant in Jesus Christ
for me
by my coming to you again.
Only let your conversation be
as it becometh the gospel
of Christ:

That
whether I COME AND SEE you
or
else BE ABSENT
I may hear of your affairs,

That
ye STAND FAST In one spirit
with one mind
STRIVING TOGETHER for the faith
of the gospel

And in nothing terrified
by your adversaries:
which is to them
an evident token of perdition
but
to you salvation
and
that of God

For unto you it is given
in the behalf of Christ
not only TO BELIEVE on him
but also
TO SUFFER for his sake
having the same conflict

Which ye SAW in me
and

now HEAR to be in me.

— 1202 S. 34th St. No. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205



Words Of Faith

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not man, as ye suppose; I am Jesus the Nazarene, and ye have slain him, whom ye say is alive. But I speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 9

What About "The Rapture"?

(No. 2)

In the first installment we discussed the background of the dispensational premillennial movement, the general teaching of this group as it relates to the rapture idea, and showed that I Thessalonians 4:13-17 defeats the idea of a secret "rapture," instead of verifying this doctrine as they commonly claim.

Contrary to Bible Teaching

There are so many things in this fanciful

doctrine which are contradictory to Bible truth! The word "rapture" itself is not a Biblical word. Hal Lindsey admits this on page 126 of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, where he frankly says it is not in the Bible, and tells us we need not try to find it in our concordances. Not only is the *word* not there, the *concept* it teaches (along with numerous related doctrines) is not there either! We shall list nine of the major discrepancies which become apparent when we try this doctrine with God's revealed truth.

1. The doctrine that *the saved will be taken from the world, while the lost remain* violates clear Bible teaching. The parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30; 38-43) is sufficient to disprove this concept. In this parable both the wheat and the tares were to grow together "until the harvest" (13:30). Jesus tells us "the good seed are the children of the kingdom" and "the tares are the children of the wicked one" (13:38). "The harvest is the end of the world" (13:39). So, contrary to the "rapture" theory -- that the saved will be raptured from the earth over a thousand years before the wicked are judged -- this scripture teaches both will "grow together" until the end of the world! In fact, when the harvest (the end of the world) does come, it is the wicked (not the righteous) who first are to be dealt with. Note verse 30: "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (emphasis in all quotations added, JEG). In his explanation,



JOE E. GALLOWAY

Jesus gives this same sequence: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and *them which do iniquity*; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun . . .*" (13:41-43).

The C. I. Scofield Reference Bible has been an important tool of the dispensationalists in our country for propagating their brand of premillennialism. It has extensive footnotes and references to accomplish this. It is interesting to notice his comments on the parable of the tares on page 1016. Regarding verse 30 which said, "Gather ye together first the tares . . ." he says, "at the end of this age (verse 40) the tares are set apart for burning, but first the wheat is gathered into the barn" (emphasis mine). He switched "first" from "the tares" in the Bible text, to "the wheat" in his comments!

2. *Separate resurrections of the good and evil* are taught in this theory. According to dispensationalists the righteous are to be resurrected when "the rapture" occurs; then some seven years later the martyred tribulation saints are also to be resurrected to take part in the thousand-year earthly kingdom. It is a thousand years later (plus the time Satan is to be loosed afterward) before the wicked are resurrected. Jesus takes care of this false doctrine in John 5:28-29. He said "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth . . ." Some try to dodge the force of this by saying that "all" simply refers to the saved. If this were so, their theory would still be wrong, for they even have the *saved* being resurrected at two different hours, seven years apart! But the remainder of Jesus' statement even takes care of this quibble, saying, ". . . they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." He clearly taught that all of the good and evil will be raised the same "hour!"

3. *A secret coming of Christ* is demanded by this theory; but no such coming is taught in the Bible. In discussing the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, Jesus warned the disciples not to believe those who would say "Lo, here is Christ, or there" (verses


23-26). Why could they be so certain Christ had not returned? Jesus explained, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). Just as a flash of lightning from horizon to horizon can be seen of all, so Christ's coming will be seen of all. It will not be a secret event that will happen so furtively that most of mankind will not even realize Christ has come until hours later! Acts 1:11 assures us, "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

4. *Two future comings of Christ* are demanded by the dispensationalists. They, themselves, call one of these "the rapture," and the other "the revelation." Jesus promised, "I will come again" in John 14:3. It is noteworthy that he did *not* say, I will come again, and then again." Hebrews 9:28 tells us that "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This theory would also demand a *third time*! Aware that the Bible only speaks of a *second* coming, dispensationalists like to downplay this by referring to the first and second "phase" of his coming. However, their play on words does not cover the fact that they teach that he is coming two more times, with a seven-year interval between his second and third comings. The Bible teaches *one* future coming of Christ!

5. *A Great Tribulation period* is not a teaching of the Bible. True, times of tribulation are mentioned in several passages, but none such seven-year period of time at the end of the age (as most of them teach) is taught in the Bible. Matthew 24:21, which mentions "great tribulation," is often misused by dispensationalists to establish their claim. This tribulation, though, was to occur at the destruction of Jerusalem -- not at the end of this dispensation. Verses 16-20 show that this could not possibly refer to conditions when Christ returns, for of what benefit would statements regarding not taking time to return to the house for possessions, the hardship of expecting a child or nursing one, and of fleeing during the winter time or on the Sabbath, have to do with Christ's second coming?

Revelation 7:14 is also claimed as a proof text for

Continued On Page 4



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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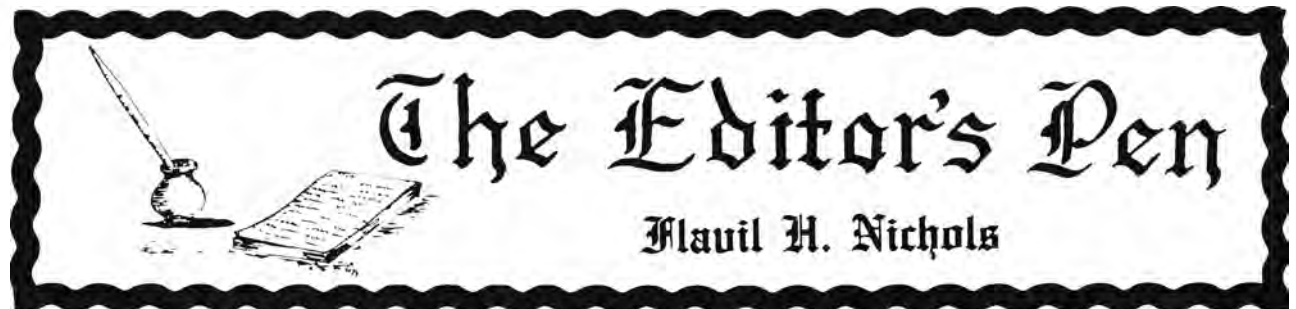
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"There's An All-Seeing Eye Watching You"

The above words of an old song are based on Bible truth. "The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men" (Psalms 33:13). "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psalms 94:9). The camera was patterned after the eye; man made the camera -- God, the eye! God can (and does) see us! "My witness is in heaven" (Job 16:19) -- although unbelievers deny it.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

GOD KNOWS AS THOUGH HE WERE PRESENT WITH US. "He beholdeth all the sons of men" (Psalms 33:13). God not only sees us, but is also MINDFUL of us: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalms 8:4). He who observes the sparrow's fall (Matthew 10:29; Luke 12:6-7), "LOVES" mankind! (John 3:16). God watches over the earth: "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth" (Psalms 102:19). Yes, he who *made* the earth *sees* it! He can see the good and the evil: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Psalms 15:3). Those unbelievers who slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless, said: "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it" (Psalms 94:6-7). Lack of faith in God promotes sin; the awareness that God sees all, is a powerful deterrent to sin!

It is a sobering thought -- that God sees me! Hagar exclaimed: "Thou God seest me!" (Genesis 16:13). No wonder she obeyed him! (v. 9). Peter assures us: "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous" (I Peter 3:12). Jesus is with us (Matthew 28:20), he knows (Revelation 2 & 3), and he cares (I Peter 5:7). God can see and know our sins -- even in the dark. "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the

darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalms 139:11-12). After some said, "The Lord seeth us not" (Ezekiel 8:12), God replied: "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them (Ezekiel 11:5). Moses wrote: "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee; our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Psalms 90:8). Since this is true, Solomon warned: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Late in the New Testament the apostle John wrote: "God . . . knoweth all things" (I John 3:20). Therefore he "shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Romans 2:16).

SIN CANNOT BE CONCEALED FOREVER! Job inquired, "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom; did I fear a great multitude?" (Job 31:33-34). Note this warning: "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and Who knoweth us?" (Isaiah 29:15). Sin is like the proverbial "monkey wrench" thrown in the wheels of machinery, or like sand in the mechanism of a watch! Moses cautioned: "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). It may find us out in this lifetime -- but certain it is that the next minute after death we will begin to face our sins, like the rich man in hades! (Luke 16:19-31).

FULL PARDON IS OFFERED! Although God knows all about our sins, he loves us, and wants to save us from our present bitterness, or remorse, our present feelings of guilt; and he wants to deliver us from the eternal consequences of our sins, and from eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 25:41). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Timothy 1:15). To the alien sinner, salvation is by God's wonderful grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), through the sinner's faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10), and by his being baptized (Mark 16:16). The child of God who faithfully walks in the light has the blessed assurance that the "blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7-9). When overtaken in a fault, if he (by faith in Christ) will repent and pray (Acts 8:22-24), confessing his faults (James 5:16), even the sinful thought of his heart will be forgiven (Acts 8:24).

The Preacher's Attitudes

It is unfortunate that some gospel preachers have, because of various personal experiences, developed improper attitudes. These unhealthy attitudes have far-reaching consequences. Occasionally some men will even give up a potentially productive ministry because they are not able to cultivate right attitudes.

Brother Batsell Barrett Baxter, in his *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* class at David Lipscomb College



JIMMY EDWARDS

stressed to his preacher students the necessity of right attitudes. Brother Baxter emphasized the preacher must have right attitudes toward himself, the elders, other preachers, the congregation, and the work of preaching. This article is a summation of his lessons concerning each of these areas.

The gospel preacher must have the right attitude toward himself. He must not be too concerned for self. "Self-consciousness is the preacher's greatest enemy." Baxter warned of four things: (1) the fear of men and the inordinate desire for their praises (Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 6:5-7), (2) adulation and despondency (conceit and disparagement) being twin enemies and both children of self-consciousness, (3) this leads to too great a concern for visible results, and (4) this leads to the feeling that preachers are in a class all by themselves (clergy vs. laity). "The desired goal," said Baxter, "is humble confidence in the Lord" (Philippians 4:13).

Right attitudes toward elders is also a must for the gospel preacher. Baxter emphasized the Eldership as being the highest rank which men may achieve in the Lord's church. He said, "Everyone else, including preachers, is to serve under their guidance, for they 'exercise the rule' and 'have care of souls.'" "When preachers disregard the authority of elders," he said,

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We Can Understand (And Be Saved By) The Bible In English

CHARLES E. COBB

There seem to be times when some become disturbed, even distressed, because the only language in which they can read the Bible is English. Thank God for our translations of the Bible into English. Were it not so, many of us might never really know what God has said.

There are translations of the Bible into the English language that are accurate, safe, and reliable. As men have used their knowledge and skill to give us these translations, they have put into our language (the receptor language) the meaning of the word(s) of

the original language in which the Bible was written. As men have striven with perseverance to do this, they have succeeded in giving us the inspired word of God. The translators have been uninspired men, but as they have translated from the ancient language into our tongue the exact word(s), we have the same word of God as those who may have held the original in their hands.

True it is that some are merely so-called versions or translations of the holy scriptures. Unfortunately,

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A Three-Fold Charge To Israel

VICTOR M. ESKEW

The law-giver of Israel sounded forth a three-fold charge to Israel: hear, heed, and honor the Word of God: "Now therefore harken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:1-2).

The word "harken" means more than just "to hear." It carries with it the idea of "hearing intelligently." It is possible for one to "hear" the words which are spoken, yet not "hear" in the sense that he doesn't understand. This Jesus had in mind when He said: ". . . and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matthew 13:13). Moses was urging the Israelites to "hear" with an apprehension of what was being said. If this type of hearing would characterize all those hearing the word of God much confusion would be eliminated. This is not to say, however, that all which is heard in the brotherhood today is being misunderstood. There are many false teachers who claim to be misunderstood, when in reality, they are comprehended very

well. When one proclaims the church of Christ is a big, sick, denomination; or that, elders have no authority; or that, there are Christians in all the denominations; or that the law of Christ is not applicable to those in the world; or that, Christ came in A.D. 70; or that, Moses did not write the first five books of the Old Testament; or that one cannot absolutely prove there is a God; or that, faith is a risk -- we understand him very well! A faithful gospel preacher strives to speak so as always to be understood. Then the responsibility lies on the hearer to "take heed what he hears" (Mark 4:24).

After hearing the word of God and understanding it, the obligation is then to heed the commandments. If the Israelites did this, Moses said it would cause them to "live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you." To merely hear the word with no response to it, is a deception of one's self: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:22-24).

Only those who obey find the reward. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

Finally Moses emphasized that the Israelites needed to honor the commandments. The children of God were not to add to nor diminish ought from the law of God. The purpose of their respecting the statutes of God in full was that they "may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." The denominational world has violated this injunction of Moses. They constantly and continually add to and take from the word of God. The consequences of such are that they are not possibly keeping the command of God; and they lose spiritual life as well. The latter is plainly set forth in the Revelation: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18,19).

These three words "hear, heed, and honor" should be impressed upon each Christian's mind. They were set forth by Moses, a man who truly knew the import of what he expressed. Notice that they must closely follow Moses' instructions to be able to cross the Jordan and enter the promised land (Deuteronomy 3:23-27). Moses himself was not permitted to enter Canaan, although he earnestly besought the Lord: "I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan." But his petition was denied by God who said: ". . . Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter . . . for thou shalt not go over this Jordan" (Deuteronomy 3:26,27). The consequences will be even more severe for those who do not hear, heed, and honor the commands of God today; for at the judgment seat he will say: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). — 600 W. Sadosa No. 28, Eastland, TX 76448.

The Preacher's Attitudes

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"or endeavor to 'run the church' they are usurping the power which God has given to the elders or presbyters."

Having the right attitudes toward other gospel preachers was important to brother Baxter. He used the illustration of the attitude of the players on a baseball team: "We preachers are all on the same team." He said, "The preacher 'belongs to' and serves the church" (I Corinthians 3:4-7, 21-23). "Hence, there is no need to choose between preachers: Love them all" (Romans 12:10).

It is appropriate, too, that the preacher have right attitudes toward the local congregation. Baxter urged preachers to have a genuine love for people, a feeling of understanding and sympathy, and a wholesome respect for the church.

Brother Baxter devoted a larger portion of time to the preacher's attitude toward the work of preaching. He stressed that to be a successful preacher a man must have as his highest ambition to preach God's Word. One who would preach must be convinced that the work of preaching is the earth's noblest calling. Baxter was also realistic. He said, "In marriage there is a glamorous side, but it is inseparably connected with the unglamorous side of washing pots and pans, scrubbing floors, etc. So, in preaching, there is a thrilling and inspiring side; but that is joined

inseparably with the other side of hard work and sacrifice." In regard to this point Baxter listed putting out the bulletin, writing letters, getting discouraged, and "just barely making ends meet."

Every gospel preacher should realize that attitudes are extremely important. In fact, if the truth were known, attitudes, may be the most important key to a successful ministry. More awareness of healthy attitudes and the practice of them may keep more preachers in the pulpits of the churches of our Lord. — 512 Gardendale Dr., Montgomery, AL 36110.

We Can Understand (And Be Saved By) The Bible In English

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men have presumed to put into their translations in some instances their doctrinal leanings, inaccuracies, biases, prejudices, and errors. Great care, therefore, must be taken by those who want the pure word to see to it that they have the pure word of God in the version which they read, teach, and recommend.

In the church we are fortunate to have scholarly Christian men, dedicated to the "old paths," who can help us with this matter. There is hardly a reason for anyone today to be misled into the use of an unreliable translation or version of the scriptures.

Therefore, we ourselves, who are readers of the Bible, bear a responsibility in choosing a reliable translation of the holy scriptures. It is not good to select just any version (?) that is called a Bible and carelessly think that we have all that we need in the way of reliability. We must be responsible enough to make some investigation on our own; and when we find that a modern translation flatly contradicts, denies, or eliminates statements of truth in other passages, that translation becomes exceedingly suspect.

Care also should be exercised in choosing a Bible for the use of our children. "Easier to read" does not necessarily spell "best!" Perversions of the sacred text are never acceptable, regardless of the dress they

wear.

We would do well, therefore, to read, memorize, teach from the versions (translations) that have been tried, tested, and proven to be reliable. Faithful brethren have been urging this upon the people for a number of years already. We would do well to take heed to their warnings and admonitions. That which is new is not always better!

In serving God, you want to be right. To be right and to stand firm in the faith, your Bible should be one that you can be sure of its reliability and usefulness by its having been proven in the fires of testing and investigation. General use of one-man translations, or paraphrases, or translations (?) biased in the interest of some denominational body -- such as the New World Translation -- should be avoided.

Never fear, then, about your faith and salvation if you obey that which you can read in an acceptable English translation of the word of God. You can understand and be saved by the Bible in English. Study and read with reverence, care, and faith.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect . . ." (II Timothy 3:16,17).

Please examine the Bible you are using in the light of these suggestions. — 613 S. Broad, Scottsboro, Ala. 35768.

WORD of GOD

Old Testament

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Is'ra-el.

And he was there

with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Exodus 34:27-28

Back To The Bible

DON RUHL

Our great brotherhood will always have to deal with controversy within its ranks. There has always been an "issue" that divided churches throughout the land. Today though, there are many "issues" causing division "Crossroadsism," false doctrines on divorce and remarriage, theistic evolution, homosexual organizations within the church, questions concerning the work of the church, ministries that preach a non-biblical message, and many other unscriptural teachings are running rampant in the Lord's church.

Why is the church plagued by these falsehoods? We have had preaching that is weak and psychology oriented -- preaching that upholds nothing, defends nothing and as a result, amounts to nothing. The majority of the pulpits have not been filled with plain, straight-forward, simple, unadulterated, Bible-centered gospel preaching. There has been an attitude that says: do not offend anybody, do not drive them away, do not be negative and do not touch the sins of men. Therefore, we are reaping the harvests that are a result of the milquetoast, spineless, weak-kneed and soft-soap preaching and attitudes of the past fifteen (or so) years.

A lack of sound Bible preaching is not a problem faced only by our generation. Since Israel did not want to hear God's message in the days of Amos (Amos 7:10-13), God said he would send a famine of hearing his words (8:11). There was even a time when Israel was without a teaching priest and the law (II Chronicles 15:3). What a deplorable situation then and now.

What is the solution? Do we ignore the "issues"? Do we de-emphasize scripture, as many have done? The solution is simple, yet profound; easy, yet rarely practiced: We must go back to the Bible, *all* the way back, on *every* subject! In other words, going back to Alexander Campbell, is not the solution; but we must study what Jesus, Paul, Jeremiah and the other inspired men wrote. Neither is going back to Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, or any other such place acceptable, but we must go back to spiritual Jerusalem. Furthermore, we must go back with respect to every Bible topic, not just the popular ones, but all, including: loving our enemies, good works, evangelism, fellowship, disfellowshipping and marking, kindness, forgiveness, patience, etc. Jeremiah gives the solution, "Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls . . ." (Jeremiah 6:16). Here is what is involved: 1) *ask* for the old paths; a fervent love of, and hungering and thirsting for, the word of God must be present; and 2) a "thus saith the Lord" must be given for everything we say and do. For example, about 2,600 times Old Testament writers and speakers rang out this phrase or ones similar. We must make it known that we are preaching God's word (Ezekiel 3:11), that he may be glorified (I Peter 4:11). When a speaker does not use scripture, he is glorifying only himself and not God.

Concerning a deep love for the word of God, Job said, ". . . I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Psalm 119 is a good place to learn about love for the word. Notice these samplings from this great Psalm: "Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (v. 97). "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold" (v. 127). "I hate and abhor falsehood; but thy law do I love" (v. 163). Additionally, Proverbs 2:3-5 says that we must cry and lift up our voices for discernment and understanding and then we shall find the knowledge of God. If we do not love the truth, then God will send us a working of error that we should believe a lie (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Once the word has been lovingly received, then it must be declared completely. It must be preached

urgently, even when it is not popular (II Timothy 4:2). I Corinthians 9:16 ought to be imbedded in every heart and memorized by every mind and uttered with every tongue, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Micaiah displayed the right attitude: when he was asked to conform with four hundred yes-men of King Ahab, he fearlessly declared, "As Jehovah liveth, what Jehovah saith unto me that will I speak" (I Kings 22:14). However, let it be emphasized that preaching *some* Bible is not enough! For example, a man can spend his life teaching the truth on the necessity of faith for salvation, and never say anything wrong: but if he never mentions repentance and baptism, he is a false teacher. Thus "the whole counsel of God" must be preached (Acts 20:27; Psalms 119:160). Like Jeremiah was commanded to speak all that God told him to speak and not to diminish a word (Jeremiah 26:2), so must we. Jesus told Satan that men shall live ". . . by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Joshua was commended because he read "all" of the words of the law; the blessing and the curse (Joshua 8:34,35). Brethren, the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth is

what God wants us to preach.

Now some may respond that this will turn people off, and drive them away. We cannot disagree with this point of contention. For when Jeremiah boldly proclaimed all of God's word, they mocked him (Jeremiah 11:19; 20:7-10), conspired to kill him twice (26:11; 38:1-6), put him into prison three times (32:2-5; 27:15; 38:1-6), cut up and burned his writings (chapter 36), beat him (37:15), and finally they took him out of the country (chapter 42). Consider Paul (II Corinthians 11:23-33), Micaiah (I Kings 22:24-28) and Stephen (Acts 7) as further examples. Jesus said the world would kill him, ". . . because I testify of it, that its works are evil" (John 7:7). Yet, many will love the word (Mark 12:37; Acts 6:7).

Preach the Bible. Do not worry about people's response (Jeremiah 1:17). Whether they respond with words or looks, let us not be afraid of them, but fervently love and herald the truth despite the receptiveness of our audience (Ezekiel 2:6,7). Going back to the Bible and fearlessly, yet lovingly, preaching it on every issue is the true basis of unity. — 2521 Nile St., Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603.

What About The "Rapture"?

Continued From Page 1

this doctrine; but it simply speaks of victorious saints who had suffered "great tribulation" for the Lord; but who, having overcome all obstacles, were now rewarded by the Lord. Neither of these scriptures, nor do any other so teach a great tribulation period at the end of this dispensation of time.

6. *The Antichrist* concept of premillennialism is foreign to the scriptures. "Anti" means against. "Antichrist" simply means a person or doctrine that is against Christ. The term is never used in the Bible to designate one person who is to be a leader of the forces of evil at the end of time. I John 2:18 is a verse that such false teachers like to avoid. John said, "even now (at the time John wrote during the first century, JEG) are there many antichrists . . ." That there were *many* antichrists refutes the claim that the Bible teaches that one Antichrist will appear at the end of the age and be prominent during a seven-year "Great Tribulation" period. It would be amusing (were it not so serious a matter, resulting in misled souls to see a complete list of names through the years of those who have been named as the coming Antichrist. Such names as various popes, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, the Ayatollah Khomeini, and even Henry Kissinger have been given as the one who would be the coming Antichrist. Who the current candidate is, I do not know! That the "prophets" for dispensationalism have obviously missed the mark in past predictions does not seem to bother their followers. Deuteronomy 18:22 is commonly ignored by all followers of modern prophets!

7. *The battle of Armageddon* as a confrontation between the forces of the Antichrist and those of Christ at his coming is foreign to all scripture. Verse 14 of Revelation 16 mentions a "battle" and verse 16 mentions a place called "Armageddon." "The Antichrist" is not mentioned in this context at all, nor do we find anything about Christ's second coming here. Those teaching these premillennial doctrines are noted for saying that prophetic statements should be accepted in a literal sense. Yet, they are quite arbitrary in making literal only the parts that seem to help their cause! The battle in this text they always make literal, carnal warfare. Some even claim that the bloodshed at Armageddon will be so great that blood will flow to the depth of the horse's bits. (Someone has well pointed out that the blood of all of humanity would not provide the volume needed to cover the

area often involved in this claim!) But, will they really accept *everything* in this context as being literal? I think not! According to verse 13 "three unclean spirits like frogs" came "out of the mouth of the dragon, and . . . of the beast" and gathered the kings to the battle. Which dispensationalists will teach that three frog-like spirits will literally come out of a literal dragon's mouth to prepare for this battle? The truth of the matter is that the battle of Revelation 16 is no more a literal battle than the instigator was a literal frog-spirit who came from a literal dragon.

8. *That the kingdom will begin when Christ comes again* is a concept that is exactly opposite from Bible teaching. The Bible teaches that the kingdom *now* exists and that it will *end* when Jesus comes the second time. It began on Pentecost (Acts 2) during the time of the Roman rule as foretold in Daniel 2:44. Paul, the Colossians, and John are spoken of as being in it (Colossians 1:14; Revelation 1:6,9). I Corinthians 15:23 speaks of Christ's second coming. Verse 24 says: "Then cometh the *end*, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." Then the next two verses tell us Christ's reign will end when death is destroyed. Although the saved will enter "the everlasting kingdom" at the end of time (II Peter 1:11), the reign of Christ in the first dominion (Micah 4:8) of the kingdom has been in force since Pentecost and will *end* at his second coming.

9. *Days of judgment* are taught in this theory. Some list as many as seven separate days of judgment; as far as I know all dispensationalists list at least three: one at the claimed "rapture" of the saints, one for the nations at the end of the claimed seven-year tribulation period, and one at the end of the claimed millennium for the wicked. In contrast, notice that the Bible teaches just one day of judgment. In just two or three successive pages in Matthew we can read of "the day of judgment" at least four times (10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36) and "in judgment (singular) at least two more times (12:41,42). Acts 17:31 tells us "he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world . . ." The concept of various days of judgment for various groups of people is foreign to the Bible. — 204 Creek Trail Columbia, TN 38401.



Words Of



(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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What About "The Rapture"

(NO. 3)

Having stressed in past installments the false claims of the dispensational premillennialists concerning "the rapture," along with some other related areas of conflict with Bible truth, we now turn our attention to what the Bible teaches will occur when Christ comes.

Bible Emphasis of "the Last Day"



JOE E. GALLOWAY

Commonly premillennialists confuse the expressions "the last days" and "the last day." They often refer to such statements as "in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Timothy 3:1) to teach what they believe will happen immediately before Christ's second coming. "The last days" were already here when the church began on Pentecost (Acts 2:16,17; Hebrews 1:1,2). In contrast, "the last day" refers to just that -- the last day of time. After "the last day" there will be no more days! By considering what the Bible says will take place on the last day we can easily disprove much of premillennial teaching.

1. *Christ's second coming will be on the last day.* We are told that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . with the trump of God" (I Thessalonians 4:16, all emphasis to quotations added by J.E.G.). The Holy Spirit calls this "the last trump" (I Corinthians 15:52), so there will be none afterward. Christ will come *when* the judgment occurs (Matthew 25:31ff). The judgment will be on "the last day" (John 12:48). Therefore, Christ will come on the last day. There can be no more days after this for "the rapture," the "tribulation" period, and then a "millennial reign" on earth -- for the last day has already come!

2. *All the dead shall be raised on the last day.* That *all* the dead, both good and evil, will be resurrected the same hour is clearly taught by Jesus in John 5:28,29. In this same book Jesus

said, "Of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at *the last day*" (6:39). Jesus, speaking of every believer, said, "I will raise him up at *the last day*" (6:40). Regarding those drawn of the Father, he said, "I will raise him up at *the last day*" (6:44). This same expression is repeated in 6:54 concerning those who will receive eternal life. Martha later told Jesus regarding Lazarus, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at *the last day*" (11:24). Since all will be raised at "the last day" there can be no other events here on earth after the righteous are raised!

3. *The judgment will take place on the last day.* Jesus said, "the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in *the last day*" (John 12:48). We have shown in past articles that there is to be just one judgment day for all people. Since this occurs at the *last day*, it cannot be true that a millennium of time will continue after the righteous are raised -- as per premillennial teaching!

4. *All humanity will be sent to their eternal conditions at the last day.* At the judgment Jesus will tell the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). Then he will tell the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (25:41). "These (the wicked, J.E.G.) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (25:46). Notice that the conditions entered by both the righteous and the wicked are to be *eternal*. There can be no more time for earthly events!

5. *The earth will be destroyed at the last day.* "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved . . ." (II Peter 3:10,11). Since the earth will be destroyed when Jesus comes (and verse 4 also ties this in with his coming), there can be no *place*, as well as no *time*, left for the events in the dispensational premillennial scheme to occur!

We need to study and learn well the teaching of the Bible regarding the end things. (This is known in theology as "Eschatology.") Then we need to boldly teach these truths, refuting all false teaching, including the fanciful, speculative teachings of the premillennialists. Contrary to what some compromisers among us have said, these are issues that are very much alive today. It will not be popular, nor easy, to answer these errors and get people to understand and accept the truth. It never is easy with any false system, but it is doubly so with this false doctrine, since the majority of denominations teach it in varying degrees. Even in the Lord's church many are at least partly sold on this error. Yet, the truth is needed (John 8:32) for the salvation of souls. — 204 Creek, Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.

Vain Religion


"If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:26-27, ASV.).

The word "religion" is used five times in the Bible (Acts 26:5; Galatians 1:13-14; James 1:26-27). Four times it has reference to the Jew's religion, and one time it refers to the one true or right religion in this (the gospel) age. The word "religion" is never used to refer to Roman Catholicism, nor to modern denominationalism. In James 1:26-27 the writer



W. A. HOLLEY

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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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Vain Religion

Continued From Page 1

purposefully uses the word to set in contrast that which is unreal and deceptive, versus the "pure religion" which includes visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and keeping oneself "unspotted from the world."

What test can we make that will disclose whether one's religion is vain? We shall note . . .

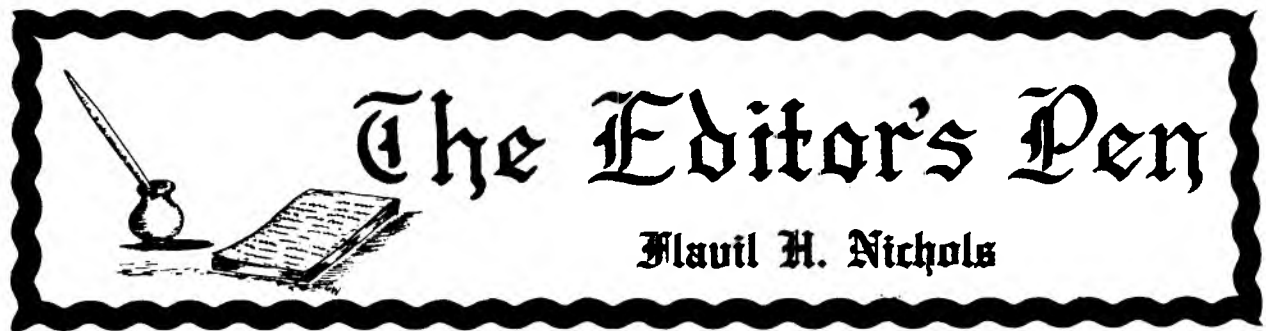
(1) One's religion is demonstrated to be vain if one's tongue is allowed to run out of control. The scourge of the tongue (Job 5:21) is malicious scandal, calumny, insulting and offensive speeches. Those who wish to enter heaven must be among those who "backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor" (Psalms 15:3). A soft answer and a tongue that speaks no evil can solve many conflicts (Proverbs 15:1; I Peter 3:8-12). Speak no falsehood, utter no vulgarity, no cursing, no swearing . . . always "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16; I Peter 2:1).

(2) Those who claim to be saved by a faith that does not work, are depending upon a vain religion. Some have alleged that Paul (Romans 4:1-6) and James (James 2:14-26) are in conflict with each other; but such is not the case! Paul is discussing the kind of works which are excluded: works of human merit, works of human achievement, works that are designed to *earn* or *merit* salvation. James is discussing works which are included and which perfect one's faith.

When one does what God commands him to do, he is not following his own works, but he is working the works of God -- those commands which God has ordered him to obey (Acts 10:34-35; John 6:28-29; I John 2:3-4). Jesus demands obedience to his will; and no man can be saved contrary to his will (Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:8-9; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4). If a dead man can get up and walk, then a sinner can be saved by a dead faith (James 2:24,26).

(3) If all that a Christian does is not done in love, such a religion is vain. It is vain to think that I could "bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:1-13). To these same Corinthians Paul wrote, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong. Let all

Continued On page 4



Thompson Manuscript In Print

Our former Editor, Bro. Bobby Duncan, has submitted the following notice of some material now available to the reader. I have read with care the booklet by Bro. Bert Thompson, and commend it to our readers. He researched this matter well, and with Christian courtesy, yet with plainness, sets forth the problem and the scriptural solution to it. I am happy to give editorial space to this material.

--Flavil H. Nichols



BOB DUNCAN

On February 19 of this year a very significant speech was delivered by Bert Thompson at the Landmark church in Montgomery, Alabama. The script of that speech is available in booklet form, and can be ordered from Apologetics Press, Inc., 5251 Millwood Road, Montgomery, Alabama 36109-9990. The cost of the thirty-page booklet is \$2.00.

During the past year, some prominent brethren among us began to fan again the flames of the old movement to eradicate the line of demarcation between the church of Christ and the churches established by men. They have asserted that there are Christians in practically all the denominations, that one can be scripturally baptized without under-

standing that baptism is for the remission of sins, that the grace of God will cover one who worships in error, etc. They have further charged that it is sectarian to insist that one must understand that baptism is for the remission of sins, that one must be a member of the church of Christ, or that the only acceptable worship is that performed in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament.

The elders of the landmark church in Montgomery requested that brother Thompson prepare a sermon dealing with these matters fully and specifically, and that he put the speech in manuscript form for distribution. The speech was presented to a large and very attentive audience. The speech was presented to a large and very attentive audience. Thompson spoke for a little more than one and one-half hours. He had researched his subject well, as is always the case with him, and his material was presented in clear but courteous fashion.

I have carefully read the manuscript, and feel that it deals with this vital issue in an excellent manner. Brother Thompson shows that what is being said today by some is just a repetition of what some were saying in the 1930's, and then some others were saying in the so-called "unity" movements in the fifties, sixties, and seventies. He thoroughly documents all quotations, reasons logically, and properly applies scripture.

This is a booklet that concerned Christians -- especially elders and preachers -- should get and read carefully. -- 4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

"In A Position To Win"

When North Carolina State University won the 1983 NCAA Basketball Championship, their coach, Jim Valvano, made an interesting statement after the game. When asked what he attributed his team's successes to, he said, "We always try to be in a position to win." He meant that there needs to be talent and ability first; then in any game situation never get so far behind that it is too difficult to come back and win. That's good thinking!



RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

We need to apply the same principle spiritually. In viewing the problems that so many have in the Christian life, many just will not keep them-

selves in a position to "win." Some play and toy with sin. They see how close they can come to wrong, and still be right. They go places and associate with people whom they KNOW will or can influence them for wrong. Then they wonder why they face so many temptations and often fall, and sin. The reason is, they have placed themselves in a position to be tempted. They really make it hard on themselves!

God warns us to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22) and "flee youthful lusts" (II Timothy 2:22). If we really understand what sin is, and what it does to us, we will be so afraid of it that we should indeed RUN from it.

When we learn to attend worship and Bible study regularly for strength; when we make strong efforts to be with Christian people who build us up and edify us; when we get into the word of God for power and courage, we will then be "in a position to win." Much of it is up to us! Then, we will come out on top! We won't get "so far behind" that we fall. -- P.O. Box 4171 Pensacola, FL 32507.

They Yielded No Ground

(NO. 4)

This, in essence, is precisely what Paul and his apostolic colleagues did at the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. Likewise, it must be our attitude and action relative to every error or falsehood we now face. To the ones already alluded to in three previous articles I shall add some more in this concluding study of this theme.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (Matthew 19:5,6).

Against this teaching we must yield NO ground. Heaven is the proper place to legislate the marks of marriage -- not state legislatures, nor human preferences. In regard to the only acceptable ground for divorce and remarriage the Bible still says, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The Bible still gives commands for children to obey their parents and for fathers and mothers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4). The Bible still declares that marriage is honorable as an institution and the bed of husband and wife is without moral or sensual defilement (Hebrews 13:4). Toward all these concepts of marriage, the home, the family, divorce and remarriage we must maintain the same courageous posture as did the apostles and elders during the Jerusalem Conference. We must not give place -- no -- not so much as for an hour. A Bible-disbelieving world has already given up far too much ground in these pressing concerns that touch human society at its foundational basis.

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND RELATIVE TO WORLDLINESS

We must not allow ourselves to go soft on the rampant evils of our day in the realm of worldliness. In Matthew 13:22 Jesus gave the application of the thorny ground hearer in the parable of the sower. He said, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Christianity cannot flourish within the mind of materialism and the heart that is filled with the disposition of worldliness. James lets it be known once and for all that friendship with the world is equivalent to enmity with God (James 4:4). The great judgment passages in the Bible and the verses that depict the final population of hell leave no doubt as to the final destiny of the worldly. Hell is to be their lot; heaven is not in their future. How long will it be before our generation learns that one cannot have all the world and heaven too? Now is no time to give ground toward the world of gambling and say it is just innocent recreation. Such is not its character at all. Now is not the time to give ground to the twin evils of dancing and drinking. Where the one is, the other is soon there as a welcome ally. Dancing is designed to inflame the passions; drinking dulls the moral sensitivity of its avid patrons. It possesses the full power to destroy people bodily, mentally, socially and spiritually. *Dancing Blvd.* and *Alcohol Ave.* also come together at the junction of trouble -- and that right early! The final destination of such is *Hell's Place*. We must yield no ground to the drug culture that has plagued our nation for the last few years so deeply. We must yield no ground toward the immodesty of dress, the obscenity of speech and the vulgar actions that are common to our sensual, morally-loose day. Toward such we should adopt Paul's sound counsel in Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." To give ground to any of the worldliness of our day is a fatal action and disposition indeed.

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO RELIGIOUS FALSEHOOD

Toward all the errors of Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism we must maintain the posture of giving place -- no -- not for an hour. We are living in a time when those who are desirous of unity are willing to play down differences of doctrine and plead for unity in diversity even where God has spoken. Such a concept is as absurd as two recently-coined expressions of our day-- "Christian atheist," or "Christian Humanist." It makes about as much sense as a "married bachelor" or a "married spinster." Various bodies of belief today would lead us away from the Bible as the only authoritative body of objective, saving truth. They would destroy the old paths that are so near and dear to many of us today. They would destroy the beautiful basics -- and basis -- of unity in religion for which our blessed Lord pleaded in John 17:20-23 and toward which Paul wisely counseled in I Corinthians 1:10-16. The Bible will produce only Christians. It and it alone will not make people into Catholics, Protestants or practitioners of Judaism. Contrary to what some are saying today there are not sincere, devout and knowledgeable Christians scattered among all the denominations. A truly knowledgeable person knows where God's people -- the Lord's church -- ARE ACCEPTABLE, and devout sincerity will not allow him to be ANY place except God's family. Furthermore, now is no time to yield ground and say that one does not have to understand the saving nature of baptism in God's plan of salvation at the time he obeys it to be pleasing to God. The very first mention of Great Commission baptism in the Bible connects it with entrance into an acceptable relationship with the Godhead and with being saved (the very same as does Acts 2:38) and baptism's final mention in Holy Writ still links it with salvation (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21). (The good editor of this fine journal has asked me to prepare some articles on baptism which I plan to do in the very near future). Toward any and all of the foregoing errors we should yield not that first inch of contested ground. Victory for the Lord Jesus Christ is not achieved upon the ominous plains of Ono -- the place of cowardly surrender. On these broad and always crowded plains people may barter away by the mile truths that have been won by inches upon the mountains of controversy and obtained by blood, sweat and tears.

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO PERVERTED BIBLES

One of the very gravest dangers facing the religious people of our day is the introduction and vast acceptance of the new 'Bibles' -- the perverted 'Bibles' of the day. This is a topic relative to which I have been writing for at least twelve or fifteen years in the pages of WORDS OF TRUTH and even longer than that in other publications. These so-called 'Bibles' are introducing into the Biblical text many of the popular errors of the day and omitting much of the truth that our reliable and time-tested Bibles have always possessed. READER'S DIGEST BIBLE has now come along and omitted more than 300,000 words in both Testaments -- about 50 per cent of the Old and about 25 per cent of the New. One cannot drink from a polluted stream of spiritual water and remain pure in doctrine and practice. For thirty-five years I have preached from the KJV with free usage of the ASV of 1901 in places where it complements the KJV.

Continued on page 4

WE MUST YIELD NO GROUND TO MARITAL ERRORS NOW PROPAGATED

This is not the time to yield ground on the Lord's teachings in regard to the sanctity of marriage, the binding qualities of matrimony, the only ground for acceptable divorce and remarriage and what the home should be. Without benefits of either a marriage license or the pronouncing of a marriage ceremony by either a civil or religious official, millions of couples in our world today just live intimately with each other. They live with each other as husband and wife when in reality they are not husband and wife. What they do is simply form and continue an immoral union -- one that God condemns and upon which righteous people frown with continuing disapproval. But this living together by those of the opposite sex without marriage is not the only problem that faces marriage and the family today. In the first part of this current decade we were registering close to a million and a quarter divorces annually. In a recent year (1981) we had 2,438,000 new marriages and 1,219,000 divorces or one for each two new marriages. For ten years now we have had a million or more divorces annually. We have about that many separations also each year and, added together, they compose about the same number as new marriages entered annually. These divorces very frequently pave the way for the entrance into adulterous remarriages by the masses each year since many of them do not possess the one acceptable ground for another marriage as spelled out in Matthew 19:9. This verse permits the innocent party whose mate has committed fornication to obtain a divorce and enter into another marriage. The guilty party does not qualify for remarriage to another, regardless of what many are now saying to the contrary. And Matthew 19:9 applies to all who marry, whether they are Christians or not Christians. This is *comprehensive* -- not *covenant* legislation for all those who are married and anticipate marriage in the future.

Even among those marriages that barely stay alive and together, there are many which experience no contentment or happiness in marriage. They are not the ideal places where children can be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). In an era of exceedingly loose ties, maritally speaking, this is no time to yield ground on marriage, divorce and remarriage. The Bible still says that marriage is for keeps, i.e., until death parts the sacred tie that binds. Jesus is still on record as saying,

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but

From Death To Life

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Jesus performed a notable miracle at the pool called Bethesda (John 5:2): he healed a man who had been stricken with an infirmity thirty-eight years (verse 5). Jesus commanded this man to "rise, take

Vain Religion

Continued from page 2

that you be done in love" (I Corinthians 16:13-14, ASV.). It is faith that works by love that counts in God's sight (Galatians 5:6).

(4) Even though one may be very religious, if he spends his efforts in doing the doctrines and commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9), his religion is vain. What are some of the doctrines and commandments of men today? Join the church of your choice; get religion; pray through at a mourner's bench; get salvation by faith only; baptism is a non-essential, etc. Jesus strictly forbade following doctrines, commandments, and traditions of men. He taught that such "make void the word of God" (Mark 7:6-13).

(5) Those who make a show of their religion are engaging in vain religion. It is vain to pray or give for the purpose of being seen of men (Matthew 6:1-8). Such hypocritical acts bring their own reward. Prayers and alms given in secret do not involve hypocrisy. Surely, we know that God knows and reads our hearts!

(6) One is engaging in vain religion when one prays contrary to God's will or word. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). Jesus, just before he ascended into heaven, in the Great Commission, said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Now, if one prays, asking Jesus to save him contrary to Mark 16:16 (refusing to submit to baptism as commanded by Jesus Christ our Lord), such a prayer is an abomination to Almighty God! (John 9:31; I John 3:22-23; 5:14-15). No more rebellious can one be, than he who has the unmitigated audacity to demand that God save him according to his (man's) will!!

(7) One's religion is vain if one's life is worldly, and ungodly, and sinful, although he is continuing to attend the services of the church, as if every thing is shipshape. Jesus our Lord spoke about Christian temperature: Cold, hot, lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-22). In far too many instances, we have those church-members who are "defrosting." According to Paul, it is possible for some to come together for the worse, and not for the better (I Corinthians 11:17-33).

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Proverbs 15:8). It is well, in this connection, for our readers to peruse the contents of the following passages: Isaiah 1:11-15; Jeremiah 6:18-21; Amos 5:21-27. Worship unaccompanied by righteous living is an offence to a holy God! David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalms 66:18). Only those who worship God "in spirit and in truth," worship acceptably (John 4:23-24). Dear reader, is your religion vain?? --- P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

They Yielded No Ground

Continued From Page 3

This is what brother Gus Nichols did for so many years and what his successors as editors of this paper have done and still do. These are accurate, understandable and dignified. Let us give no ground to perverted 'Bibles' -- NONE at all. Let us accept all truth and expose all error. --- P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

up thy bed, and walk" (verse 8). This miraculous event transpired on the sabbath day, which according to God's law to the Jews, was a day of rest (Numbers 33:13,14). The Jews twisted the meaning of this day to the point that they even regarded this man's carrying his bed as sinful. Therefore, they rebuked him: "The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed" (verse 10). Upon hearing that it was Jesus who had done this miracle upon the sabbath, the Jews turned their attention from the cured man and sought to slay Jesus (verse 16). "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (verse 17). This response, however, only incited the Jews more: "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (verse 18). The verses which follow tell of Jesus' response which was designed to prove to the Jews that he is equal with the Father.

One of his proofs is stated in verse 21: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." Jesus argues that only God has the power to bring individuals from death to life. He continues by stating that he can do this. Therefore, he must be equal with God. There has been much debate as to whether Jesus has reference to a physical resurrection, or a spiritual resurrection. The context of John 5, however, will bear out that both can be applied to Jesus.

In John 5:25-27, Jesus refers to the passing from death to life in a spiritual sense: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." From this passage, we learn that it is possible for one to be alive physically and yet be "dead." The prodigal son was in this state at one point in his life: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found" (Luke 15:32). Paul wrote to Timothy: "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Timothy 5:5,6). Death is a separation. In the spiritual realm, the sins and iniquities of individuals separate them from God. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1,2).

From such a death, Jesus is able to raise one. The time of the first such occurrence was Pentecost. This Jesus referred to when he said: "The hour is coming and now is . . ." On Pentecost day, we read that Peter, "standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words" (Acts 2:14). His preaching included the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. It also included repentance and baptism in Jesus' name for the remission of sins, the release from that which separated man from God and which caused him to be "dead" spiritually. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Those three thousand souls passed from death to life when they heard the voice of the Son of God on that day. This was the promise, for Jesus said: ". . . and they that hear shall live." Each time since that event, when one has truly

heard the word, believed it and obeyed it, he, too, has passed from death to life.

Not only in the spiritual realm can Jesus bring the dead to life, but also in the physical realm: "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). During his personal ministry, he proved he could do this by raising Lazarus (John 11:1-46), and the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17). His own resurrection as the firstfruits of those who would never die again also proved that a literal, bodily resurrection of all the dead shall transpire (I Corinthians 15:20). This is that for which all Christians are earnestly longing, which shall occur at the second coming of our Lord (I John 3:2).

Jesus, by the fact that he can cause people to pass from death to life, proved he is equal with God. Those of us who have passed from death to life in the spiritual sense, have nothing to fear in physical death, nor should we sorrow for others who have died in the same state: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). --- 600 W. Sadosa #28, Eastland, TX 76448.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

Wherefore, my beloved,
as ye have always obeyed
not as in my presence only
but
much more in my absence
work out your own salvation
with fear and trembling
For it is God
which worketh in you
both to will
and
to do of his good pleasure
do all things
without murmurings and disputings
That ye may be blameless and harmless
the sons of God without rebuke
in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation
Among whom
ye shine as lights in the world
holding forth the word of life
that I may rejoice in the day of Christ
that I have not run in vain
neither labored in vain
Yea
and if I be offered
upon the sacrifice
and
service of your faith
I joy
and
rejoice with you all
For the same cause
also
ye joy
and rejoice with me

— 1202 S. 34th St. No. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205



Words Of Tri

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1984

NUMBER 11

Does The New Testament Authorize Social Drinking?

What do we mean by the above title? We mean, does the New Testament (the twenty-seven books in the Bible from Matthew to Revelation) authorize (justify, teach) it is scriptural to be engaged in the drinking of beverages which contain alcohol (distilled from grain and used in beverages)? The New Testament must either authorize the use or drinking of alcohol, or condemn it. It cannot do both. If the New Testament teaches one may participate in social drinking, then we must proclaim it from the housetops. But if the New Testament teaches it is a sin to drink socially, then we must proclaim this from the housetops, too. Whatever we believe or teach, we must have a thus saith the Lord (I Peter 4:11; II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:3).



GEORGE REED

NOTHING GOOD HAS EVER COME FROM DRINKING

The drinking of alcoholic beverages has never produced anything good in a person. "That's a fact, Jack!" Christians are to "prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). If it can be proved that alcohol is not good, then it follows Christians should abstain from it. And those who are engaged in drinking (saint and sinner) must repent before it's too late (cf. I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21). How are we going to prove that alcohol is not good? Let us take a look at some statistics and see the results alcohol has produced:

DRINKING AMONG TEENAGERS

*Almost nine percent of persons between 12 and 17 overdose with alcohol.

*Arrests of teen-agers for drunken driving has tripled since 1960. Sixty percent of people killed in drunken-driving accidents are in their teens.

*Dr. William Rader, a California psychiatrist

specializing in alcoholism in teen-agers says: "Alcohol is the number one problem among teen-agers today. Half a million teen-agers in the United States are alcoholics. Some twelve-year-olds are now reported in Alcoholics Anonymous."

OUR NUMBER ONE SOCIAL PROBLEM

*Next to heart attacks and cancer, alcoholism is the nation's third most serious health problem.

*Alcohol related health problems account for 26 percent of all admissions to state and county mental hospitals.

*Dr. Karl Menninger says that alcohol constitutes the country's largest mental health problem and that nothing looms as large on the horizon.

*The Vietnam War lasted from 10 to 12 years and took some 56,000 American lives. But did you know that in just one recent five-year period, over 125,000 Americans were killed in alcohol-related auto accidents. (That is more than the Korea and the Vietnam War put together.)

ALCOHOL AND CRIME

*Alcohol kills one person every 24 minutes in traffic "accidents."

*Alcohol is a contributing factor in 80 percent of all crime.

*Alcohol accounts for 40 percent of all problems brought to family courts.

*Statistics tell us that three-fourths of all divorces are associated in some way with alcohol.

*The Superintendent of a children's home in Texas said 90 percent of the children were there because one, or both, of the parents had an alcohol problem. (Much of this information was taken from Don Humphrey, *Social Drinking and the Christian*.)

While some of America has been brainwashed into thinking you can't legislate laws to enforce morality, they fail to look at the facts. In 1919, when the Prohibition Law became the 18th amendment to the Constitution, did you know that within the next ten years crime dropped 54 percent, death due to liquor dropped 42 percent, and insanity decreased 66 percent? Then in 1933 when Prohibition was repealed, drunkenness rose 350 percent, hospitals recorded an increase of 400 percent, illness related to alcohol increased 250 percent, homicides increased

78 percent, rape was up 49 percent, and assault jumped 100 percent. With the above statistics how can you prove that social drinking is good, according to I Thessalonians 5:21?

HOW MUCH ALCOHOL DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE ONE INTOXICATED?

A leading authority states: "Blood alcohol of one-tenth of one percent can be accepted as prima-facie evidence of alcohol intoxication recognizing that many individuals are under the influence in the 5/100 of one percent range . . . There is no minimum (blood-alcohol concentration) which can be set at which there will be absolutely no effect (Minutes of the 1960 annual meeting of the American Medical Association, and "Are You Fit to Drive?," *Journal of the American Medical Association*).

At 0.06% (which would take only three beers, or three glasses of wine, or two highballs) man's reaction time is distorted. At 0.10% he is considered legally drunk (only five beers). As brother Flavil Yeakley says, "Obviously there are degrees of intoxication; but remember that the Bible does not say 'Don't get dead drunk,' it just says, 'Don't get drunk!'" Let's remember social drinking makes one socially drunk! — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.


(more to follow)

Some Popular Sins (II)

W. A. HOLLEY

(3) The sin of abortion. How serious is the problem? Please note: Every day an average of 4,257 babies are aborted in the United States. That averages out to 177 per hour; 3 per minute; one every 20 seconds. In Washington, D.C., abortions outnumber live births by 3 to 1 (*American Life Lobby*). In Old Testament times children were "an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalms 127:3;

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

Flavil H. Nichols

Why Worship On The First Day Of The Week?

Some Popular Sins (II)

Continued from page 1

cf. Genesis 33:5; 48:3-4). But it seems not to be so any longer. Millions seem to desire the physical pleasure of sex, but not the responsibility of caring for children; -- thus innocent babies are slaughtered day by day.

Since the Supreme Court decision (1973) legalizing abortions, more than 15 million unborn children have been murdered. During this period, according to President Reagan, the number cited above represents ten times the number of Americans lost in all our nation's wars. Furthermore, he said: "We are poorer not simply for lives not led and for contributions not made, but also for the erosion of our sense of the worth and dignity of every individual." "Human life begins at conception and is continuous, whether intra- or extra-uterine" (California Medical Association, Cf. Exodus 21:22; 23:26).

(4) The sin of gambling. Gambling is very popular because it offers something for nothing. But nothing is free! Horse racing, dog racing, bingo, casino, and other forms of gambling are often urged upon our citizenry as the answer to our financial problems; but, alas, such promises are false. Do not vote for legalized gambling under any circumstances! In 1976, the people of Atlantic City, N.J., were urged to support legalized gambling, saying that it would improve the lot of the old, the handicapped and the minorities; but such was not and is not the case. "Legalized gambling promised residents of that run-down city to build new low-cost housing, eradicate the slums, and provide jobs;" yet such never materialized. In fact, Atlantic City is a disaster. Its casinos have fostered crime, corruption, and prostitution but have done nothing of consequence for the needy and aged. Legalized gambling in Alabama will accomplish nothing good, but will do much evil.

Visitors to Atlantic City's nice casinos lost more than \$1.7 billion at the slot machines and gambling tables last year. That was an increase of nearly 20 percent over 1982. Some 27 million people visit Atlantic City, each year, hoping (?) to beat the odds; but few have been winners. When New Jersey legalized gambling, it was believed the casinos would

Continued on page 3

"Thou shalt worship the Lord Thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10) was quoted by Jesus from God's law through Moses (Deuteronomy 6:13). Under that law, Israelites for fifteen centuries has observed the sabbath, which was the seventh day of the week (Deuteronomy 5:12-15), our Saturday. But in one generation, sabbath-keeping fades, and the first day of the week rises into prominence, beginning with the Saviour's resurrection on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

All the events of the notable Pentecost day (Acts 2) occurred on the first day of the week -- for Pentecost always came on our "Sunday," the day after the sabbath (Leviticus 23:15,16; Note that this text does not use the name "Pentecost," for that is a Greek word; but it means "fiftieth," and is the Greek name of the Jewish feast described in Leviticus 23:15,16). On that notable day of Pentecost, or Sunday, (1) The Holy Spirit came on the apostles in baptismal measure (Acts 2:1-4; Mark 1:8). (2) They were filled that Sunday with miraculous power (Acts 2:1-4,43). (3) On that first day of the week the church or kingdom came "with power" (Mark 9:1; Acts 2:1-4,47). (4) The gospel began to be preached on Pentecost (which always came on Sunday) in his name among all nations (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:8-11,14,22-26). (5) On that Sunday, for the first time sinners were told what to do to be saved in the name of Christ (Acts 2:36-38,40,41). (6) That day the first additions to the church are mentioned (Acts 2:47). (7) For the first time we read of people who "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

That the saints in the first century worshipped on the first day of the week, rather than on the seventh day (sabbath), is clear from Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1-2. Later the apostle John called it

"the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10).

What happened to make those who loved God and believed in Jesus Christ his Son, give up sabbath keeping and begin to worship on the FIRST day of the week? *Jesus arose on that day* (Mark 16:9)! This great miracle confirmed him to be God's Son (Romans 1:1-4). Without his resurrection, Christianity could never have been established.

Every Sunday is a monument to the fact that Jesus is alive! This is why all so-called "Christian" nations pause from regular employment, not on Friday (as do Muslim countries), nor on Saturday (as do the Jews), but on the FIRST day of the week -- Sunday -- to worship God in the name of the risen Savior (Colossians 3:17). The very day on which he arose is a memorial to his resurrection!

How can any believer pause each week to remember Christ's resurrection, while he fails to commemorate in the Lord's supper *each week* also his death? Does not consistency demand that each Christian should worship every Lord's day?

Although the apostle Paul was on a journey, and was only "passing through" Troas, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" he was present for worship with them (Acts 20:7)!

When he instituted the Lord's supper, Jesus promised to "drink it" (the fruit of the vine) "new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). But that same night he told them "my table" will be "in my kingdom" (Luke 22:30) -- which incidentally shows that premillennialism is false, for it tries to distinguish Christ's kingdom from the Father's. On the Lord's supper, Jesus said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26). He was here telling them HOW to commune, not how often; yet even here he implies that it is to be done "often."

Under the Old Covenant, when God said "Remember the sabbath day" (Exodus 20:8) he meant every sabbath day. When an Israelite violated one sabbath day, he was commanded to be stoned to death (Numbers 15:32-36). Under Christ, when "the first day of the week" is mentioned, how can anyone imagine it does not mean every first day? How can you explain that intentional absenteeism is called sinning "wilfully" (Hebrews 10:24-29)?

WORD of GOD

Psalm 91:1-7

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver

thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow

that flieth by day;

Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Psalm 91:1-7

The Indestructible Bible

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away . . ." (Matthew 24:35). Among the many aspects of the Bible that declare its supernatural origin and nature is its indestructibility. No other book has endured the wide range of determined attacks as the Bible has.

The very fact that the Scriptures have survived through the ages speaks of their heavenly origin. Moses' law is now 3500

years old. The New Testament is nearing 2000 years. Many books do not survive their generation; most do not last a century. Yet the word of God has not merely survived-- it is perennially a best seller and is produced in more languages than any other volume ever written. Many ancient books have lost all their usefulness as man's knowledge of his world advanced, but God's word is as relevant for 20th Century man as it was for those of the past.

Jehoiakim, a degenerate king of Judah, burned an original draft of Jeremiah's writings (Jeremiah 36:4-6, 20-24). Few people in America would know of Jehoiakim today, but most would recognize the name of Jeremiah.

Under the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) "Every copy of the law (of God) was to be surrendered to the authorities and be destroyed . . ." (Alfred Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation*, page 11). This was part of a planned drive to exterminate the religion of Jehovah and the Jewish culture. Antiochus is a lost name in the dusty pages of some ancient history book; the Bible flourishes.

In A.D., 303 Diocletian, Emperor of Rome, ordered all copies of the sacred writings destroyed. This, too, was but a part of a massive attack against the whole of God's church. The haughty emperor had a medal engraved, saying, "The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored." Ask your children if they have heard of Diocletian.

Other Roman emperors such as Decius threw the entire weight of their powerful empire against the infant church and her sacred book. Rome crumbled; the church and the Bible are yet with us (Neader's *History of the Christian Religion*, Volume I, page 48).

Julian the apostate became Roman emperor in 351. He renounced Christianity and openly championed heathenism. Julian wrote *A Refutation of the Christian Religion*, attacking the New Testament. He died June 25, 363, saying, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered."

Chapters could be written of the fury Mohammedans vented against believers in Jesus and the Bible as they conquered Asia Minor and North Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries. Isaac Taylor wrote, "The deathless book has survived three great dangers: the negligence of its friends; the false systems built upon it; the warfare of those who have hated it."

Sadly, the most systematic attempt to destroy the scriptures was perpetrated by devotees of the apostate church of Rome. In 1199 Pope Innocent had French Bibles burned at Metz and forbade the people to have more. The Council of Terragona, in Spain, under Pope Gregory IX (1234 A.D.) ordered the people to surrender their Bibles for burning. Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain forbade their people

to have Bibles (1474-1516). In 1383 John Wycliff of England was condemned as a heretic by the Synod of Oxford for translating the Bible.

William Tyndale was murdered for his work in translating scripture. A thousand of his Bibles were burned at St. Paul's cross in London by order of Bisiop Tonstal. Emperor Ferdinand II ordered 10,000 Bibles burned at Graze in Steirmark in 1600. Jesuits boasted of burning 60,000 Bibles in Bohemia in 1637 (George DeHoff, *Why We Believe the Bible*, pages 115,116). The names of these evil men and all their deeds have largely been forgotten; but God's word thrives and prospers.

Infidelity has had its match with God's word -- and lost. The French infidel Voltair understood that "If we would destroy the Christian religion we must first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible." He boldly predicted that his attacks against the Bible would make it extinct in a hundred years. Soon after his death in 1778, the British and Foreign Bible Society used his writing room for Bible storage and the very presses that printed his anti-Biblical tirades were used to print Scripture.

Thomas Paine, the American infidel, viciously attacked the Bible in his *Age of Reason* and predicted that "Fifty years hence, the Bible will be obsolete and forgotten." Poor Paine! His books are long forgotten but the Book he despised abounds more and more.

Among those who claim to be its friends, but who in reality are its enemies, are the "higher critics," i.e., skeptical theological literary critics who fancy themselves to be wise enough to put the Bible to the test and decide which of its verses are truly genuine. In reality many of these scholars are but infidels drawing salaries from churches and church-related schools. Thousands of young students have left their classrooms with their faith in God's word shattered. Strangely, the latest edition, of the Bible still contains

all those verses they would have excised; but the critics' names and books are largely forgotten.

The most current enemy of God's Book is Communism and those governments under its influence. Arguing that "religion is the opiate of the people," they have sought to discredit the Bible and gradually smother it out of existence by not allowing it to be printed or imported into their domain. Yet, no place in the world today is there more hungering and thirsting after God's word than in Eastern Europe. Each year, thousands of Bibles are smuggled across the forbidden borders. Radio waves take the word of God into millions of homes. Hand-copied Bibles are reverently studied. God's word lives!

Why have men fought against God's word with such zeal? "Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them." Satan knows full well that Scripture is the chain by which he is bound (Revelation 20:1,2; Matthew 4:1-10). Therefore, he has commissioned his servants to use every scheme to destroy those words which are God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,

And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor;

Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"to wear and batter all those hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; and then with twinkling eye,
"the anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

"And so," I thought, "the anvil of God's word

For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."
— 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Some Popular Sins (II)

Continued from page 2

be a painless way to swell state and city coffers and lead to the rejuvenation of Atlantic City.

But gambling taxes have not resulted in any new programs, land speculation has spread the city's slums, most of the casino jobs have gone to outsiders, local crime has risen, along with the cost of law enforcement and, despite attempts to prevent it, organized crime has begun moving in. Can Alabama hope for any thing better?

Verily, cashing in on human weakness, which is what legalized gambling does, remains ultimately a losing proposition for any government. Honest, honesty, are words used in the New Testament: good, admirable, becoming --- what is fair, right, honourable, of such conduct as deserves esteem. Gambling fails such definitions by a country mile! (Suggested reading: Luke 8:15; Acts 6:3; Romans 12:17; II Corinthians 8:21; 13:7; Philippians 4:8).

(5) The sin of drug abuse. Obviously, drugs administered on the advice of physicians represent a legitimate and proper use of drugs; but there are illegal and harmful uses as well. Such abuse of drugs has taken its toll on the old and the young, physically

in broken health, as well as morally, and spiritually. What about its cost in money? Well, illegal drugs generated an estimated \$79 billion in 1980 --- and at what terrible cost? Think of the homes, food, education, etc., this money could have purchased!! Alas! It purchased misery, suffering, torment, and lost souls. It is estimated that there are 450,000 heroin addicts in the United States today.

Cocaine and marijuana are being smuggled into the United States by the tons. Conservative estimates show that 10 million individuals in our nation use cocaine daily, and at least another 5 million have experimented with it. One-third of our children start smoking marijuana in grade school. One-in-ten high school seniors smoke it every day. There are 3 million teenage alcoholics in America, and the number is growing.

There are two primary choices in our lives: to accept the conditions as they exist, or to accept the responsibility for changing them. Will you climb higher or fall lower?? "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23; 5:12; Genesis 2:17). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

WORD of GOD

New Testament
Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the

church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;

and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
James 5:14, 15



Winfred Clark



Harold W. Gray



Willard Collins



E.L. Whitaker



Wesley Crews



Rev. A. Turner, Sr.



Lois McCord



J. F. Camp



W. Clay Ross



Gilbert Gough



Robert I. Brown



Winford Claiborne



B.C. Carr



Bobby Duncan



Walker Crossno



Glenn M. Lee



Dub McClish



Dewey Medlin



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.



Roy Deaver



W.B. West, Jr.



Frank D. Young



Garland Elkins



Jimmy Moffett



Hugo McCord



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Virgil L. Hale



Glenn Hitchcock

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

MARCH 25-29, 1984

Memphis School of Preaching

4400 Knight Arnold Road

Memphis, TN 38118

THEME:

Challenges of First Century Christianity - Acts 1-11

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

Sunday, March 25, 1984

10:30-11:30 a.m. F. L. Whitaker "Who Is This Jesus?" (Acts 1:11)
6:00- 7:00 p.m. Franklin Camp "The Challenge of First Century Christianity - Its Purity and Ethics"

Monday, March 26, 1984

9:00- 9:50 a.m. Franklin Camp "Introduction and Overview of the Book of Acts"
10:00-10:50 a.m. Harold Gray "Ascension and Awaiting the Promise of the Father" (Acts 1:1-26)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Mrs. Lois McCord "Principles of Christian Womanhood as Seen in the Lives of Women in the Book of Acts"
11:00-11:50 a.m. Gilbert Gough "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - Its Recipients, Nature, and Consequences" (Acts 2:1-21)
11:50- 1:10 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
1:10- 2:00 p.m. Franklin Camp "Acts on the Warpath - Its Refutation of Sabbatarianism and Legalism"
2:10- 3:00 p.m. Glenn Hitchcock "Peter Proclaims the Christ - His Resurrection, Exaltation, and Invitation" (Acts 2:22-41)
3:10- 4:00 p.m. Robert Taylor "The HUB of the Bible - Pentecost (A.D. 29) or Destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Which? Refutation of Max Kingism"
4:10- 4:30 p.m. Hugo McCord "Word Studies - Acts"
4:30- 7:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER
7:00- 7:30 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:30- 8:30 p.m. Willard Collins "The Challenge of First Century Christianity - Its Unity"

Tuesday, March 27, 1984

9:00- 9:50 a.m. Roy Deaver "Establishing Bible Authority - Is the Apostles' Doctrine Authoritative?" (Acts 2:42)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Glenn Lee "With One Accord - God's Plan for Unity, Does It Include Fellowshiping the Sectarians?" (Acts 2:43-47)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Mrs. Lois McCord "Principles of Christian Womanhood as Seen in the Lives of Women in the Book of Acts"
11:00-11:50 a.m. William Cline "The Lame Man Healed, Peter's Sermon on Solomon's Porch - Have Miracles Ceased?" (Acts 3:1-26)
11:50- 1:10 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH (FIRM FOUNDATION LUNCHEON)
1:10- 2:00 p.m. Frank D. Young "Acts on the Warpath - Its Refutation of Pentecostalism and Gimmickery"
2:10- 3:00 p.m. Rex A. Turner, Sr. "The Gift of the Holy Spirit - What Is It?" (Acts 2:38,39)
3:10- 4:00 p.m. B.C. Carr "The Restoration of an Erring Child of God"
4:10- 4:30 p.m. Hugo McCord "Word Studies - Acts"
4:30- 7:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER (ALUMNI MEETING)

7:00- 7:25 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:30- 8:30 p.m. Garland Elkins "The Challenge of First Century Christianity - Its Personal Evangelism"

Wednesday, March 28, 1984

9:00- 9:50 a.m. Robert Brown "Peter and John Arrested - The Church Reacts to Persecution" (Acts 4:1-31)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Walker Crossno "Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira - Benevolence of the Church, Church Discipline" (Acts 4:32-5:11)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Mrs. Lois McCord "Principles of Christian Womanhood as Seen in the Lives of Women in the Book of Acts"
11:00-11:50 a.m. Wesley Crews "The Church Prospers, The Twelve Before the Sanhedrin" (Acts 5:12-42)
11:50- 1:10 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
1:10- 2:00 p.m. Dub McClish "Acts on the Warpath - Its Refutation of Premillennialism and Crossroadism"
2:10- 3:00 p.m. Jimmy Moffett "Unity Jeopardized and the Problem Arrested - How Does the Church Handle Internal Strife?" (Acts 6:1-7)
3:10- 4:00 p.m. Dewey Medlin "Can Churches Cooperate, Help Non-Saints, Orphans?"
4:10- 4:00 p.m. Hugo McCord "Word Studies - Acts"
4:30- 7:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER
7:00- 7:25 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:30- 8:30 p.m. Hugo McCord "The Challenge of First Century Christianity - Its World Evangelism"

Thursday, March 29, 1984

9:00- 9:50 a.m. Winford Claiborne "Stephen Seized and Falsely Accused, Delivers Address and Is Stoned" (Acts 6:8-7:60)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Winfred Clark "The Church Dispersed; the Gospel Moves to Samaria, Peter and John in Samaria" (Acts 8:1-25)
10:00-10:50 a.m. Mrs. Lois McCord "Principles of Christian Womanhood as Seen in the Lives of Women in the Book of Acts"
11:00-11:50 a.m. Virgil Hale "The Conversion of the Ethiopian Nobleman" (Acts 8:26-40)
11:50- 1:10 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR LUNCH
1:10- 2:00 p.m. Guy Hester "Acts on the Warpath - Its Refutation of Denominationalism and Evangelistic Oversight"
2:10- 3:00 p.m. Clay Ross "The Gospel Moves to the Uncircumcized" (Acts 10:11-11:18)
3:10- 4:00 p.m. Bobby Duncan "Admonitions from Antioch - What Is a Christian? Question of 'Christians Only But Not the Only Christians'" (Acts 11:19-30)
4:10- 4:30 p.m. Hugo McCord "Word Studies - Acts"
4:30- 7:00 p.m. INTERMISSION FOR DINNER
7:00- 7:25 p.m. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:30- 8:30 p.m. W.B. West, Jr. "The Challenge of First Century Christianity - Its Hope"



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 21

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 1984

NUMBER 13

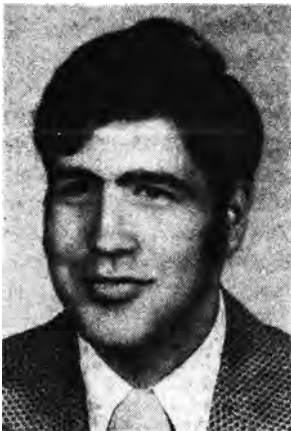
"Social Drinking"

(Part II)

In last week's article we noticed some very sobering statistics concerning alcohol, and how much it takes to make one drunk. This week I will show that the scriptures forbid the use of alcohol.

"WELL, JESUS DRANK WINE"

It is often alleged that our Savior drank *intoxicating* wine. The passages that are usually cited are: Matthew 11:19; 26:27-29; 27:48; John 19:30. The social drinker argues that since Jesus turned water into "wine," he must have approved of social drinking (John 2:1-11). First, it must be noted that Jesus lived under the Old Testament law, and was subject to it. Therefore, did Jesus cause his fellow man to err? (Proverbs 20:1). Did he cause his fellow man to be bitten like a serpent? (Proverbs 23:32). Did Jesus cause his fellow man to sin? After all, he made anywhere from 120-180 gallons of wine! Second, it was strictly forbidden in the Old Law to make one drunk. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink . . . and make him drunken" (Habbakkuk 2:15). Did Jesus make his fellow man drunk? This is what you have, if you believe Jesus made wine that is intoxicating.



GEORGE REED

The word wine (*oinos*) in the New Testament is a *generic* word, and its definition is derived from the context in which it is located. In Genesis 40:11 the butler told Joseph "I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup in Pharaoh's hand." Plutarch, who lived 600 years before Christ said, "The Egyptians neither drank fermented wine nor offered it in sacrifice" (*Bible Wines*, p. 77). Moses spoke "of the blood of the grape" in Deuteronomy 32:14. One must study the context to see if *oinos* means unfermented grape juice, or intoxicating wine. Albert Barnes in his commentary on John 2 lists the following: Pliny, Plutarch, and Horace describe wine as good, or

mention that as the best wine, which was harmless or innocent . . . The most useful wine . . . was that which had little strength; and the most wholesome wine . . . was that which had not been adulterated by the "addition of anything to the must or juice." Pliny expressly says that a "good wine" was one that was destitute of spirit." Dr. Jacobus says, "The boiling prevents fermentation. Those were esteemed the best wines which were least strong." Dr. S. M. Isaacs, Jewish rabbi, says: "In the Holy Land they do not commonly use fermented wines. The best wines are preserved sweet and unfermented."

SOCIAL DRINKING IS WRONG!

The word sober (*nepho*, this word and this word only) is used in I Thessalonians 5:6,8; II Timothy 4:5; I Peter 1:13; 4:7 and 5:8. W. E. Vine says this word "signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants." Note the following syllogisms.

Major Premise: Today's wines are wines which intoxicate.

Minor Premise: The Bible tells us to abstain from wines which intoxicate (I Thessalonians 5:5,8; II Timothy 4:5; I Peter 1:13; 5:8).

Conclusion: Therefore, we must abstain from wines which intoxicate.

Major Premise: We are to abstain from all and every form of evil (I Thessalonians 5:21).

Minor Premise: Alcohol is proven to be evil (alcohol causes 20 percent of all divorces, 25 percent of all

insanity, 37 percent of all poverty, 47 percent of all child misery, 50 percent of all traffic deaths).

Conclusion: Therefore, we are to abstain from alcohol.

Major Premise: If it is the case that social drinking makes one sociably drunk, then it is a sin to drink.

Minor Premise: It is the case that social drinking makes one sociably drunk. (The more liquor you consume the more of a drunkard you become. The word drunk (*methusko*) means: ". . . cause to become intoxicated; get drunk, become intoxicated with wine" (*Arndt & Gingrich*, p. 500). W. E. Vine says, with regards to *methusko*, "to make drunk, or to grow drunk [an inceptive verb, making the process of the state expressed in *methuo*], to become intoxicated, Luke 12:45; Ephesians 5:18; I Thessalonians 5:17)."

Conclusion: Therefore, it is the case that social drinking is a sin.

Major Premise: Drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21).

Minor Premise: Social drinking is getting sociably drunk.

Conclusion: Therefore, social drinkers will not inherit the kingdom of God.

There are many other passages which prove social drinking to be wrong, but the arguments used in this article will help those in and out of the kingdom see that social drinking is a sin. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

In The Wrong Place

W. A. HOLLEY


We suggest that Luke 2:41-52 be read with great care and understanding. It is a story which involves negligence on the part of Mary and Joseph. This worthy couple had gone to Jerusalem, as was their custom, carrying Jesus with them, to observe the passover.

Jesus was twelve years of age. After they had finished their services to God, they returned toward home, a day's journey, supposing that the boy Jesus was with them. But Jesus was not with them! They

looked for him among "their kinfolk and acquaintances," but he was not there to be found. They were searching in the wrong place!!

They decided to go back to the place where they had left Jesus; and there they found him, in Jerusalem, in the temple, talking with Jewish leaders, "both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at

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 Christian's Influence

I continue to be impressed with the bold fact that Christians greatly influence those with whom we associate, even casually. Someone said that we are a part of every one we meet, and that is so true. It then behoves us to be on our best behavior *all* the time. We must be careful not to even **APPEAR** to be engaged in wrongdoing.

The stakes are just too high! People's souls are involved. Now, some Christians rebel at the thought of being careful of actions and words as not to cause others to think wrong of us. But as I question my own heart in such matters, I should check my love for (1) the Lord and care about what others think of him, (2) the church and have some concern about how I portray it, (3) the soul's salvation of people who are looking at me. I cannot conscientiously continue in my sins or my liberties so dogmatically that I would bring shame on the precious body of Christ or cause a soul to be lost because I am stubborn.


There are too many Bible principles that teach against such attitudes (Romans 14; I Corinthians 8,13; Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 4:22-32; etc.). We become responsible for how others follow our words and actions, to a degree. If we refuse to admit that, we are in essence refusing to care about those who are watching us.

Of course, there is the positive aspect to influence, too. We, by our good lives can and should lead others to a knowledge of the truth, salvation, or a closer walk with the Lord (Matthew 7:13-16; I Peter 3:1,2).

Let us love the Lord, the church, others, and ourselves enough to swallow our pride and be an influence for good; and **NEVER** for the bad. — P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507.



RONNIE A. MISSILDINE



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Secret Sins

Sin is the worst thing in the world! And sin is always worse than we think it is going to be. If we could ask Adam, doubtless he would confirm this! Sin --any kind of sin-- will separate man from God. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Those who die in their sins cannot go to heaven, for Jesus said: "ye . . . shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21).

However there are different kinds of sins. There is a difference between (1) secret sins, (2) personal offenses, and (3) public sins. Let us look at some Bible truths regarding secret sins.

Moses wrote: "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Psalms 90:8). We are warned that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Be assured, however, that such sins are secret from man only! They are not secret from God! God "knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalms 44:21). David exclaimed, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee" (Psalms 69:5). Seventy men -- old men, Israelites-- worshipped idols, saying, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth" (Ezekiel 8:11,12). In response, God said to Ezekiel: "Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them" (Ezekiel 12:4,5). So, although our sins may be secret from mankind, they are not secret from God! He knows! Paul wrote of "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16). We read that "all things are naked and opened unto the



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

eyes of him with whom we have to do" and "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight" (Hebrews 4:13).

Secret sins may be the most treacherous and dangerous of all our sins. If those who love me knew of my guilt, they would teach me to repent, encourage and admonish me to be saved, and pray for me to have strength to quit those sins. But because of their secret nature, the Bible class teacher does not know I need such teaching, the preacher does not know to preach for me to repent, my dearest kin are unaware of my guilt, thus do not supply the needed support for me to quit. I am left on my own meager knowledge of God and his word, and my own puny resources of will-power, so that I may not muster up the courage to repent!

It may be that some of our sins against God are secret even from ourselves. Does David imply this when he prayed: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalms 19:12)? We should yearn with him, and pray as did he: "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalms 19:13,14).

I know of no passage in God's word which teaches us to 'confess' to other people our **SECRET** sins. The very Greek word translated "Confess" (HOMOLOGEO) literally means "To speak the same thing (HOMOS, same, LEGO, to speak) . . . to confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of . . ." (Vine, W. E.: *Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words*, I, p. 224). If one is not accused, his would be a *report* of sin, not a *confession* of sins. Nowhere does God teach us to **REPORT** our sins!

Without repentance, no sins will be forgiven (Luke 13:3,5). A child of God must repent of his secret sin, confess it to God (who already knows about it), and pray for pardon from God. Having obtained God's forgiveness, we should also 'forgive' ourselves, and not develop a guilt-complex regarding "secret" sins of the past which God has blotted out! Thenceforth one should seek to avoid temptation, praying: "Lead us not into temptation . . ." (Matthew 6:13).

(Next week: Personal offenses).

It Doesn't Pay To Be A Prodigal*

JOHN WADDEY

Jesus told a story of a foolish young man who left his father's house and wasted his life in riotous living. After falling on hard times he returned home where he was received with open arms by the loving father (Luke 15:11-32). Having heard the story of the prodigal son, a young man quipped, "What's so bad about being prodigal?" His logic ran thusly, "the prodigal got the best of both worlds. He got his share of the estate, had a wild party and then got to come back home and enjoy the benefits the same as before." The older brother worked hard and didn't

even have a party. The young fellow's reason was falacious on many counts. He failed to realize that not all prodigal stories have a happy ending.

I. Many prodigals never return home. Some die in the far country of sin. An unexpected accident may claim their lives. Others may die violently in some bar-room brawl. Some will destroy themselves (commit suicide) because of their despair. Jesus said "ye shall die in your sin; (and) whither I go, ye cannot

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In The Wrong Place

Continued From Page 1

his understanding and answers."

As much as we might think that Christ can be found among our kinfolk and acquaintances, it not always so. While it may sometimes be good to trust one's parents for religious instruction, it is not always the safest way! What is the safest course for one to pursue? The answer is found in the Holy Scriptures! Listen to parents, but search the scriptures daily in order to learn whether what is taught is according to God's divine message (Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:27-31).

(1) It is possible to go to the wrong place. Naaman, the Syrian Captain, a leper, seeking relief from his terrible disease, went to the wrong place (II Kings 5:1-14). The Captain went to the king rather to God's prophet. The king could not help him; but God through his prophet could. Naaman finally came to the door of the prophet and was told to go to Jordan river, dip himself seven times therein, and his leprosy would vanish away. When he fulfilled the demands of God, the Captain's leprosy was healed. If one wants to have his sins forgiven, he should go to God's word—not to the doctrines and commandments of men (Mark 7:6-13). Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Jesus is right, even though men may disagree!

(2) The man of God mentioned in I Kings 13:1-19, went to the wrong place. The man of God was ordered to go to Bethel and cry out against it, which he did. When King Jeroboam sought to interfere, laying his hand upon the altar, his arm became immobile. The King then besought the man of God, asking him to restore his arm to normal use. God granted his request.

Following his healing, the King requested the man of God to "Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. But the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou comest" (I Kings 13:7-9). Thus, the man of God knew and understood perfectly what he was required to do!

But in Bethel there dwelt a prophet, whose sons were present that day. They brought news of the events which had transpired that day. The old prophet lied to the man of God, saying, ". . . I am a prophet. . . 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. But he lied unto him" (I Kings 13:18). The man of God went to the old prophet's house: and because he was found in the wrong place, it cost him his life (I Kings 13:20-32).

(3) Lot, even though he thought he was improving his station in life, was found in Sodom and Gomorrah—the wrong place—where he, and all his family were forced to suffer the consequences of his having "Pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13:12; 18:16-20; 19:1ff; Luke 17:32). "Be not deceived: Evil companionship corrupt good morals," and one always reaps what he sows (I Corinthians 15:33, A.S.V.; Galatians 6:7-9).

(4) The prodigal son left his father's house and was found in the wrong place—the hog pen! He had "wasted his substance in riotous living" (Luke 15:11ff). Any person who leaves God out of his life is always in the wrong place. Such an one cannot be in the right place until he returns to the Father's house. Today (in the New Testament era), the Father's "house" is the church which Jesus Christ built (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47; I Timothy 3:14-15). The church is essential to one's salvation because Jesus built it, purchased it with his own blood, is its head, and its saviour (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). No, the church

is not the SAVIOUR; IT IS THE SAVED (Acts 2:47).

(5) Peter was in the wrong place when he followed afar off and sat with the enemies of Jesus (Luke 22:54-62). One of the factors which lead to Peter's denial of Jesus was his association with unbelievers; in fact, Peter would have been far stronger, spiritually, if he had been among Jesus's friends. Factually, one cannot run with the goats and become a strong, healthy sheep!

(6) Members of the Lord's church found in dance halls, beer parlors, and gambling joints are in the wrong place (Galatians 5:19-21). Those who stay at home, or go to the lake, or go visiting at service time, (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts

20:7), are in the wrong place. Those who are helping promote Satan's work through compromise, poor influence, and poor living, are engaged in the wrong work. Those who lend themselves to participate in church fusses and quarrels and strifes of whatever shade or color, are dragging the banner of Christ in the dirt. Those who seek to be saved according to doctrines and commandments of men are doomed to fail.

The right place is in Christ! (Ephesians 1:3). Believe and be baptized into Christ where salvation is located (II Timothy 2:10; Galatians 3:26-27).—P. O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

It Doesn't Pay To Be A Prodigal *

Continued from page 2

come" (John 8:21).

II. Some prodigals never come to themselves like the boy in the story. Satan is able to blind the minds of some unbelievers so that they don't realize how dangerous and desperate their situation is (II Corinthians 4:4). The pleasures of sin, while but "for a season," are real and inviting (Hebrews 11:25). There are prodigals who love their sin so much it never occurs to them to give it up. Sin deceives its victims (Hebrews 3:13). They think they are happy, that they will live and be young forever. The conscience can become seared (I Timothy 4:2), so that a prodigal feels no guilt nor shame, and really has no interest in returning to his father. For such prodigals their future rests in the pigsty!

III. There are prodigals who want to return home, but are not able to do so. "Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin" (John 8:34). Some who choose the prodigal life-style become alcoholics, or get "hooked" on drugs. Others will get entangled in crime or dishonesty to a point that they cannot escape—others will not allow them to do so. Some become addicted to an immoral life-style: e.g., prostitution, homosexuality, or a live-in companion. Still others are trapped in unscriptural repeat marriages, perhaps with children. It is often the case that prodigals in these difficult circumstances just cannot find the strength and courage to break free (II Peter 2:14) and return home.

IV. Not all fleshly fathers, families, and friends are able and willing to forgive and receive the prodigal back. God will forgive them if they will truly repent and return on his divine terms (II Peter 3:9). There are parents who have been hurt so deeply, so often, that they have shut the door forever on their prodigal child. The man who was a foolish rebel at 20 may be ready to settle down to respectability at 40; but he may never enjoy the respect of his parents again. Many a prodigal has lost his mate and his family forever. Even though he or she repents with bitter tears at some later point, the damage done is irreparable. How tragic to see a sorrowful, broken adult begging his wounded mate or children to let him come home -- but to no avail.

V. Even a returned and forgiven prodigal has to live with the scars of his former sinful life. Paul still felt himself to be "chief of sinners" (I Timothy 1:15) because of his past role in the death of Stephen, and his persecution of other saints. God had forgiven him the church had accepted him -- but he bore the ugly scars in his conscience. So with many modern-day prodigals: some will have trouble forgiving themselves. In years yet to come they will wrestle with their lingering guilt feelings. They will fear lest someone dear to them hears of their past indiscretions. Many a married woman is now haunted by the memory of an abortion in her wayward years.

Some prodigals come to their senses and come

home, but the friends and neighbors will **not forget** their past mistakes. A man with a prison record will forever be a "con" in some people's book. A boy who is striving to escape his homosexual lifestyle will find people who will not accept him. There are parents who do not want their daughters to marry a former prodigal -- even though he has reformed his life. Some prodigals have permanently damaged their health and/or their emotions by their foolish indulgence. Some have discovered that drugs used in prodigal years have now damaged their offspring. Solomon taught his sons against the dangers of promiscuity. He warned them, remorsefully saying "and thou mourn at thy latter end, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised thereof" (Proverbs 5:11-12).

VI. A prodigal must live with the shame and hurt he brought to his parents, his mate, his children; to all who love him. Perhaps they will forgive him and never mention the matter again. Yet he will know that he put the gray in their hair, and the furrows of grief in their faces. Some prodigals by their folly have sent a loved one to an early grave. What a burden it is to know that your thoughtless conduct has wounded the most important people in all the world!

Conclusion: It just does not pay to be a prodigal. The idea that one is "cute" or "smart" enough to have the best of two worlds, to "have his cake and eat it too," is Satan's lie. "For he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8). In the years to come, one will never regret the fact that he was never a prodigal -- but multitudes will rue the day they left their father's house.

*I am indebted to an unknown author for the outline of this lesson. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY TO SISTER GUS NICHOLS ON MARCH 29TH. AN ARTICLE WILL BE FOLLOWING IN NEXT ISSUE OF THE WORDS OF TRUTH.

The Ethiopian Eunuch

The very thrilling and fascinating story of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is told in Acts 8:26-39. This man must have been of sterling character, because he heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ promptly, without delay. Verily, one must have good timber before one can make a good ax handle. Paul mentions various kinds of material which are sometimes used in building a house for the Lord—gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; but, to the chagrin of many, only the gold, silver, and precious stones can endure; while wood, hay and stubble shall be burned up (I Corinthians 3:9-15; II Timothy 2:19-21). The preacher is not held responsible for the inferior quality of the material he may build into the house, but the individual is!!



W. A. HOLLEY

What were some of the qualities of the Ethiopian eunuch which set him apart? We shall note . . .

(1) *Who was the Ethiopian eunuch?* He occupied a high political position. The Scripture speaks of him, saying: "Behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning . . ." (Verses 27-28). The lesson is: Those who are high in political circles, such as Presidents, Governors, Senators, Congressmen, and the like, should bow to the mighty demands of the glorious gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Such men, as powerful as they are, must not resist the overtures of heaven.

(2) *The Ethiopian eunuch was a Bible-reading man.* In his day the Bible was the Old Testament, and he was reading from Isaiah chapter 53, verses 7-8. One would do well to turn to this famous chapter and read it in its entirety. Obviously, the eunuch was reading that part of the Old Testament most likely to bring him to Christ. Thus Philip began at that Scripture "and preached unto him Jesus." Do you, dear reader, read the Scripture for the noble purpose of learning exactly what the Lord requires of YOU? (Acts 17:11; Hosea 4:6; Matthew 4:4; Acts 20:32).

(3) *Do you, like the eunuch, understand what the Bible teaches?* So often this is not the case! Many false teachers are abroad in the land (I John 4:1; Jeremiah 29:8-9,31). What can the honest person do in order to learn the whole truth of God? The answer is simple. Take no man's word for what the Bible teaches, but go to the Bible . . . to the Bible alone . . . because it, alone, is authoritative (Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 22:18-19). The doctrines, the commandments of men, the traditions of the most highly-respected of men, must be rejected (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13), if such do not agree with the sacred text. You can understand the truth of God (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17). God made both the Bible and man. Thus, the Bible as it is, is adapted to man as he is!

(4) *The Ethiopian eunuch believed and promptly obeyed what he was taught:* No hesitating, no quibbling, no equivocation! What did the eunuch do to become a Christian, a child of God? Well, he heard the truth, he believed the truth, he repented of his sins, he confessed Jesus Christ, he was baptized according to the scripture (Acts 8:36-39, 5,12; 18:8; 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16). Actually, the eunuch was so anxious to obey the Lord, he did not go home to consult his friends, or some preacher, or priest!!

Was the Ethiopian's "baptism" sprinkling? or

pouring? It was neither. How do we know? The answer is simple. The Scripture reads: ". . . And they went down both (Philip and the eunuch) into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he (Philip) baptized him", the eunuch (Acts 8:38). Before the eunuch was baptized, what confession did he make? Did he confess, saying, "I feel that God has forgiven me of my sins?" No, he did not! When we follow the scripture, we learn that he said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37; Cf. Matthew 10:32-33). We must confess Jesus Christ, not our feelings!

(5) *In obeying the Christ, the eunuch changed his religious affiliation,* which some in our modern day would think to be almost blasphemy, since many family religious relationships appear to be so strong. The eunuch evidently was a Jew, since he had been to Jerusalem to worship according to the law of Moses -- which law had been abrogated when Jesus died upon the cross just a few weeks before this account (Colossians 2:14-17). His old religion had gone out of date! He now embraces a new religion . . . the religion of the New Testament. Would you give up a religion which the New Testament knows nothing about for a religion which does bear the stamp of divine approval?? Not even the slightest traces of Roman Catholicism and Denominationalism can be found in the Holy Bible (Matthew 15:10-14).

(6) *When the eunuch became obedient unto God's word, he became a simple Christian,* a member of the

Lord's church as mentioned in the Bible. The Lord added him to his church (Acts 2:36-38,41,47). He did not become a member of any denominational church since such did not exist in the first century. In those days there were no human creeds, no human manuals, no denominational names, no denominational machinery (Cf. Acts 26:28; 11:26; I Peter 4:16).

Moreover, the Ethiopian joined no church whatsoever! The Lord added him to his church (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-38,41,47). As strange as it may seem to readers in the eighth decade of the twentieth century, it is possible to go back beyond all vestiges of Roman Catholicism and protestant denominationalism, back to the days of the apostles, and become a member of the original church of Christ . . . the first church of Christ that ever existed in the history of the world. This church began on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, and is in existence now (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38,40, 41). We have the same seed (the word of God), the same soil (the human heart), which, according to God's unalterable law always brings forth fruit after its own kind (Genesis 1:11-12; Galatians 6:7-9).

Dear readers, we plead with you to follow the eunuch's example! Hear the truth, believe it and obey it . . . as he did . . . You in so doing will become a simple New Testament Christian, a member of the Lord's church. If you will remain faithful even unto death, you can go to heaven when you die (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21-27; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 2:10). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

That your rejoicing
may be more abundant in Jesus Christ
for me
by my coming to you again

Only let your conversation be
as it becometh the gospel
of Christ:

That
whether I come and see you
or
else be absent
I may hear of your affairs,

That
ye stand fast in one spirit
with one mind
striving together for the faith
of the gospel

And in nothing terrified
by your adversaries:

which is to them
an evident token of perdition
but
to you salvation
and
that of God

For unto you it is given
in the behalf of Christ

not only to believe on him
but also
to suffer for his sake

having the same conflict

Which ye saw in me
and
now hear to be in me

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, mis-
the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 14

The Overlooked Christian

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42).

The context of the foregoing verse shows that Jesus is speaking of his apostles. In fact, Jesus calls them "little ones." They were sheep sent forth in the midst of wolves, and were to be harmless like doves, tender like small children. "A cup of cold water" represents a very small service. Those who serve one another, serve Jesus Christ. The giving of "a cup of cold water" to a disciple shows love for that disciple, and for the Lord.

All true disciples of Christ should be encouraged by the fact that even the least service done for those who work for the Lord are observed and rewarded by Almighty God. Actually, no act of service, no matter how small, escapes the eyes of God (Hebrews 4:12-13; Acts 16:15).

Conversely, those who throw stumbling-stones in the pathway of those who attempt to serve God, as did Diotrephes to John (3 John 9), are noted and rewarded according to their evil deeds (Cf. Matthew 25:31-46). Thus, Jesus places great emphasis on little, apparently insignificant, deeds. Many might think that such deeds deserve no special recognition; but Jesus sees their importance.

(1) Being human, most of us are more interested in doing some great thing, rather than those ordinary deeds required by the Lord. II Kings 5:1-14 tells the story of Naaman the leper, who, when told to dip seven times in Jordan in order to be clean, became angry, "and went away in a rage." "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather



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then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

Many seem to think: If I cannot do some great thing, I will do nothing. Is this your philosophy? If I cannot preach the sermon? if I cannot teach the class? if I cannot lead the singing? if I cannot be an elder or a deacon? -- I will do nothing! Shame! What an ugly spirit! Jesus, in Matthew 20:20-29, taught that the way to become great in God's sight is to become a servant of all. Remember Jesus Christ washed His disciples' feet (John 13:1ff).

(2) Who are we to overlook little people? the use of little talents? the weak and the poverty-stricken? and the quiet and the reserved? It is a sin to "despise the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10). Is it true that God keeps track of the evil and the good? (Proverbs 15:3).

In all probability, there are thousands of mild, timid, quiet, unassuming Christians who are doing more to advance the church of Christ than all the great promotional campaigns among us. These remarks are not to be construed as meaning that great workshops, seminars, and lectureships accomplish no good; but what here is emphasized is the multiplication of all the talents of those Christians who have but one or (at the most) two. Thus these Christians should not become discouraged; rather, they should rejoice that with proper use they can help move the church forward (Matthew 25:14-30).

Let us take for example, Brother Doe. He is not a "dynamic" personality. He has never gone to a workshop nor made a public speech, nor taught a class, nor preached a sermon, nor lead the singing; but, does this mean that he has done nothing to advance the Lord's church?

Certainly not! In his own quiet way he has gone about doing good. What does he do? Well, he helps his neighbor, picks up the elderly to bring them to services, lends a sympathetic ear to the troubled, keeps a promise to a small child, writes a letter or makes a telephone call to the lonely and discouraged, and visits the sick. In addition, such an ordinary or common Christian lends his moral support to the elders, the deacons, and the preacher. In his unpublicized way he shows his gratitude to God and to the church, seeks to end quarrels and strifes among

brethren, wisely uses his time, talent, and money, and attends on a regular basis the services of the Lord's church. What is Brother Doe doing? In short he is trying to live a Christian life! Should we not praise "the little ones" for their devotion to Christ's holy cause? Are these to be considered failures?


Think of some of our overlooked women members. They work in their homes trying to rear their children in the right way, bringing them to the services week after week. These sisters may not receive much earthly recognition; but the Lord recognizes them, just as he took note of Mary and Martha, Eunice and Lois, Dorcas and Priscilla, et al. Such godly women may never be chosen president of a garden club, never be called upon to lecture before a group of ladies; but for this is she a failure? Of course not! God knows and cherishes every one of them! A faithful Christian woman represents one of the most powerful forces in the world (I Timothy 2:15; I Peter 3:1ff).

All Christians are to bear fruit for the Lord (John 15:1-8). When the fruit of the Spirit can be seen in the activities of God's children, progress will be evident to all (Galatians 5:22-23).

I am convinced that thousands of seemingly overlooked Christians accomplish much more for the Lord than some who receive so much recognition and attention for their dynamic deeds. It may be that we give too much attention to the "Chief," and not enough to the "Indians." Where would the elders and the preacher be if it were not for those legions of common, ordinary, run-of-the-mill, everyday Christians who go about their duties in somewhat obscurity?

Do we not, sometimes, get excited about and carried away with our programs, projects, and schemes, yet forget about the importance of one of the most important elements or segments of the church -- the "little ones" who contribute so very much to the success of the church? So often "big" things count for very little in the long run -- it is the accumulation of the "little things" that truly counts!

I take my hat off to the thousands of quiet and unassuming Christians who spend their lives working for the Lord. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

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Happy 90th Birthday, Sister Nichols

Ninety years ago, March 29, 1894, a little girl was born. She was named Matilda Frances Brown. Little did anyone know the impact she would have upon the world. We are quite sure that her birth brought great joy to her family and their friends. Her childhood must have been equally joyful to those who knew her. Still no one could have foreseen the impact for good she would have on the world. This young lady married Gus Nichols on November 30, 1913. This union must have caused joy in the hearts of those who knew her. By this time, there must have been indications that this woman was going to better the world in which she lived. However, we dare say that there was still not an indication of her far-reaching influence upon her world. Eight sons and daughters were born into this family. Notice must have been paid to the manner in which this couple molded their children. Matilda Nichols, along with her husband, instilled in the children an unfeigned faith, like that in Eunice and Lois. The children have been faithful preachers and teachers of the word of God for many years. Their examples and attitudes have been examples for many, and continue to be.


Many of us have long appreciated the good life of our beloved sister Nichols. She has by God's grace graced his earth for these many years. This stately Christian lady has been, and is, one of the beautiful flowers in God's garden. She has been one of his productive fruit trees, bearing good fruit in his orchard. We believe Proverbs 31:10-31 was written for such a woman as Matilda Nichols.

We are so thankful that God has blessed us with this gift for these many years. We rejoice in her good health until this day. We hope for her a good number of other years, if the Lord will.

Much more could have been said about sister Nichols. However, we just want to wish you a **HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY, SISTER NICHOLS**, and also thank you for the offspring, their training, and such like, that has had such an influence for good around the world.

James Pilgrim
P. O. Box 3022
Hueytown, Al. 35023

NOTE: I have asked brother Nichols to run this article without editing it, and to so state the case, so that all may know that he is not tooting his own horn. His work through this paper is but one example of what we have said of sister Nichols in this brief article.



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Personal Offenses



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

God does not will that any should perish (II Peter 3:9). He does not want any soul to be lost because of secret sins. But neither does he wish to lose a single individual because of personal offenses. The "Golden Rule" will revolutionize human behavior: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). His code of conduct demands that his disciples treat each other right, but not their brethren only. He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48).

Awareness that "we be brethren" (Genesis 13:8) ought to help motivate mankind to strive to "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). In his "Sermon On The Mount" Jesus preached: "That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:21-24).

Jesus knew we should exercise diligent care regarding personal offenses, for he prefaced his remarks concerning such sins with the caution: "Take heed to yourselves. . ." (Luke 17:3). This suggests that extraordinary caution is needed! "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him" (Luke 17:3). Notice this is not a secret sin; neither is it a public offense; it is the case where one individual sins against another individual— "thy brother," "against thee." Jesus said the offended individual is to "rebuke him." Fuller directions are recorded by Matthew: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: and if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother" (Matthew 18:15). Both the *offended* (Matthew 18:15 and the *offender* (Matthew 5:23, 24) have responsibilities to settle all personal offenses.

It must be clearly understood that this is not a public sin, but is between two brethren only. Jesus said they should keep it personal. He said, "Go and

tell him his fault . . ." not to tell everybody else! The offended should not take his wife with him to settle it, nor approach the offender in the presence of *his* wife: they should settle it between themselves, "alone." It should never concern or involve anyone else! This is in contrast with *public* sins, which were rebuked by the apostles publicly (I Corinthians 5:1-13). It was *public* sins of which Paul wrote: "Them that *sin*, rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:16).

If the transgressor will repent, the offended is to forgive him. Jesus said, "rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3, 4). Forgiveness involves giving up all resentment, and forfeiting any claim to requital on account of the offense. Of course the penitent offender can be saved, whether I forgive him or not—but I can't! Jesus said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14, 15). If one says, "I repent," I am to take him at his word; and *he* is subsequently to "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

Jesus Christ knew that some sinners cannot be brought to repentance by only one person, so he said: "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew 18:16). Perhaps another individual, or two others, can prevail upon him to repent, where only one failed. Even then the implication is that the matter is to be kept quite, while those seeking to save a transgressor prayerfully proceed.

Jesus, however, was also aware that some are so obstinate that two or three cannot persuade them to do right; so he added: "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church" (Matthew 18:17). What began as a *personal* matter, now is to be brought before the public consciousness of the church. Where one, or "two or three," unsuccessfully sought to bring the wrong-doer to repentance, perhaps the influence of the entire congregation will succeed! At least, Jesus said try this. This matter was no business of the church at first, for it was a *personal offense* of one member against another member—"thy brother" against "thee." But personal efforts have failed to get him to repent; so now all the church is involved in the effort to save the sinner.

If the church fails to bring him to repentance, Jesus gives clear directions: "But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matthew 18:17). This is the same as withdrawing our fellowship from him (II Thessalonians 3:6). It is what Paul meant when he directed the church to "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Corinthians 5:13).

To obtain forgiveness from God for personal offenses (for *all* sins are against God!), one who has never been saved must, by faith in Christ, repent and be baptized for the remission of all his past sins (Acts 2:36-38). One who has done this, but subsequently has trespassed against his brother, must repent and

Continued on page 3

The Collinsville, Oklahoma Case

FRANK D. YOUNG

I wrote an article for publication in the Bible Way (the week of March 19) in reference to the Collinsville, Oklahoma, court case against the church. In that article, and based on what limited knowledge I then had, I allowed for human error in judgment. Yet, I urged brethren everywhere to support this church, and to supply the needs of these brethren. Rumor had it then, that there might have been a better time to have made this withdrawal. With further facts coming out, I now whole-heartedly urge all-out support for these brethren.

This court case, and its outcome, is a challenge to every Christian. These brethren report that they worked with this woman for many months. She, they say, divorced her husband on the grounds of unfaithfulness. The church believed then, and they believe now, she was in the right. They therefore not only stood with her at that time, but they came to her assistance in helping to gain custody of her children. They also rendered aid to her so that she could get in position to care for her family. Brother Hunter, the preacher, tells me that the charge of "mental anguish" could not have been true. It is said she admitted that what had been done toward her, was in kindness and compassion.

This church, at first, had asked the Oklahoma Supreme Court to declare this a matter of religion, and not a matter of law. The Supreme Court refusing to do so, remanded the case to the lower courts. The church thus had no alternative, except to go into the court. Though judgment has been given against them, these brethren believe it has already done good. Three baptisms, as well as three restorations, are believed to have been the result of this trial. In addition to these mentioned, another man, who had had no connection with the church in Collinsville, made a confession of long-time unfaithfulness: and his wife became a Christian. (Both of these are, seemingly, in their middle 60's.) Our brethren thus give praise to God for results already seen. Even the news sources say that brother Moody, one of the elders who testified, read from the scriptures, and offered their reasons from the Bible for the action taken.

These brethren have had judgment assessed against them for \$390,000, besides expenses otherwise necessary in such a trial. And now steps are being taken to appeal this case. On Sunday, March 18, when I talked with these brethren, they then understood they must immediately raise about \$40,000 in order to take this appeal. At that time, in the last two days, they had had about 300 phone calls, coming from every state in the nation. One brother called the same day I did, and when he was told what I was told, that is, they must raise about \$40,000, he agreed to guarantee the money. However, this week (week of March 20th), they have further learned they must have raised between \$625,000 and 650,000 before they can take this appeal. The \$390,000 is required (as I understand it), plus interest, at the rate of 15% for four years, the four years, being the time assumed to go through courts with this case. Brother Hunter said, "When we win (and he said "I didn't say 'if' we win") "this money will be refunded, with interest; the church then will, in turn, refund the money to any one who has contributed."

The other alternative they have is to hire a bonding company to make their bond in this amount. Should they take this route, the fee for making the bond is 10% of the assessment. In that case, regardless of the outcome, this payment to the bonding company would not be refunded. They thus hope to raise the greater amount. In their report to me February 3, 1984, before the trial came to the hearing, they already had spent about \$19,000, of which they still owed about \$8,000.

I have learned that five elders, and one deacon,

all lawyers who are (as the church believes) among the greatest *legal* minds in the brotherhood, are flying to Tulsa, on March 26 (at their own expenses), to take charge of appeal of this case. At that time they will as a team, decide who will head the team, and thus prepare the case further. These attorneys will also handle this case *at no charges to the church*. One of these lawyers is from California; one from Arizona; one from Texas; another from Nashville, Tennessee; and one from Tulsa. Another, sixth, is to join them.

This is *not* a case (I believe) for the *civil* courts. According to I Corinthians 6, I understand a case like this should be handled another way. These brethren, as I have showed before, felt the same way. But the Collinsville church had no other choice.

Collinsville, Oklahoma, is a challenge to the faith of every Christian. Christians don't take their cases to marching in the streets, nor standing on the courthouse steps, to pray to the governor, or other civil authorities. But we in our assemblies, and in our privacy, need to remember these brethren. Pray for our government. Let us not take for granted our religious freedoms. Let us keep alive a love for God, and for righteousness in our nation. Our people won

over Rome. They won in the Dark Ages. The church will win now.

Churches may profit in other ways from this trial. Given the irreligious atmosphere to which we are continually subjected, plus the love for money, and disregard for morals, we need to use wisdom in what we say, as well as how we do. We need to get advice from knowledgeable, Christian lawyers. Use men who know both the civil laws, and the laws of God, in regard to the government of God's church. We may need to consider incorporating the churches. Many have had to do this through the years, in order that they borrow money. (Birmingham churches, as well as other Alabama churches, have had to do so). Even before this case in the courts, some have seen fit to insure the church against libel suits. Brethren, get sound legal advice. Let us not become fearful to do right.

Brethren, let us get behind the Collinsville, Oklahoma, church. Send your contribution to: The Sixth Avenue of Christ, 1501 Sixth Ave., Jasper, AL. 35501. Mark your check for the Collinsville church. — 500 Third Ave., Jasper, AL. 35501.

Viewing The Fringes Of His Power

LARRY R. YURK

Man has accomplished some truly powerful things. Think of power and destructive force of the atomic bomb which was dropped on both Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Consider the awesome force packed in just one hydrogen bomb, which could easily obliterate an average county in a matter of seconds. Contemplate the tremendous power required to hurl the space shuttle into orbit. Think of the most impressive displays of power that man can muster.

Compare those displays of power to the force that was felt as Mount St. Helens blew thirteen hundred feet off its peak, sending four hundred million tons of debris into the earth's atmosphere. It all happened in less than one minute! Ash from the volcano, driven by winds, circled the earth in a matter of days. Yet St. Helens' blast was a mere firecracker in comparison to the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia in 1815, killing nearly twelve hundred people and resulting in 1816 being known as the "year without a summer," as a result of the ash scattered through the earth's atmosphere. This eruption was *eighty* times greater than the one America experienced on May 18, 1980!

Yet these things comprise no more than a speck in the vast expanse of the universe. One begins to realize how small man's little world really is! Looking upon the vast greatness and beauty of God's creation, one can hardly imagine the power which was required to create it all from absolutely nothing! Yet David described this universe as merely the work of God's *fingers* (Psalm 8:3-4). Job pointed to the mighty creation of God, concluding: "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14). Job was declaring that the visible things of creation are merely the *fringes* of God's power—and that his full power is beyond all comprehension!

But notice again what David said after viewing the brilliance of the night sky thousands of years ago: "When I consider thy heavens, . . . what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:3-4). In the midst of such mind-boggling power stands man as a tiny

speck in the vast emptiness of the universe. David points to the amazing fact that God *is* mindful of each man, and that it was for man that all was created (verses 5-8). As God viewed man and his universe through man's eyes, he declared, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, either do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 6:28-30). Many years later Peter was inspired by the same omnipotent God to write: "Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).

Power beyond comprehension and yet such personal care and concern for each of his creatures! "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Truly One such as this is worthy of man's praise and devotion! —2416 Hull Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50317.

Personal Offenses

Continued from page 2

pray for God's pardon, in addition to making the matter right with the offended brother (Acts 8:22-24). If such offenses are publicly known, the only way to remove the public stigma is to announce publicly one's repentance, and ask for the forgiveness and prayers of other Christians (James 5:16). The purpose of such "confession" is not to advertise one's guilt, but to announce the repentance of his wrongs.

(Next: Public Sins).

Doers Are Blessed

VICTOR M. ESKEW

In the religious world there are some who believe in the fallacious doctrine of salvation by grace only. These individuals pervert the teachings of the Bible in regard to the tremendous theme of divine "Grace." They tell us that man does not have to do anything in regard to his salvation; and that God will ultimately save all men by his grace. Others in the denominational world teach salvation by "faith only." This doctrine states that man is saved by faith alone with no works of obedience required on the part of the individual. These man-made doctrines are in total contradiction to the Word of God which consistently teaches throughout its pages that man must do the will of God in order to be blessed.

In his Sermon on the Mount, 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" (Matthew 7:21). Thus, Jesus made one's entering into the kingdom of heaven contingent upon doing the will of the Father. Just to say: "Lord, Lord," is not enough according to the words of Jesus -- even though some men (such as, Billy Graham, Jimmy Swaggert, Oral Roberts and many other false teachers) would have us to believe otherwise.

Jesus emphasized this divine imperative of doing the will of God with an impressive illustration in his majestic masterpiece: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-28).

Not only will the doer of the work enter into heaven, but he is the only one who can truly call Jesus his Lord. Jesus questioned certain individuals, saying: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). If one is calling Jesus his Lord, yet, is not keeping the commands of the Master, his doing so is vain, useless, and worthless in the sight of the Lord. "Ye hypocrites, well did Esais prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:7-9).

James underscored the necessity of one's being a doer when he wrote: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25). According to James, the difference in being deceived or in the obtaining of blessing, is found in not doing or doing the word of God (cf. James 1:21).

The apostle John strikes at this vital concept when he said: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is

righteous" (I John 3:7). Here, John makes being righteous dependent upon one's doing righteousness. And he made access to the tree of life and the entering in through the gates into the holy city contingent upon doing that which is required: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

The Biblical teaching that man has a part to play in his salvation in no way eliminates the fact that salvation is by the grace of God. The passages which teach this simply show that this salvation by grace is conditional. To illustrate, assume that one inherits one million dollars from an uncle. But in order to obtain the money, the uncle has placed stipulations upon the acquisition of it. One's compliance with those stipulations would in no way alter the fact that the money was a gift given to him by the uncle. The same is true of God: he has made available his gift of salvation. He has also placed certain conditions upon

one's receiving this gift. One's meeting the conditions will not alter the truth that man is not worthy to receive this gift, and that it has been bestowed upon him by the grace of God. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

There has never been, nor will there ever be, any substitute for obedience on the part of mankind. One's being a doer of the work shows that the individual has faith: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). It is only the doer that will be blessed in his deed (James 1:25). And only the obedient have Jesus Christ as the author of their eternal salvation: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8,9). — 600 W. Sadosa #28 Eastland, TX 76448.

What Others Have Said Of Baptism

It has been alleged by many Protestant preachers through the years that "baptism for the remission of sins" originated with Alexander Campbell. Those acquainted with New Testament Christianity have known better all the while. In forthright, unequivocal language the Pentecost spokesman commanded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, . . ."

(Acts 2:38). Nor was Mr. Campbell the first among the restorers to expound the truth set out by the inspired apostle some two thousand years ago.

John T. Mueller, in his *Christian Dogmatics*, provides some interesting reading along these lines. Under the heading of "The Divine Institution of Baptism" (page 486), the learned doctor provides insight into Luther's position: "Baptism," he affirms, "is not a mere church rite, but a divine ordinance, which is to be in force till the end of time, . . ." (Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:19-20. The command to baptize was given by Christ as emphatically as was that of preaching the gospel, a fact which the apostle duly recognized, Acts 2:38; 10:48. This must be maintained despite the fact that it was St. Paul's special mission to evangelize rather than to baptize, I Corinthians 1:14,15; for throughout his epistles he teaches both the necessity and efficacy of baptism, Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:27; Titus 3:4-7; etc. Hence, if Quakers, the Salvation Army, and other enthusiasts reject baptism as a mere 'ceremony, which is not binding on the conscience,' they reject God's own institution and ordinance."

On page 489 Mr. Mueller continues: "The baptismal promise is stated more clearly in Mark 16:16 as follows: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" In Romans 6:4 the promise is put still more definitely: "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death: In Gal. 3:27 St. Paul declares that



R. W. GRAY

they who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, namely, His righteousness and merits (justification)."

In answer to his critics Mueller thus quotes Luther: "Water, according to the Calvinistic doctrine, simply cannot do such great things." This Luther admits when he writes: "It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God . . . For without the word of God the water is simple water and no baptism." Page 493.

It is not our purpose to show the necessity of baptism by quoting Martin Luther, nor do we propose to suggest that everything he taught on the subject is in harmony with the scriptures. But it is clear that he recognized the fact that baptism is a command of God and not of man. That he, along with all serious Bible students, recognized that the early church viewed baptism as essential to one's salvation in Christ, is in evidence. Mr. Campbell, therefore, was not the first, nor was he in any sense alone, in affirming that baptism is "for the remission of sins."

The design of baptism, as well as the purpose for all the commandments of Christ, if settled right must be settled by a "thus saith the Lord." God's reasons for providing it will not be determined therefore by Alexander Campbell, Martin Luther, or any other uninspired writer or preacher. We have no pressing reason to defend Campbell or other Restorationists except to refute the errors advanced by some who would use them as a means of denying the faith once delivered unto the saints. The world owes much to men like Luther and Campbell, but the truth of any subject is determined by the word of God, not by great men -- either living or dead.

One of Satan's favorite weapons in turning men away from the commandments of Christ is setting forth the idea that this is "Church of Christ doctrine." We desperately need to meet him on this charge and assist our fellow men in seeing the glorious light of the gospel of Christ just as it is found in the New Testament. It was Jesus who taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). A church may either agree with or deny the plain statements of Christ, but the truth is determined by the word of Christ, not the word of a church, nor a multiplicity of churches. — P.O. Box 90236 East Point, GA 30344.



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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Pilgrims and Strangers

The Bible often compares the Christian's relationship to this world to that of a pilgrim. Peter beseeches us "as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" and that our behavior be seemly among the Gentiles; that wherein they speak against us as evil-doers, they may by our good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (I Peter 2:11-12). *Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the



JOHN WADDEY

greatest books ever written, uses the analogy of the Christian's pilgrimage. Numerous hymns reflect this thought.

A pilgrim is one "sojourning in a strange place, and away from one's own people" *W. E. Vine*. Three terms are used to describe pilgrims in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. (1) *Xenos* means a stranger or foreigner. In that ancient day strangers were viewed with hatred, suspicion and contempt in most societies. Tertullian wrote: "he knows that on earth he has a pilgrimage, but his dignity is in heaven." (2) *Paroikein* suggests a resident alien. An unknown disciple wrote, "The world is a bridge; the wise man will pass over it, but will not build his house upon it." (3) *Parepidemos* speaks of one whose stay was temporary; whose permanent house was elsewhere. Augustine wrote "we are sojourners, exiled from our fatherland." One of the problems of the pilgrim is reflected in these words from the Letter of Aristeas. "It is a fine thing to live and die in one's native land; a foreign land brings contempt to poor men and shame to rich men, for there is the lurking suspicion that they have been exiled for the evil they have done." (The above is gleaned from Wm. Barclay's Daily Study Bible).

Characteristics of Faithful Pilgrims
Faithful pilgrims obey God without reservation

even though they may not understand the consequences. Abraham, when called by God, obeyed to go out unto a place he was to receive, not knowing where he went (Hebrews 11:8). So will all true pilgrims.

Pilgrims do not become too attached to this present world. Abraham became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own; for he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:9-10). Like Paul, our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). We know that to depart to be with Christ is far better than to cling to this life (Philippians 1:21-24). Sadly, many pilgrims get too attached to the campground.

They are looking to the eternal city (Hebrews 11:10). The promise of Jesus is precious to pilgrims: "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

True pilgrims see the promises of God by faith, not by sight. The patriarchs of old did not receive the fulfillment of the promises but saw them and greeted them from afar . . . confessing that they were but pilgrims on the earth (Hebrews 11:13). So today, Christian pilgrims "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). Promises of God that cannot be subjected to empirical testing are nevertheless confidently accepted by faith. That faith gives "assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

They eagerly embrace the promises of God. The Hebrew writer tells us that the early fathers greeted those divine promises and embraced them as we would a loved one returned from a long journey (Hebrews 11:13). Like Mary of Bethany, we will sit at his feet and eagerly absorb every word that falls from the Master's lips (Luke 10:38-42).

Faithful pilgrims freely acknowledge to others their faith and their citizenship (Hebrews 11:13). They are not ashamed of Christ and his words (Mark 8:38). Because they confess their Lord before men, he will confess them before his Father and the holy angels (Matthew 10:32). As they go on their way to their heavenly home, they invite others saying, "Come ye, and let us go to the . . . house of the God of Jacob" (Isaiah 2:3).

God's pilgrims must never turn back. This is a choice they make. "If indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return" (Hebrews 11:15). Jesus taught us that "no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). When they consider the wonderful paradise to which they are going and the wasteland of sin from which they came — their hearts are firmly set on the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). They desire a better country — a heavenly home (Hebrews 11:16).

To please their Lord, they abstain from fleshy lusts that war against the soul and live seemly lives among the sinners of the world (I Peter 2:11-12). Like lights in the world, they hold forth the word of life to crooked and perverse generations (Philippians 2:15).


They die in faith, even as they have lived (Hebrews 11:13). With John we can hear the heavenly voice saying, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (Revelation 14:13). Surely this world is not worthy of such godly saints who have taken up their crosses and followed Jesus (Matthew 16:24).

Two Precious Promises

God is not ashamed of his pilgrims to be called their God (Hebrews 11:16a). They might be dressed in rags and have no place to pillow their heads at night; the world may despise and reject them; yet to the King of Kings, they are his precious children. They wear his holy name, Christian, and he will one day welcome them home.

"He hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16b). It is not a city that will grow old and perish with the years; not one plagued by the blight of our great sin-cursed cities. It is where the Father is. Its streets are paved with gold. The *glory* of God is in her midst. The water of life and the tree of life are there. The saints are safe behind its massive walls — all the wicked are shut out. The curse that has lain upon the race since Eden will be lifted and they shall see his face. God himself shall wipe away every tear from

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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Does What We Wear Really Matter?

Not long before I moved from Montgomery, Alabama, a very tragic thing occurred. A young male employee of a grocery store abducted a young female customer from the store parking lot, took her to a remote area, raped her, and shot her in the head leaving her for dead. Amazingly, the girl lived and the young man was brought to trial. During testimony the boy stated that he was sexually aroused by the girl's manner of dress the day she came into the store. She wore short shorts and a halter top and was bra-less.



RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

Be well aware that if the girl had entered the store wearing NOTHING, the boy still would not have had the right to do what he did. *But WHAT SHE WORE DID CONTRIBUTE.* Because skimpy dress is the socially acceptable summer-time attire, many do not realize the problem. Both women and men (especially men) are sexually aroused by what they see. There is simply NO WAY that we can show large quantities of bare skin and not cause others to have problems in their minds, especially with such loose attitudes towards sex as our modern society has.

That is why the Holy Spirit directed Paul to write Christian women to "adorn themselves in modest apparel . . . as women professing godliness" (I Timothy 2:9,10). Christians whose attitudes and commitments are to please their Lord with all their might, will not have any problem deciding what is modest and what is not. We will WANT to be right in God's sight and set good examples before others.

I wonder, if the young lady in the incident I related could relive that terrible day in her life, if when she stepped to her closet to choose her clothing that day, what would she choose? Would she say that it DOES matter what you wear? — P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507.



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Public Sins

We have recently studied (1) secret sins, and (2) personal offenses; now let us consider (3) public sins.

To a young minister the apostle Paul wrote: "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). If he has in mind a personal trespass, his directions run counter to the teaching of Jesus regarding such trespasses (Matthew 18:15-17). Hence we conclude Paul refers to public, not personal, sins.

When the apostle Peter "dissembled" (acted a hypocrite) at Antioch, Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11). Others were being adversely influenced by Peter's example (verses 12, 13), so Paul "said unto Peter *before them all* . . ." (Verse 14). The sin was public; the apostolic rebuke was public.

It was "commonly reported" at Corinth that a member in that congregation was guilty of fornication (I Corinthians 5:1). Since the sin was publicly known, the apostle Paul did not hesitate to direct Christians to deal publicly with the sinner. He did not write the man a private letter, nor tell the elders to talk with him privately. Instead, he wrote: "I . . . have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together. . ." (you can't get any more 'public' than this!) "and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:3-5).

This step is taken by the authority of Christ, and with the apostle's assurance that he (Paul) would be with them in spirit. And it was to be taken in a public assembly, because the sin being dealt with was publicly known.

Such steps of discipline were not restricted to one guilty of fornication only. Paul wrote: "If any man that is called a brother be fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat. . . . Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (verses 11, 13).

Once the announcement is made, the whole body of Christ is to withdraw, not to keep company, or not to eat, with such. To deprive him of our social and fraternal association should bring him to repentance. This is the effect it had in Corinth, for Paul's second epistle to them says: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many" (II Corinthians 2:6). Since Paul had written them to have no company with him, they refused to do so—even after the guilty one had repented; and Paul had to instruct them: ". . . ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him" (verses 7-9).

Another sin which is to be publicly dealt with is the sin of division. Read with me: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

offences contrary to the doctrine which he have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by goods words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16: 17, 18). False teachers are to be "marked," and this must be done in public, so the whole membership will know to avoid them.

Another text which deals with public sins is very explicit: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). Note first that this is an apostolic "command." (2) It is by the authority of, or "in the name of," Jesus Christ. (3) It involves individual action by each member in the congregation: "that ye withdraw yourselves." (4) Such actions were to be taken against "every brother that walketh disorderly." Our English word "disorderly" comes from the Greek (ATAKTOS—a, negative; *tasso*, to put in order, arrange); and "signifies disorderly, with slackness (like soldiers not keeping rank), II Thessalonians 3:6; in verse 11 it is said of those in the church who refused to work, and became busybodies. . ." (Vine, W. E.: EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF N. W. WORDS, Vol. I, p. 230).

Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon* defines *ATAKTEO* (used in II Thessalonians 3:7) as "to be disorderly; a. properly of soldiers marching out of order or quitting the ranks: . . . c. to lead a disorderly life." Notice that this word (*disorderly*) includes one who has *quit the ranks!* If a soldier goes A.W.O.L., he is disorderly. If a member of the church quits his post of duty, and abandons the church, the church is to publicly withdraw from Him (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14).

I know of no passage in the New Testament which demands that the *church* (collectively), or which requires an *individual* Christian, to *privately* admonish one who sins PUBLICLY. The Holy Spirit indicates that such public rebuke will have a two-fold effect: (1) it may save the offending brother; and (2) it may cause others to fear. Hear what the Spirit says: "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). A (3) benefit will be to let the world know that the church (as such) does not endorse sin, even on the part of its own membership.

All should be aware that such measures are to be taken in the right spirit. "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). Disciplinary steps must never be taken in a partisan or factional spirit, for we are taught, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory" (Philippians 2:3). Although public sins are offences against the church (I Corinthians 10:32), the purpose of any rebuke or exhortation is to save the transgressor.

Next week: Discipline in the church).

PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS

Continued from page 1
their eyes (Compare Revelation 21-22).

"Sing on ye joyful pilgrims, The time will not be long,
Till in our Father's kingdom we swell a nobler song,
Where those we love are waiting to greet us on the shore,
We'll meet beyond the river, where surges roll no more."
— 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

“Thou Hast The Words Of Eternal Life”

Following the feeding of the 5,000 and the teachings by Jesus concerning the need for men to feast upon the Christ (figuratively), many turned their backs on him (John 6:1ff). These former followers had become “turncoats” — “. . . many of his disciples. . . walked no more with him” (Verse 66). The twelve, however, were more confident of his Messiahship. Thus, they had a greater understanding of his word.



BILL CLAYTON

Peter stated, “. . . thou hast the words of eternal life” (verse 68), and this fact cannot be emphasized too strongly. Peter recognized the futility of their situation when he identified that they had no one to whom they could turn, except Jesus, if they were serious about their eternal well-being.

In the long ago, David acknowledged the power of the word to keep him from sin: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalms 119:11). The Hebrew writer echoed the power and eternal aspect of the word (Hebrews 1:2, 3). Jesus, himself, testified saying, “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” [Matthew 28:18]. “I am the way the truth and the life” (John 14:6). The apostle Paul wrote that the gospel (the words of Jesus, both those spoken while on earth and those spoken by the pens of inspired writers) is God’s power to save (Romans 1:16, I Corinthians 15:1-3). He (Paul) sought to know nothing among the Corinthian brethren “. . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (I Corinthians 2:2). James clearly identified the integrity and power of the word when he penned, “. . . received with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

It is most evident that few, indeed very few, would agree with Peter’s conclusion, although the Scriptures undeniably confirm his affirmation. Many proclaim truth to be whatever one chooses to believe. Most seek a doctrine to salve their “felt needs.”

Evidently Jesus was not overly concerned about the “felt needs” of this multitude, and they, subsequently, turned to their own selfish desires as the twelve identified their loyalty to Jesus.

Satan is always present as he tempts us to receive *His* word and follow *Him*. He was successful in tempting one of the twelve (Judas) to betray the Christ. Peter would follow afar off. Jesus would go to the cross alone. Likewise, we too will face death and judgment alone. To whom will you have gone in this life? The word is yet eternal; it is forever the hope and giver of life through the Christ. It is mankind’s only weapon against Satan.

Although many do not agree, the absence of obedience to the word is yet the barrier separating men from God’s grace. What is the substance of our conviction concerning our responsibility for obediently following the pure and simple truth of the gospel? Would we follow afar off? “Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). It is little wonder that God chose “the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Corinthians 1:21).—2006 Sea King, Houston, Texas 77008.

What Will Keep Him From It?

Suppose your child joins a club (such as a little league baseball team) and is encouraged to attend the meetings. From time to time, suppose the schedule of the club’s meetings conflicts with an important school function, something vitally related to your child’s education? As a parent, what would you counsel your child to do? Would it be to go to the club meeting? or, to the more important school function? Probably, you would send him to the event that will better help his education (though you see good in both). If you do this for your child, he will more than likely grow up to consider employment, career goals, and continued self-improvement as more important than the Civitans, or playing golf. Though he will realize that these latter things are not wrong in themselves, he will still recognize the importance—the priority—of the former. This is just what you want him to learn.



PHILLIP GRAY

Now suppose your child is getting a sound education pertaining to physical things: What if there arises a conflict between school work versus the service or work of the precious, blood-bought church of the living God? Which will you counsel your child to attend? Will it be the secular and temporal? or, the spiritual and eternal? If you allow the school work (purely physical concern) to win out over the Lord’s cause now, what will keep your child from growing up to believe that, “Really, after all this ‘church talk’ and high-sounding ‘rhetoric’ about ‘spiritual priorities’ and ‘putting first the kingdom’ is said and done, my job and my pocketbook are practically more important?” What will keep him from believing that?

Oh, brethren and friends, we are every day caught up in a stupendous struggle -- a struggle between Satan and the forces of evil versus God and the forces of righteousness. Every moment we are being tested; our faith is on the line. “Tested, I say, to find out just whom and what we will put first in our lives. Is it going to be the devil and the material allurements of the world? or, God and the prospect of life everlasting? What choice are you now teaching your child to make? But, perhaps you are honest about it and admit to yourself, “I guess I’ll have to confess that school is

really more important to me and my child than church.” Now, you may have been honest with yourself; but you ought to maintain a respectful silence the next time sincerely dedicated saints of God sing the submissive strains,

“Live for Jesus, O my brother,

His disciple ever be:

Render not to any other,

What alone the Lord’s should be.”—P. O. Box 606, Flomaton, Al. 36441.

“Except These Bonds”

“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (Acts 26:27-29).

At the time of this oration, Paul was speaking before an august audience: Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, and many other prominent citizens of that far-off day. Paul had been arrested and was a prisoner in the City of Caesarea. Some years before, the Lord had said regarding Saul of Tarsus: “. . . 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” (Acts 9:15-16).

The statement, “Except these Bonds,” is a very significant one. In wishing that Agrippa were as he, the only thing that Paul had to “except” was his chains. Paul, on this historic occasion, had said, “I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

Through resentment and frustration, Paul could have wished vengeance and retribution upon the king, since he occupied a position of authority; but such was not the nature of Paul the Christian. As another example, David refused to slay King Saul,



W. A. HOLLEY

even though his life was in his hands (I Samuel 24:4; 26:5). Both Jesus and Paul taught that it is better to take wrong, than it is to do wrong (Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:17-21).

Now for some pointed questions? Please answer candidly. If you were trying to persuade a sinner to become a Christian, what would you have to “except?” Paul had said to the Corinthians, follow me as I follow Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). Would you recommend your total example? The Bible teaches that we must examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (II Corinthians 13:5).

We shall note some exceptions which might be offered. One might have to say, “. . . except my bad temper;” another, “. . . except my evil speaking of others;” another might say, “. . . except my tainted imaginations;” one might have to say, “. . . except my reading pornographic magazines;” others might have to say, “. . . except my frequent absence from the Lord’s assembly;” again, some might say, “. . . except my lack of self-denial for Christ and the church;” another might say, “. . . except my fornication and drunkenness;” others might have to say, “. . . except my stinginess;” another, “. . . except my love for popularity and praise of men;” others might say, “. . . except my lackadaisical attitude toward service for Christ and his work;” others, “. . . except my sowing division and discord among the people of God.”

We recognize, of course, that a person cannot be a Christian without being one. However, many *claim* to be Christians, when, as a matter of fact, they fall far short of so being. No doubt the man who had taken his father’s wife, being a member of the church at Corinth, claimed to be a Christian; but was he?? All Christians are members of the church, but not all church-members are Christians! In the instance re-

Continued On Page 4

“Except These Bonds”

ferred to, Paul ordered the faithful “to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (I Corinthians 5:1-5). Such a church-member cannot recommend his example, surely.

The word “example” (Greek *hupogrammos*), is defined by Vine: “. . . An under-writing . . . to write under, to trace letters for copying by scholars; hence, a writing-copy, an example, I Peter 2:21; said of what Christ left for believers (not expiatory, but

exemplary), that they might “follow his steps.” Jesus’ conduct was exemplary in all respects, leaving us, therefore, a perfect example.

Those of us who are Christians should set before our acquaintances the finest examples possible. “None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing” (Benjamin Franklin). Socrates, the famous Greek philosopher, who lived almost 500 years before Christ, said, “Let him that would move the world, first move himself.”

Dear Christian friend, have you ever taken a good, hard, honest look at yourself? Ask the following question: “If every member of the church were just like me, what kind of a church would the church be?” Men often find it difficult to hear what we *say*, when what we *are* is forever thundering in their ears. “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). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Acts

The book of Acts is truly one of the most exciting books of the Bible. Dealing primarily with the evangelistic efforts of Peter and Paul, Acts shows the worldwide expansion of Christianity.

Jesus said to the apostles: “. . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). With their marching orders ever in mind, the apostles preached the gospel in Jerusalem (2:4-5); Judaea and Samaria (8:1-4); and



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

unto the uttermost part of the earth (Colossians 1:23) -- just as Christ had commanded.

The consistent theme of their preaching was the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, (2:23-24; 3:14-15; 13:28-29).

Those sinners who believed the preaching of the disciples, were baptized for the remission of sin: Jews on Pentecost (2:38-41); Samaritans (8:5-12); Simon the sorcerer (8:13); the Ethiopian eunuch (8:27-39); Cornelius and his house (10:47-48); Lydia (16:15); the Philippian jailer (16:33); many of the Corinthians (18:8); twelve disciples in Ephesus (19:5); and Saul of Tarsus (22:16).

Accordingly, the theme of Acts is (1) the spread of the gospel, (2) the content of the gospel, and (3) what gospel obedience entails. Hence, a careful study of Acts enables us to reproduce in our own time the church of the first century -- the church of the Bible!

When we preach the same message today that Peter and Paul preached in the long ago, and when sinners receive that message by obedience to the same conditions of salvation stipulated therein, we will reproduce in our time the same church of which Peter and Paul were members.

Why should anyone want to be a member of a human denomination when he can be a member of the glorious church of Christ? Why should anyone knowingly turn from the commandments of the Lord to the perverted gospels of men?

Through the message of Acts we may escape the condemnation of those who blindly follow the error of denominationalism. We may establish in every community THE body of Christ.

Friend, can you read in Acts about the church of which you are a member? — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

We Miss You!

RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

This article is being written to you whom we have not seen at services nor involved in the Lord’s work in quite some time. Brother/Sister, WE MISS YOU! You were such a part of us. You looked so natural in “your” pew. The work you did and the encouragement you provided for us is now not being done, because with your special talents and abilities no one can take your place. As Paul suggests in I Corinthians 12, when you are not here, a part of the body is missing. Really! Literally! Because, the church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23), and you are a part of it. When you are not here, *we miss you!*

What happened? Did someone offend you? If so, remember Jesus’ teaching about how to correct it? Read Matthew 18:15-17 and straighten out the matter. Don’t leave the Lord because of it. Your soul, the work, and God are too important for that.

Did you just get involved in other things? We earnestly pray that you will re-evaluate your priorities. God will take care of your needs if you will put him first (Matthew 6:33). Will those things you have substituted for God’s worship and work benefit you eternally? Get back on an even keel. *We miss you!*

The thing we want you to know above all others is that both God and we love you. We love you so much that we pray for you and your return almost daily.

We admit that we have not expressed that love to you enough. In fact, because we did not know what to say and just when to say it, we have neglected you. We watched you drift away without encouraging you as much as we could have. And we are sorry. We ask your forgiveness. Please come home. We love you, and *WE MISS YOU!* — P. O. Box 4171, Pensacola, Fl. 32507.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

thought it not robbery
to be equal with God:
but
made himself of no reputation
and
took upon him the form of a servant
and
was made in the likeness of man
and being found in fashion
as a man
he humbled himself
and
became obedient unto death
even the death of the cross

Wherefore,
God also hath highly exalted him
and
given him
a name which is above every name

That at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow
of things in heaven
and
things in earth
and
under the earth
and that
every tongue confess
that
Jesus Christ is Lord

To the glory of God the Father
1202 S. 34th St. No. 2 — Birmingham, AL 35205



Words Of Truth

(USP:

It speak forth
the Words of Truth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY APRIL 13, 1984

NUMBER 16

Must One Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ?

PAUL KIDWELL, Sr.

This is at once a very simple and a very complex question, depending upon the attitude and intent of the one asking. One who is sincerely seeking truth and attempting to determine both the value and the place of the church in God's arrangement may ask. The question may come from one mired in denominational thinking. This question may be asked with a view to using the answer given to arouse prejudice in the minds of others. Currently, gospel preachers are being asked this question by their brethren, to satisfy a sincere desire to know, and to determine by the answer given whether the preacher is sound in the faith.

Just as in answering the question, "What must I do to be saved?" so in responding to the question before us, attention should be given to the place and posture of the querist. It is a simple matter to instruct the sincere seeker for truth who has just been introduced to the church in his study of the word. When he learns that the Lord adds one to the church of Christ at the same time he is saved (Acts 2:47), the question of church membership is thus settled in this querist's mind. Other situations are not so easily handled and may require the very best of both Bible knowledge and communications skills.

This is a *very difficult* question for some, evidently. It has posed some degree of difficulty to many of us, but *not because the Bible teaching is less than precise on this subject*. If for no other reason, our answer is made a challenge to our concern for "speaking the truth in love." Not wanting to convey a denominational concept, we speak guardedly lest we feed a wrong concept of "church joining." Neither do we offer a response which seeks to elevate "us." However, with due attention to humility and propriety, we must ultimately respond with a "thus saith the Lord." Even if the querist is trying to "ensnare" us, we must still provide a Bible answer. Yes, brother, even though you believe your brethren have asked of you in order to prove your soundness, *you too must answer*. If your brethren either do not know your convictions or have reason to doubt their scripturalness, there is a responsibility on your part to give answer. Stooping to ridicule the mentality or maturity of the querist will not do the job.

Our task in answering is made less difficult if we are primarily concerned with giving an answer which will please God. Becoming a member of the church of

Christ is not a matter of choice for those who would be saved. It is not an obligation put upon man, as in the obedience to a command of God. God did not "command" that we be members of the church; but neither did he leave us with the liberty to choose the "which," or "whether," or "if" of church membership. God places the saved in the church (Acts 2:41,47). He adds the saved to that "number." Thus, becoming a member of the church *is not something man does*. It is rather something which is done for man. A proper understanding of this principle would settle once and for all, and for all concerned, the matter before us. Occasionally, we hear someone say, "When I became a member of the church . . ." We may have avoided the use of "join the church" by such statement, but do we not still convey a wrong concept? We need to stress again and again, that the idea of man's having a choice in churches is contrary to the Bible. Jesus bought his church (Acts 20:28). He is the head and saviour of his church (Eph. 5:23). God puts all the saved into Christ's church.

The fact that some brethren have not been adequately taught and have used the phrase "Church of Christ" in a denominational sense is admitted, and at once deplored. The church of our Lord is *not a denomination*. Yet we must pause in our study at this point and question some of our own. Some say this, but they don't mean the same thing. Faithful preachers have spoken against denominationalism and *contrasted such with the church built by Jesus*. Today, some are actually applauding denominationalism while "putting down" those faithful advocates of the "one way."


On this same subject, Reuel Lemmons wrote in *Firm Foundation*, June 4, 1963: "When Bro. Ketcherside says, 'The church of God is no sect,' he does not mean what you and I mean. He contends that the church that you and I are members of -- the ONLY church you and I are members of -- is a sect. It is of this body of people he speaks when he says, 'No sect is the church of God.'" "Reading from Ketcherside in the late 1950's and early 1960's would produce a striking similarity to statements we are hearing today. The argument may be made that some of God's sheep are caught in "strange thickets," but some who so argue can't tell the fold from the thicket. They think the church of Christ is simply another

"thicket."

Some have charged that we come across with an answer which says, "We *only* have the ability to interpret scripture correctly; therefore, you must surrender every thing which you have believed and accept everything which *we* believe in order to be right." I do not believe this represents the thinking of any great number of my brethren. It is not true that brethren generally have either taught or tolerated this view. We *do* believe there is a body of truth so clearly set forth that every man may, as God commands, understand, obey, and contend therefor. Too, even as an individual may know he is a member of the church of Christ, *SO ALSO* may we know that a body of such baptized believers constitutes the church in a given area. **WE CAN SEE THE CHURCH!** The glasses of self-righteousness are not used in so doing, but rather the glasses of scripture. In fleeing from denominationalism, some have gone right on past non-denominational Christianity and have ended up in the inter-denominational camp. In fighting what they see as a super-exclusive position, they have taken the posture of "open fellowship."

To admit that one could possibly learn the truth, obey the gospel from the heart, and still not be identified with a local congregation of God's people does not compromise the identity of the church. To make it appear that we believe the validity of one's baptism is predicated upon "our" doing the baptizing is to represent us falsely. On the other hand, to state that there are *many cases such as just described*, existing in practically all denominations, is to assume the very point which needs proving. *If one learns the truth of the gospel while in a denominational environment, it is in spite of such environment, and not as a result thereof*. One could hardly learn the pure gospel from an impure source! It is significant that we have not been exposed to the "many" Christians in practically "all denominations!" Rather, we hear testimony concerning one who *was* in this denomination or that, and who had his appetite sharpened for truth, and who after study of the word *obeyed the gospel*. Brethren, this is what we all know should happen. Be careful that statements

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

Flavil H. Nichols

Attitudes Toward Christ's Church

Do you have the same attitude which Christ manifested toward his church? He "loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25). Do you? Paul said, "But we have the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16), and he awaited the time when "Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19). Paul himself exhibited a concern or "care of all the churches" (II Corinthians 11:28). What is your attitude toward the church?



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

SHOULD LOVE THE CHURCH

Love for the church means that we will not intentionally offend the church. "Give none offence . . . to the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32). Rather, we should seek to please the other members of the church, as Paul who said: "Even as I please all men in all things . . ." (I Corinthians 10:33). (Of course, if doing our duty offends any, then he will just have to be offended). But Paul wrote: "For do I now . . . seek to please men?" adding, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). Assuredly, Paul made no effort to DIS-PLEASE men; but neither did he seek to PLEASE men!

When one loves the church as he should, he is happy to attend its services. David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1). Is this your attitude toward the church, which now is the "house of God" (I Timothy 3:15)? Are you really HAPPY to attend *all* services (Hebrews 10:25)?

One would be inconsistent if he claims to love the church, yet has refused to become a member of it! When we obey the gospel and become "such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47), the Lord adds us to the church. We are members of the same church to which they were added, for we have obeyed the same gospel they obeyed. Like the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-39), we have not joined any denomination, but simply became Christians like he, and the Philippian jailer, and all others in the book of Acts, did (Acts 16:30-34).

To love the church is to love the members of the church -- its people. The apostle John wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death" (I John 3:14). Another apostle wrote: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22).

One who loves the church, also loves its doctrine and its restraints. One purpose of the word of God is to keep us from sinning (I John 2:1). David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalms 119:11). Part of the word includes "reproof," and "correction" (II Timothy 3:16,17).

The church of Christ was in the "eternal purpose" of God (Ephesians 3:8-11; note also Daniel 2:44). *This same church is also in the "purpose" and plans of all who love it* (II Corinthians 9:7; Acts 11:23). We are taught to "Love the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17) -- not

just our home congregation.

SINFUL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CHURCH

Only a sinful attitude toward the church could make an informed member shirk his duty to attend the services of the church. God says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . ." (Hebrews 10:25). Those baptized on Pentecost "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Furthermore, "they continued daily with one accord in the temple" (verse 46). One who gives the Lord only *one hour a week* by coming habitually only to the Sunday morning worship, should re-examine his basic attitude toward the Lord's church. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Ask yourself: "Do I believe this verse? Is it "good" to attend Bible study, and all other services? If I *know* this, and don't *do* it, do I not have a sinful attitude toward the church?"

Christians are taught to "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). Is such a member described above a "steadfast" Christian? Is he always "abounding" in the Lord's work? (You answer please). Furthermore, Christians are directed by the Holy Spirit to "Be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). Is building up Bible class attendance a "good work?" If one disobeys Titus 3:1, does he not have a sinful attitude toward the church and its work?

God placed a "curse" against Meroz because its people were "absentees" when they should have been present (Judges 5:23). This was written for our learning! (Romans 15:4). It seems the Antioch church assembled daily for a whole year (Acts 11:26). Do we have the same disposition toward the church if we show up only once or twice during a revival? And attend even the regular services only spasmodically? How can a negligent member claim to be "of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) with the Eldership, the Deaconship, and the rest of the faithful members who constantly strive to build up the church? Does this not apply also, and with equal force, to those who are deliberately absent on Wednesday nights?

A second sinful attitude toward the church characterizes one who sows discord. In the list of things God hates we find "he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). To the Lord's church 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" (I Corinthians 1:10). God's plan whereby we may attain this perfect oneness of believers in matters of 'judgment' is for us to "obey them" (the elders) "that have the rule over you and submit yourselves" (Hebrews 13:17). It is wrong to agitate trouble and stir up strife in the church. In the very shadow of the cross Jesus prayed that "all who shall believe on me" may "be one" (John 17:2-23). The slogan of an earlier era is still valid:

In matters of faith, UNITY;

In matters of opinion, LIBERTY;

And in all things, CHARITY (or LOVE).

It is wicked to press even a rightful opinion to the point of dissension or division.

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Must One Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ ?

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made do not leave the impression that this one could continue in a denominational body with God's approval.

This writer is still willing to affirm; "The churches of Christ today are a result of the word of God. This is the same fellowship as existed in the first century." If you don't believe that, where does this leave you? — Box 7133, Columbus, Ga. 31904.

The Son Of God

GARY C. HAMPTON

Today, someone's son is simply his male descendant or one he has adopted to fill that role. However, Christ was called the Son of God for another reason. To be sure, he was God's Son by birth (Luke 1:34-35), but the title "Son of God" most often refers to Jesus' being of the same nature as God. When Jesus called God his Father, the Jews understood that he was claiming to be God (John 5:17-24).

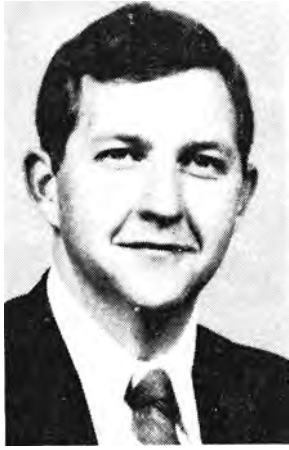
The New Testament tells us Jesus was God come down to earth. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). John says that the Word was with God at the beginning, and was God. That all things were made by him is proof that he is God, since God was the creator (Genesis 1:1; compare Colossians 1:16-17). This Word, that was God, John plainly shows to be Jesus (John 1:14).

The Hebrew writer spoke of Jesus as God: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3). Vine says that Jesus was the shining forth of God's glory and the very image of his substance. In verse 8, the Hebrew writer quotes Psalm 45:6-7 and says that God, the Father, called Jesus God (1:8).

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way of the Lord (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3). Jesus understood Malachi 3:1 to refer to John the Baptist (Matthew
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Is Gambling Sinful?

Just a few years ago such a question would have been virtually non-existent among Christians. There may have been many who did not know why gambling was wrong, but almost every religious person agreed that it is. According to a recent Gallup poll, eighty percent of the people surveyed endorsed legal gambling. An article on the "Gambling Rage" in *U.S. News and World Report* (May 30, 1983) carried the following statements:



DAVID COURINGTON

"Never before have so many people used so many ways to bet." "Government researchers estimate that 32 billion dollars per year is gambled with professional bet takers alone." "The moral tone of America is changing." "Old doubts and fears about games of chance are falling by the wayside as states, churches, and other organizations cater to people's desire to bet." "One fact that helps explain declining opposition to gambling: Previously wary governments and religious groups are now among the biggest profit makers, promoters, and proprietors of legal games." These statements let us see the scope of the problem and part of the reason why. In the church we need to take a firm stand against all forms of evil. *Gambling should be no exception.* To combat renewed efforts to promote gambling, every elder, preacher, teacher -- indeed, every Christian -- should renew his efforts to educate others as to its sinfulness, and the great harm that results from gambling. Yes, gambling is sinful. Now let us note what it is, and why it is a sin.

What is gambling? The issue often becomes confused at this point. Most people really have only a vague idea of what gambling is. Some people say, "Gambling is no different from buying stock, or insurance. Why, there is risk involved in everything, so don't tell me that gambling is wrong. You do it

every day when you get in the car and drive to town." One who would say such evidently does not know what gambling is. Webster defines gambling as "To play games of chance for money or some other stake." Notice he uses the word "play." Gambling is the creation of an unnecessary risk for fun or sport, not a natural risk as in business or legitimate investments. It is games "of chance." Something is at risk. Some have erroneously labeled winning a prize at a local supermarket as gambling. There is no money paid or other thing at risk in such. Another definition given by the Post Office to regulate lotteries says that there must be three elements involved for a thing to be a lottery. They are (1) consideration contributed by the participant (2) the element of chance in selection of winners (3) a prize. If all of these elements are present, then a thing is gambling.

This brings us to the heart of the matter: "What is wrong with gambling?" Bear in mind that if it violates just one Bible principle, it is wrong and Christians must abstain from it, and oppose it. Note what is wrong with it:

1. *The whole reason for one to gamble is covetousness.* To covet is a sin. Would anyone deny that such is the case? The tenth commandment states, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17). I Corinthians 6:10 says that the covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. There are many other

passages condemning this sin (Acts 20:33; Romans 1:29; I Corinthians 5:10,11; 6:10). To *covet* means to desire to have that which belongs to another. What other motive is there for gambling, if it is not to have something that belongs to someone else without paying for it. To covet after money is a terrible thing; it has caused many to err from the faith and pierce themselves through with many sorrows (I Timothy 6:10). Many have erred by gambling in desiring and seeking the money of another.

2. *Gambling violates Romans 12:17* . . . *Provide things honest in the sight of all men.* W. E. Vine defines the word *honest* as "fair, right, honourable, of such conduct as deserves esteem." Gambling is not any of these things. It is not fair for it takes one man's possessions and transfers them to another. It is not basically right, nor honorable. It is certainly not conduct deserving esteem. How can it possibly deserve esteem when it has been recognized for centuries as a sinful practice? Gambling violates the basic principle of honesty because it is taking something that belongs to someone else and giving nothing in return.

3. *Gambling is in opposition to God's method for man to provide for himself and his family.* "Dear Abby" once said, "The psychology of gambling is not very complicated. It is the science of trying to get something for nothing." In the same article cited earlier from *U.S. News and World Report*, the 20th Century Fund (a New York research group that did a study on legalized betting) was quoted as saying, "Gambling's get-rich-quick appeal appears to mock capitalism's core values: Disciplined work habits, thrift, prudence, adherence to routine, and the relationship between effort and reward." The idea of one's working for what he wants is not only a major principle of capitalism but a major one of the Bible. II Thessalonians 3:10 says, "That if any would not work, neither should he eat." How contrary gambling is to Paul's admonition to the Ephesians, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour" (He didn't say 'bet' -- D.C.), "working with his hands" (Not with numbers and point spreads! -- D.C.) "the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28). Work is in God's plan, not trying to get something for nothing.

4. *Gambling is often illegal.* Even with the increases in legalized gambling, some estimate that illegal betting outnumbers the legal kind by seven to one. Betting on poker games, football games, private lotteries, etc., is still illegal in spite of the popularity of it. Romans 13:1,2 makes it very clear that we are subject to the laws of the land and those who resist the powers that be, resist God and "shall receive to themselves damnation." The Christian abides by the law, even if he thinks he can get by with breaking it.

5. *Gambling can be labeled as sinful by its associates.* The frequent association of gambling with organized crime, increased crime, the drug trade, the liquor business, an increase in the number of divorces, etc., further points up the fact that the Christian must oppose it. A recent *New York Times* editorial said casinos provide "easy credit for gangsters." The crime rate in Atlantic City has tripled since the beginning of legalized gambling there. One by casual observance can see the connection with liquor, and with prostitution. The Lord said that we could know false teachers by their fruits. Can we not know that gambling is wrong by the results that it produces and the things that come with it?

6. *Gambling is wrong because it harms one's influence.* If you do not think so, answer this question, "What would you think of a preacher or elder who played poker, operated a roulette wheel, or bet on horses?" No, he could not influence others for the right. His gambling would not only fail to influence others for the good, but it would have a bad influence

The Son Of God

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11:7-10). By looking back to Malachi 2:17, we can see that this Lord, whose way he was to prepare, was the God of Judgment. By inspiration, John tells us whose way he came to prepare (John 1:29-34). It was Jesus, the Son of God.

Paul also believed Jesus was God come down to earth: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:5-7). Paul is saying Jesus existed as the very essence of God, just as he took on the very essence of a servant by becoming a man (Hebrews 2:9-18).

As proof of his divinity, Jesus cited his miracles (John 5:36). Nicodemus had seen those miracles and knew they were proof Jesus was from God (John 3:2). John says the reason he made record of those miracles he did was that we might believe Jesus is God's Son (John 20:30-31). Jesus was able to turn water into wine (John 2:1-11), healed the son of a nobleman (John 4:43-54), and healed a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years (John 5:1-9), just prior to citing his miracles as proof of his being God. Later, he raised others up from the dead (i.e., John 11:1-46), and was finally resurrected himself (Romans 1:4). The Pharisees recognized a special power was behind such miracles, so they attributed them to the power of the devil (Matthew 12:22-30). Jesus showed them that Satan would be working against himself if he cast out devils. Therefore, the power had to be from God.

As another proof of his divinity, Jesus turned to the prophecy of Old Testament scripture (John 5:39). We will deal with some of these in our next lesson.

In this lesson, we have seen that Jesus is God's Son in at least two senses. He is most importantly God's Son in that he is like God or the same in nature. We have briefly looked at some passages that stated he is God's Son and two proofs of Sonship Jesus used in answering his critics. — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

Attitudes Toward Christ's Church

Continued from page 2

A "don't-care" attitude toward the church is also sinful! To be indifferent toward the church, not caring if it succeeds or fails, indicates a lack of love for the body of Christ. One who does not care about the effectiveness of our worship in song -- whether the singing is excellent, mediocre, or poor -- may refuse to sing as commanded (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). When the house is not filled, for those present to 'scatter out' over the auditorium may be indicative of a "Don't Care" spirit, and may lessen the effectiveness of our worship. For members to spend generously on themselves, to keep up with the latest fashions, or to gratify the desires of the flesh, yet be 'tight-fisted' when giving to the church, may reveal a lack of concern for the church and its program(s). Still true is it that "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). It is sinful to be unconcerned about lost souls (Matthew 16:26), and not to care if the outreach of the church is hampered by stinginess.

May all of us become even more vitally interested in the total program of the church. May our love for the church grow until it becomes like the love Christ has for it -- enough to die for it, if need be! (Ephesians 5:25).

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"I Never Met A Man I Did Not Like"

GARRY STANTON

The words, "I never met a man I did not like," have been immortalized by Will Rogers. These are truly great words which express a very admirable sentiment. But there lived on this earth a greater man, whose attitude and feeling for mankind is much stronger. That one is Jesus, the Christ. Though it is not found in so many words in the Scriptures, the attitude is definitely there: *Jesus never met a man he did not love*. To love someone, expresses a much deeper and more meaningful concern than just liking someone. Christ's love for the *entire world* manifested itself in the fact that he was willing to die for all mankind. Paul wrote, "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). Christ's love for man was not kept hidden, but he showed it and proved it for all to see.

Sometimes in the frailty of the human mind and human reasoning, we may think that Christ died only for the righteous and godly. But the scriptures tell us that Jesus died for *all*: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6,8). Since Jesus died for *all mankind*, Jesus never met a man he did not love. Let us notice some of the people Jesus had opportunity to meet.

(1) Jesus met a woman of Samaria (John 4). The average Jew would have "no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). In fact, Jewish prejudice was so strong, they would go miles out of their way to avoid passing through Samaria. But Jesus overcame racial prejudice, and was willing to give her of the "living water" which would lead to "everlasting life." Jesus' love for the Samaritans was so great that he spent two days teaching them so that "many more believed because of his word" and they knew "that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (John 4:41-42). Jesus never met one of another race that he did not love.

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on many. I Corinthians 10:31-33 says, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, 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." How can gambling bring glory to God? or influence anyone to obey God? When one gambles he does not seek to influence others to do good, but he seeks his own profit at the expense of those he might influence.

7. *Gambling is a sin because it disregards the other person and breaks the golden rule*. Jesus stated the highest principle of living in Matthew 7:12 when he said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets." Can one abide by this rule when he is taking another man's money and putting it in his pocket with glee, while the other fellow looks on, sad and forlorn? Of course not! "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10). Picture yourself going to the window and placing a two-dollar bet at the dog track. "All in fun" you say. at one of the other windows is a man (and there are many) who is betting the last two dollars his family has. Should you win, you get the money that this man has bet. (Money doesn't come from the track owner, but from other bettors). He is certainly guilty; and what about you? You are, too. The object of gambling is not to help others but to help yourself at someone else's expense. I believe that it is good to have a good laugh and a good time, but not at the expense of someone else. To profit is not wrong in itself, but who would say that it is right to profit by taking advantage of someone else.

(2) Jesus met "a man with an unclean spirit" (Mark 5:1-20). The demons which possessed this man made him a raving maniac; he could not be contained; he would cry and cut himself with stones. This conduct was frightful, so bad that "no man might pass by that way" (Matthew 8:28). But Jesus had *compassion* on the man (Mark 5:19) and he helped the man by sending the devils into the swine so that the man could be "in his right mind." Jesus never met one who was afflicted, physically or mentally, that he did not love.

(3) Jesus met a woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11). Not only was the woman an adulteress, but she was caught "in the very act" (John 8:4). The Scribes and Pharisees were interested, not in justice, but in trapping Jesus in violation (?) of the Mosaic law. The law required that both man and woman guilty of adultery, be stoned (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). But they had brought only the *woman*. Jesus tells her: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). Jesus did not condone her actions, for he called it *sin*; but he was compassionate toward her, telling her to repent and change her life. Jesus never met a sinner he did not love.

(4) Jesus met Malchus, the high priest's servant (John 18:10). When he was betrayed by Judas, who led a mob "with lanterns and torches and weapons" to take Jesus, Peter tried, to help Jesus by striking out with his sword, cutting off Malchus' right ear. Jesus rebuked Peter's rashness and touched Malchus' ear and healed him. (Luke 22:50-51). Jesus never met a man, even an enemy, whom he did not love.

(5) Jesus met the executioners (Luke 23:26-46). Jesus stood before Pilate not willing to answer the charges made against him. Pilate later says that he "found no fault in this man" and is "willing to release Jesus." But the Jews wanted him crucified, so Jesus is sentenced to death, while a murderer goes free.

You may say that there is no harm done in gambling; but there are one million compulsive gamblers in the United States and they all started by small bets. If you support gambling you aid in the demise of others.

Yes, gambling is sinful. "But it can't be stopped, so it should be made legal," is the cry of so many, even some weak Christians. If that is your belief just remember: Legalizing a thing does not make it better, nor less destructive. Is a legal drunkard any less drunk or disgusting than an illegal drunkard? Also, legalizing a vice means that there will be more of it -- not less! Some are deterred from gambling by the illegality of it. Furthermore, anything that is wrong is better done undercover than out in the open because the influence of it will be felt less that way. In addition, sin is better to be far away from us than close by. Lot might not have been able to stop the people of Sodom and Gomorrah from their evil, but did he have to pitch his tent next door? The idea that many have is that they can't go to Las Vegas, so let's bring Las Vegas to Alabama. We need to raise our voices against such.

Young people, may be tempted to gamble because it seems like a good way to get rich, and a smart thing to do. Gambling is stupid! You will lose more than you win. Lotteries typically return less than one-half of the money bet. Casinos and horse tracks return only 75 to 80 percent of the money bet. Would you put your money in a bank that did not pay interest, but charged you 20% to 50% of the money which you put in -- and gave no guarantee that you would get that small portion back? That is gambling! It is sinful, and it is harmful in every way! In gambling, even if you win, you lose; because it displeases God, and leads away from him. — P.O. Box 323, Mulga, AL 35118.

Jesus is spit upon and made fun of and then he crucified between two criminals. He is about to die an unjustified death when he says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If Jesus could forgive them, he can forgive us for whatever we do, provided we by faith in him repent and do his will (Acts 2:38). *Jesus never met a man he did not love*.

Jesus wills that the same love be found in us. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Therefore, let it be true of each of us, "He never met a man he did not love." — Box 278, Trenton, Texas 75490.

Who Moved The Stakes

DANA WATFORD

When I was still a student in school, trying to prepare myself as a minister, I took on a secular job to help pay the bills. I worked for a church member who owned a fence company. No matter what the reason was for our putting up a fence we always had to locate the old property stakes, left by the surveyor, to determine the property line. This would sometimes lead to a property dispute because the stakes had either been removed or moved out of their original positions. Arguments would ensue and nothing settled until the line was resurveyed and staked and then all arguments would cease because the authority had been established.

This removing of stakes is not anything new. It has been going on for centuries. In ancient times stones were used as boundary indicators. Sometimes people would move these stones and claim land that did not rightfully belong to them. Of this act, God said, "Cursed be he that removes his neighbor's landmark" (Deuteronomy 27:17). Solomon also warned his descendants, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28).

There is a great need today in our world to heed those warnings of old. We are living in an age when men are tampering with and removing ancient landmarks which God himself has set. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible word of God, has set forth certain limitation and boundaries or landmarks to help govern our lives. When men remove or disregard these landmarks they transgress God's law (I John 3:4).

How we are to worship and serve God has already been staked off for us. Our worship must show an attitude of reverence toward God, coupled with a desire to do things in accordance to his truth (John 4:24). When we seek to add to this or subtract from it we are guilty of trying to remove the ancient landmarks of faith.

We also should recognize that how we are to live and conduct our lives has been well established by God's ancient landmark-authority, the Bible. God in his divine wisdom has drawn the lines. In reference to some things he said "thou shalt not."

Why can we not be content with the Lord's way?

Which ancient landmark of God's are you considering tampering with? To try to remove one, replace one, or simply going around one of God's landmarks is to transgress God's law and such is sin with its awful reward (I John 3:4; Romans 6:23). — High Forest Church of Christ, 1850 McFarland Blvd. N., Tuscaloosa, AL 35406.

(Editor's note: I believe this in Bro. Watford's first article in WORDS OF TRUTH. We appreciate his stand for truth, and anticipate other good articles from him.)



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

VOLUME 21

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Abraham, Father Of The Faithful

Abraham is called *father* by more people than any other man this side of Noah. His descendants are the Jews, Magians, Sabrians, Indians and Moham-medians.

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" (Genesis 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" (Genesis 12:3).

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" (Galatians 3:6). Paul applied this kind of faith to Christianity. Those who have Abraham's faith "the same are the children of Abraham" (Galatians 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" (Galatians 3:16).

In the Hebrew letter, we read of Abraham's faith in action: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10). Because of his faith in the eternal reward of heaven, Abraham implicitly obeyed.

The Jews of the first century attached great importance to being heirs of Abraham. They mistakenly thought this relationship would get them



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

to heaven. They themselves 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. One inspired writer 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 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 . . ." (Hebrews 11:19).

LET US IMITATE ABRAHAM'S FAITH! — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

Commitment To Christ

DANA WATFORD

Jesus teaches us what it will mean if we commit ourselves to him (Luke 14:25-33). Great multitudes had been following Jesus. People were excited about him. They were fascinated by his strange teachings and his miracles. Some, in believing he was the Messiah, thought he would drive out the Roman forces. Others were just curious. To this crowd, who was turning the whole affair into a wild extravaganza, Jesus said, "If any man come unto me . . ." (Luke 14:26f).

Simply crowding along behind Jesus did not mean discipleship. Jesus makes this unmistakably clear. Jesus states clearly the conditions that must be met by those who would follow him as his disciples. These conditions are given in two illustrations: (1) A man who would build a tower; (2) A king who would do battle (Luke 14:28-33). Jesus teaches that before a person commits himself to anything he should first count the cost; and secondly he must be willing to pay the price. Discipleship to Jesus involves these two conditions.

We recognize the importance and the necessity of counting the cost in anything in which we participate. We do not commit ourselves to buying a house, insurance, car or even taking a vacation, unless we first know what it is going to cost us. The total cost of something, if we accept it, becomes our commitment.

Therefore, commitment to Jesus involves the recognition of what it costs to serve him. That is why


Jesus taught that a person must first count the cost of discipleship before accepting it. If Jesus' stern conditions of discipleship seem as deterrents to superficial enthusiasm, they must also be regarded as challenges to those who desire to live an active life serving Jesus.

Jesus was uncompromisingly honest. He wanted no one to follow him with false illusions. People who wanted to be his disciples would have to face up to the task, or not follow him at all. Commitment to Jesus begins with a person's first counting the cost.

The second condition, before a person makes the commitment to follow Jesus, is a willingness to pay the price. The cost of faithful discipleship is high. It costs all who are involved. It cost God (John 3:16). It cost Christ (Phil. 2:5-8). It cost Christians for they have a price to pay as well. It is true that Jesus "paid it all," in that he paid everything that we ourselves can not pay. But there is a price that we too must pay. If there is no payment to be made, as some would teach, then why would Jesus teach us to count the cost?

What is the price we must be willing to pay in order to commit ourselves to Jesus? First, there is the price of self-denial (Matthew 16:24). To deny self does not mean a temporary denial, or simply a sacrifice of certain pleasures for a short period of time in order that some temporary good may be done. To "deny" self is to no longer live for self (Galatians 2:20). Paul had died to self; he had nailed his passions and lusts

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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

Discipline In The Church

In this column in recent weeks we have seen that public sins (those publicly known, as in I Corinthians 5:1) must be publicly rebuked (I Timothy 5:20). Unlike private sins and personal offenses, which should be kept private (Matthew 18:15-17), public announcement should be made of repentance for sins which are publicly known. (Be it clearly understood that no passage of holy scripture authorizes the 'reporting' of one's sins!)



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

God always has been on the side of law and order. He cast down to hell the angels that sinned (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6, expelled sinful Adam from the beautiful garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24) and placed mankind under the curse of death. God disciplined Cain, sending him out as a fugitive and a vagabond, and set a mark on him (Genesis 4:8-15). When the world became almost totally corrupt, God disciplined the whole world with a flood (Genesis 6-9). From his own presence, God sent fire and burned to death Nadab and Abihu who offered "strange fire, which the Lord commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-10). The earth swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram for their sin (Numbers 16:1-35). The following day, fourteen thousand seven hundred Israelites were killed by the Lord for murmuring at God's disciplinary measures against Korah and his company (Numbers 16:49). Truly, God is (in regard to sinners) an unsparring God! (II Peter 2:4-9).

The first recorded sin in the church was when Ananias lied about how much he was giving (Acts 5:1-11). It was a public sin, and God publicly struck him dead! Upon her arrival and telling the same lie, God struck dead his wife Sapphira likewise! This was in the days of the apostles, who had the ability to "discern spirits" (I Corinthians 12:10), which no man now possesses. However, Jesus said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). As the church became fully established, matters of discipline were turned over to the congregations (I Corinthians 5 and II Thessalonians 3:6).

Webster defines DISCIPLINE as "Training or experience that corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects, esp., the mental faculties or moral character . . ." Thus, in a general sense, DISCIPLINE includes all the processes or means by which members of the church are trained and educated to "walk in the light" (I John 1:7) of the glorious gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 4:4). The inspired word is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16, A.S.V.). This aspect of DISCIPLINE is of an *instructive*, or a *preventive*, nature.

But there is also *punitive discipline*. By the Holy Spirit the apostle Paul wrote of one who had been withdrawn from by the church: "Sufficient to such a one is this PUNISHMENT which was inflicted by the many" (II Corinthians 2:6). This *chastizing discipline*

actually PENALIZES one who was impenitent of his sin.

Congregations have an apostolic command (II Thessalonians 3:6) to exclude from our fellowship those who walk "disorderly." According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon this military term describes one who is out of step, or has quit the ranks. Thus the church is *commanded* to withdraw from members who (to use the familiar military lingo) go A.W.O.L., as well as from those who (while professing to remain in the church) "walketh disorderly." This does not include those who make mistakes, but correct them; the term "walketh" indicates continued action. After all, if one is not going to heaven with us, why should he be retained in our fellowship on earth?

Hear the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). He directed the church at Corinth: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4,5). Hear him again: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators" (verse 9). Again: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat" (verse 11). Now listen to verse 13: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

The church at Corinth obeyed this divine command, and withdraw from the guilty brother. He subsequently repented; and the same apostle taught them the beautiful lesson of forgiveness in his case (II Corinthians 2:1-11). The desired goal was reached; the purpose of discipline in this case was accomplished, namely, the salvation of the brother in error. But if he never had repented, the church had cleared itself from blame in this case! Hear the Holy Spirit's approving words: ". . . ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (II Corinthians 7:11; read also verses 3-12).

WORD of GOD

Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be

held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Psalm 32:7-11

Commitment To Christ

Continued from page 1

to the cross. He told Christians the same was required of them (Colossians 3:5-10). To deny self is in every moment and in every way, to say "no" to self, and "yes" to Christ. Jesus does not want so much of your time, nor so much of your money: *He wants you!* -- All of who you are and all of what you have! That is the price we must pay! The reason for lukewarm Christians, Sunday-only saints, non-attenders, tight-fisted givers, is because unless we first give ourselves we really can not give anything else (II Corinthians 8:3-5).

A second payment we must make in order to follow Jesus is the price of living by his will for our lives. A disciple is one who follows another with the intent to learn his teaching. This is what Jesus is teaching when he says "follow me." Discipleship involves continuing in the teaching of Christ (John 14:15; 15:14).

Commitment to Jesus will involve our counting the cost and our willingness to pay the price. If we are able to meet these conditions, we will reap the benefits of God's grace through Jesus Christ. There is, for those who run the race with patience, who finish the course, who keep the faith, the reward of eternal life with God. But commitment to Jesus pays in this life also: the peace that passes understanding, a glorious hope, an all-encompassing love, forgiveness, grace beyond measure, strength, and joy are but some of the dividends we receive when we commit our lives to Jesus.

In every area of life it is good to be honest with one's self, and face the true facts. A young man may have his heart set on becoming a star athlete, he may have visions of victory, but unless he is willing to face the facts, to pay the price for excellence, he will never achieve that goal.

In Luke 14:25-33, Jesus does not intend to dampen enthusiasm; but he is teaching that the cost of discipleship must be faced, or else red-hot enthusiasm will end up in cold despair. There is no challenge that compares to Christian living, and no thrill that excels that of the Christian way. But dying with Jesus and taking up his cross is not easy. Counting the cost and paying the price is necessary in following Jesus, and that is a commitment that leads to rewards both now, and in eternity! — 1850 McFarland Blvd. N., Tuscaloosa, AL 35406.

Editor's note: Bro. Watford has worked for congregations in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi, and is presently working with the High Forest congregation in Tuscaloosa.

Christ Is The Theme Of the Old Testament

GARY C. HAMPTON

We live in an age that has placed youth on a pedestal. Anything one wants to sell should be new, different, and for the young, if not in body at least in heart. Such an emphasis has, perhaps, caused some to lay aside the Old Testament as unimportant and outdated. True, we no longer live under it as a law (Colossians 2:14), but it does satisfy an important need for us all.

Paul states the law's purpose clearly when he writes to the people of Galatia: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). The main purpose of the law was to point to Christ. Close examination will show this to be the purpose of all the Old Testament.

In Genesis 3 we find a hint of things to come. God pronounces sentence upon Satan for his involvement in man's fall, when he states, "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" (Genesis 3:15). Surely this foretells more than snakes biting people, and people killing snakes! It points to Jesus Christ and his work on earth. Jesus had to die on the cross of Calvary so that you and I might live. This death was the bruising of

the heel of the seed of woman. Three days later Christ was raised from the dead, conquering sin, and a death blow had been dealt to Satan's head (Hebrews 2:8-9, 14-15).

The great promise of blessing that was given to Abraham (Genesis 22:15-18) also points to the Christ to come. Paul called Christ the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. He 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). In verse 14, he 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." Further application comes in verse 16, when he writes, "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." Jesus was the blessing promised in that promise to Abraham in the book of Genesis.

Jesus is the star that was to come out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17; Revelation 22:16). He is the priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17). He is the king promised

through Jeremiah (23:5) and the suffering servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4-9; Acts 8:32-35). On and on we could go, naming prophecies and showing Christ as the fulfillment of them. However, these statements coupled with Luke's record of the trip to Emmaus are sufficient to show that Jesus is the essence of Old Testament writing. Luke tells us, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (24:27).

The inspired spokesmen of the New Testament also recognized Jesus as the theme of the Old Testament. That first sermon on Pentecost showed that Jesus was the promised Messiah of Old Testament prophecy. Peter, in Acts 3, said that Jesus had come from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Acts 4 Peter's answer to the rulers declares Jesus to be the stone set at naught of the builders, which is spoken of in Psalm 118:22. Stephen's famous defense involves proof of Jesus' Sonship, starting with Abraham. The writer of the book of Hebrews shows Jesus and his church to be the true substance of the shadows we find in the Old Testament. — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

The Merideth-Smith Debate

(No. 1)

During 1982 and 1983 two significant debates were conducted in Grenada, Mississippi, regarding the "saints only" position in church benevolence. Noel Merideth, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, participated in both discussions. Ward Hogland, Booneville, Mississippi, and J. T. Smith, Lake Jackson, Texas, represented the "saints only" benevolence in congregational giving.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

The proposition the first two nights was, "The Scriptures teach that a congregation, from its treasury, may provide benevolent aid to a sinner or one who is safe." Merideth so affirmed; Smith denied it. The last two nights Smith affirmed as unscriptural congregational help to non-saints.

Smith represented the Van Doren congregation in Grenada; Merideth, the Elliot congregation. The debate was conducted June 27-30, 1983, at the auditorium of the High School in Grenada. James Needham, Tampa, Florida, moderated for Smith; Bill Robinson, Jr., took care of Smith's charts. I moderated for Merideth; Wendell Gann had charge of Merideth's charts. Fine order prevailed: not one did either moderator have to call for a point of order. Both speakers pressed hard their particular positions, but each was a gentleman all the way through in his argumentation.

MAJOR THRUSTS OF THE DEBATE

There is open division among Smith's brethren on this saints only proposition. Eural Bingham in his debate with Alan E. Highers in the late 60's said he would take money out of the treasury and feed a child before he would let him starve. At the other extreme is A. C. Gride's statement, which Merideth read the

last night: "The Bible teaches that it is a sin for the church to take money from its treasury to buy food for hungry, destitute children, and those who do so will go to hell." Smith agrees with neither of these, though they all espouse the "saints only" doctrine in congregational benevolence. In the 1982 debate Ward Hogland also disagreed with Bingham.

Smith's thrust was that congregations from their treasury are restricted to "saints only" in benevolence. This rules out any congregational help to an outsider even if he were in direst need. Smith also denies any congregational aid to a baby or child. His position is that Christian *individuals* may aid such, but not *the church*. His charts gave several references in Acts and the epistles where the great Judaeian contribution was for poor "saints." He contended this means poor saints *only*. Merideth countered that we must accept all the Bible says on this subject. Needy "saints" are mentioned; however Paul brought alms to his "nation" (Acts 24:17). In II Corinthians 9:13 Paul says the aid was for "the saints" and "all men." Smith contended that "all men" simply means other saints. Merideth showed that AND means others in addition to the ones included in the "saints." By parallel construction of the same idea in other places such as Acts 5:11; I Thessalonians 3:12 and 5:15, Merideth showed with force and finality the fallacy of restricting ALL MEN to just "saints only." Smith's position has Paul using redundancy. Smith thought he had Thayer on his side; but he was on the wrong page and in the wrong category (neuter instead of masculine) in his appeal to Thayer. Merideth corrected Smith's erroneous Greek argument showing that Thayer taught that *pas* (root word for "all men") means just what our translators knew it meant, and translated it. Smith acknowledged his mistake on Thayer and this was commendable on his part.

Smith had real problems with *koinonia*, the Greek word for fellowship, contribution, distribution, etc. He argued that if a congregation gave benevolent aid to a sinner, the congregation would be in "fellowship" with him. Merideth showed in response that this type of logic would mean that a Christian

individual who gave to a sinner in need (which Smith agreed could and should be done in matters of need) would then be *fellowshipping* him. Again Merideth showed that Smith's logic would mean that if a *sinner* gave \$20 to the church each Sunday he came, that the sinner and the congregation would be in "fellowship" — the sinner for giving; the congregation in its reception!

Merideth used with force his chart on individual responsibilities which are collectively discharged such as worshippers who sing, give, or pay the preacher -- but do so collectively. Look at the individual pronouns in connection with the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:20ff; and yet it is collectively discharged or performed in a congregational setting each Lord's Day.

Merideth showed that Smith used "all men" in Hebrews 2:9 to refer to all men when he was refuting Calvinism. But in this debate Smith contended that "all men" in II Corinthians 9:13 does *not* mean *all men*. This was a decisive argument.

The "saints only" proponents have trouble maintaining consistency: They will allow a sinner to drink at the water cooler which was congregationally purchased; But a sandwich bought by that same congregation could not be given to a needy sinner *at all!* Smith denied that members of the church could *eat in* the basement of the very building they paid for, *yet* it would be all right for *him* to eat a sandwich in his office! Merideth pressed him hard about this evident inconsistency. Merideth asked Smith if a woman could feed a hungry baby during the two-hour service on Sunday morning. He adamantly refused an answer. It would be unusual if all the Smith children got through every service in infancy without a cracker, bottle, etc.! (The Taylor and Merideth children did not!!)

Hogland in 1982 went all-out on his contention for the distributive (individual) use of the word *church*. Smith evidently knew that point was minus Biblical ground, for he dropped it after a brief allusion to it.

Merideth fixed up an orphan home for Smith: Smith agreed that he could take in five orphans in his

Continued on page 4

The Limitations Of Fellowship

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:5-10).



PAUL KIDWELL, Sr.

We learn from this passage that everything is not always like man thinks and says it is. Some think they are in fellowship in the light when in reality they "lie and do not the truth." Just so, there are some who have stated their convictions on fellowship with little regard for Bible principles. Some have stated their intention to extend the "right hand of fellowship" to all. Others have offered some slightly more restrained limits. The truth is, man can neither

enlarge nor restrict the borders of fellowship. You can change the area of your fellowship, but you cannot take down God's "ancient landmarks." You really can't have fellowship with everyone. You may want to, but you *can't!* You may claim to, but you are simply *wrong!* The limits of fellowship are expressed by the inspired apostle. There are two areas in which fellowship exists. The areas are exclusive. Those in one area do not have fellowship with those in the other area. The areas are "light" and "darkness." Each of us is either in fellowship in light, or in darkness. Thus, fellowship exists with all who are in that same group, exclusively. If one is in the light, he is in fellowship with God and with all others who are in the light. If I claim to have fellowship with God (and consequently with all who are in his fellowship), and yet "walk in darkness," I "lie and do not the truth." I may claim to be in the fellowship of "light" but I am in reality in the fellowship of "darkness." The limitation of "light" is the limit of scripture. Man may claim to follow God, but he must be following God's instructions, doing His will, "walking in the light." I cannot restrict this fellowship further. Everyone who is in fellowship in the light is in my fellowship. Conversely, none who are in the fellow-

ship of darkness may simultaneously be in the fellowship of light. It matters not how loving and charitable I believe my action to be, any attempt to break the divinely-imposed limitation on fellowship is futile. I may have fellowship with either "light," or "darkness," but not with both. If I insist on extending fellowship to those in darkness, I must as a result thereof lose the fellowship of "light." If one in darkness wishes to enjoy the fellowship of light, he must leave the fellowship of darkness.

These limitations are not mine. They are God's restrictions. The righteousness of God demands that neither he nor those who are his be placed in communion with the works of darkness. Those who would "broaden" the fellowship of God and his people (as though they would improve on the love and grace of God) to include some whom they consider "gray area" children of God, have the laboring oar in their hand. God says it is either *darkness* or *light*. Let the man who would take issue with the principle "row hard" to prove otherwise. I won't wait for that boat to arrive. It is destined to flounder on the rocks of human speculation. May we all simply "stick to the book." — P.O. Box 7133, Columbus, Ga. 31908.

Merideth-Smith

Continued from page 3

home (paid for by the church), and could receive money from the church for their upkeep as long as the money was handed to him directly. He said the five orphans were *his* responsibility, and if he were unable to meet all known needs, the church could aid. Merideth pressed him about getting a license for the home to meet state law. He never answered whether he would allow it to be licensed! This was a strategic point in the debate.

In the 1982 debate Merideth pointed out that if a disaster hit Grenada, the "saints only" congregation could not even open its building for sinners to use as a refuge temporarily. Some said his position was just theoretical and never would happen. But it *did* happen -- in less than six months! Grenada was hit with a major flood before the year was gone. Many had to leave their homes. Many churches in the area helped -- but not the "saints only" church! At least, not sinners and babies out of their congregational treasury. They did not take a dime out of their treasury to help non-Christians who were in dire need. The Elliot brethren did: they aided a family who were not members. It was devastating to the Smith view when brother Merideth showed the flooded town by means of a local newspaper picture and had circled where the Elliot brethren aided. Some of the "saints only" people drove around during the debate to check on the people Elliot aided. With noticeable impact Merideth chided a position that would allow them to spend money on gas later for CHECKING purposes, but during the flood could not spend congregational money aiding flood victims unless they were members of the church! This was decisively devastating to the Smith position. Clearly and convincingly, it unmasked the "saints only" position in both inconsistency and selfishness.

(The next and final article will deal with the consequences of the Smith position and the Merideth plea for unity which he gave with precious persuasiveness at the end of the debate.) — P.O. Box 464 Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

A suicide-threat call brought a striking, alarming insight -- the thought that this desperate caller is not so different in many ways from some Christians. His basic message was, "Either do what I tell you to do, in the way I tell you to do it, or I will kill myself and make you feel guilty." There are some people who, when dealing with God, act similarly: when a crisis occurs in life, they as much as say, "Lord, either change the way things are, or I won't believe in you any longer." It is painfully obvious that to deny God is, without doubt, SPIRITUAL SUICIDE (Matthew 10:32). It is as though such people think along the lines Job's wife suggested: "Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). Such a thing is a form of blackmail and extortion.

Some might say, "But the suicidal man is irrational and at least approaching a state of temporary insanity." Let us make spiritual application: how sane and rational is it for one to blackmail(?) God? to kill his own soul? can we force our will on Almighty God?

Again, consider the consequences of such an attitude: Suppose the terminal terrorist follows through on his threat: whom has he hurt? He may inflict agony on those who remain; but *he* is the *real* loser. Those left alive can adjust and work out the problems. It is just so with the man who carries through on his threat to God. If he turns permanently from the Father because his extortion demands are not met, who is the loser? God does not want him to be lost (II Peter 3:9); but his choice of action and the consequences of that action are, finally, the problem of him who acted in such a way (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Regardless of the hardship in life, let us never threaten God with SPIRITUAL SUICIDE! He doesn't want to lose us; but he *cannot* be successfully blackmailed! Rather, let us meet our difficulties with Job's outlook: "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" and, "Though he slay me, yet



PHILIP DAVIS

will I trust in him . . . He *also* shall be my salvation" (Job 2:10, NASV; 13:15; cf. II Corinthians 4:16-5:1; James 1:2; I Peter 1:6-9; 4:16-19). God said of Job, "In all of this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22).

Let us gain strength from the promises of God (Psalms 37; Matthew 6:33; I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13,19; Hebrews 4:15f, 13:5; I Peter 5:7; etc.). Remember that if we choose to draw closer to God from our adversities and trials, then we are those of whom Romans 8:28 is written: "All things work together for *good* to those that *love* God" This is the ultimate and eternal benefit of those who love God supremely (regardless of the circumstances of life) and who obey his gospel call (II Thessalonians 2-14). — 3800 S. Woodward, Oklahoma City, OK 73119.

(Editor's note: This author is a son-in-law to Bro. Robert R. Taylor, Jr., and we look forward to other articles from him.)

WORD of GOD

Prophecy [Old Testament]

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

Isaiah 11:1-2

Fulfillment [New Testament]

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1

And Jesse begat David the king;

From Matthew 1:6

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Matthew 1:17



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1984

NUMBER 18

The Merideth-Smith Debate

(No. 2)

In the first of this two-part study of a significant debate that occurred in Grenada, Mississippi, in June of 1983, I set forth some of the background, the participants in the discussion and the main thrust of the debate from the standpoint of both debaters. This second and final article will deal with some serious implications of the "saints-only" position espoused by J. T. Smith of Lake Jackson, Texas.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SMITH POSITION

As in the Hogland Debate in 1982, we compiled a lengthy list of consequences from Smith's position. Merideth pressed these home again and again with force and finality. Here they are numbered and noted.

(1) Smith's position makes "Dead Sea" churches -- they receive *from* sinners and children, but will not reciprocate with benevolent aid from the congregational treasury.

(2) Smith's position robs God of glory through the church (Ephesians 3:21).

(3) Smith's position prohibits the church from the full practice of pure and undefiled religion.

(4) Smith's position makes James 1:27 and I Timothy 5:16 stand in contradiction.

(5) Smith's position says that churches of Galatia could not "do good unto all men, especially to the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

(6) Smith's position says money from the Corinthian treasury could not be used for "all men" (II Corinthians 9:13).

(7) Smith's position denies that the church at Thessalonica could abound in love "toward all men" (I Thessalonians 3:12).

(8) Smith's position says that churches of Achaia could not give to saints and "all men" (II Corinthians 9:3,13,14; I Corinthians 16:1,2; Romans 16:1).

(9) Smith's position says the churches of Asia could not give to saints and all men.

(10) Smith's position makes fleshly Israel superior to spiritual Israel. The former could aid non-

Israelites; the latter cannot aid non-Christians.

(11) Smith classed a water fountain as evangelism, but food for a hungry child is not evangelism.

(12) Smith eats in his church building office paid for by church members, but forbids members to eat in the basement -- which they paid for, plus his office.

(13) Smith refuses to tell us whether a hungry baby can be fed in the building. If it could, ones who are *safe* can eat there, but not the saints!!

(14) The Van Doren church did not help any non-Christians in the flood out of its treasury; the Elliot brethren did, and from the treasury.

(15) Jesus fed five thousand men plus women and children; but Smith's position will not allow the church to feed children. He denies the church the right to pursue the pathway trod so beautifully by our Lord.

(16) Jesus chided those who saluted their brethren only; but Smith's position calls for and actually demands this very thing in congregational benevolence -- help saints ONLY and turn deaf ears to ALL others.

(17) Smith says if a church helps a sinner, it is fellowshiping him; but an *individual* can give to that same sinner. The Smith dilemma has the *individual* in fellowship with the sinner he aids!

(18) Smith utterly fails to understand that *koinonia* (in II Corinthians 9:13) means "contribution" or "distribution."

(19) Smith says he never heard of an individual duty collectively discharged, and yet he practices it weekly in singing, communion, and the contribution that pays his salary!!

(20) Smith will allow members to perform their individual duty of paying him by putting money into the collection; but will not allow members to help orphans similarly by congregational giving. Some people can help in this way, such as teen-agers and retired people on fixed incomes, who could not take an orphan into their homes at all.

(21) Smith's orphan home has him in a church-owned house with five orphans and with church help as long as the aid is handed to him personally.

(22) Smith's position is that the church can help a non-saint provided it goes through the hands of a saint first.

(23) Smith misquoted Thayer on *pas* in II Corinthians 9:13. Smith was in the wrong section and

on the wrong page.

(24) Smith failed to see that Thayer defines *pas* in the masculine plural section (he was in the neuter section) as meaning "all men."

(25) Smith failed to see the parallel construction of Acts 5:11; I Thessalonians 3:12 and 5:15 to II Corinthians 9:13 relative to "saints" AND "all men."

(26) Smith disagrees with the Tant box in the vestibule. Yet in the Hogland Debate he told how they put money for a little child into the hands of a woman. If her hands could not have held it all, could they have put the extra in a box and handed it to the little girl in need?

(27) Smith receives his paycheck from II Corinthians 12:13 -- individuals who give with a collective duty discharged -- but will not allow the same logic on pronouns in Galatians 6:10 to aid non-saints in need. This is inconsistency in full, infamous bloom -- and then some!!

CONCLUSION

Tapes for the entire four nights may be obtained from Robert Rawson, 120 Eureka St. Batesville Ms. 38606.

Brother Merideth spent the last five minutes in the debate with an eloquent plea made for unity based upon God's Word. He pointed out the many, many ways in which Merideth and Smith are united. It is sad, inexpressibly sad, that such a few things really divide us, he averred.

Brother Merideth is a tremendous debater. The truth is safe in his hands as preacher, teacher, editor, writer, counsellor and upon the polemic platform. He is set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17). He stands ready at all times to give a reason for the hope that within him lies (I Peter 3:15). — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

WORD of GOD

Fulfillment [New Testament]

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice

out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Matthew 17:5



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

Berkley Hackett Family Coming Home

This week I am giving editorial space to the following article regarding Bro. & Sis. Berkeley Hackett and their daughter, Mary Frances.

Brother and Sister Berkeley Hackett have been sponsored by the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, for seventeen years of mission work in Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa. This is an exceptionally long time for a congregation and a missionary family to be united in any evangelistic endeavor. Ours has been a pleasant and fruitful undertaking. Only eternity can reveal all the results of this effort.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

We have great admiration for the Hacketts, including their daughter Mary Frances. Berkeley and Charlotte have willingly abandoned luxurious American-style living in their loving outreach for souls, and to evangelize the African country of Kenya. They are not 'fly-by-night' operators, nor have they been easily discouraged by disappointments at home or abroad. Mary Frances, too, has largely grown up in Kenya, having gone from grade one through high school on the mission field! Thus she herself has made personal sacrifices, although she has also reaped the benefits of world travel and education, which thousands of others wish they could have had. Charlotte's father, Bro. Bruce Myers, died last year, and Sixth Avenue (through the marvel of modern communications) carried the funeral service to them *live* -- but that was not the same as if they had been with her mother for the occasion. Charlotte did not quit and come home at that time!

Berkeley evidently has gained the respect of the government officials on the local and regional levels. They apparently have confidence in him and the cause for which he stands. Therefore they count him as a leader in the church on whom they can depend. We respect and appreciate him for this posture he has attained before them.

Sixth Avenue church, along with all who have contributed to their working fund, has reaped dividends from our partnership with the Hacketts. Among these we may list the following: 1) Our long involvement in this mission field has kept us constantly soul-conscious, and has continually kept us aware of the world-wide scope of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20). 2) It has doubtless increased our giving; for it is our observation that Christians will sacrifice and continue to give more and more for evangelism, whereas they soon will tire of giving for buildings at home. 3) No doubt it has also enhanced our *local* personal work program, for when people learn that we care about folk in foreign lands, they know we sincerely mean it when we seek to teach them in our home area. 4) We may never in this world know how much influence this particular mission program has had by way of encouraging others--young and not-so-young--to prepare for, and to launch out into, some other mission field. 5) Perhaps our long years of tenure with the Hacketts has encouraged other congregations not to withdraw their

support from their missionary families after only one or two or three years -- but to stand behind them so long as they live right and preach or teach the truth faithfully.

We trust that the foundation has been well laid, and pray that the work in Kenya will continue without any interruption. May others, especially the natives who have been trained for leadership roles, keep the church in Kenya ever loyal to Christ and his work.

Perhaps mistakes have been made overseas, as they have been at home, too. But we refuse to allow any such to harden us to our responsibility to preach the whole gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15-16). Notwithstanding the fact that the Hacketts are coming home 'to stay,' Sixth Avenue already is seeking another mission field and a missionary family to send and support.

As their supporting Eldership for seventeen years, we are happy to pay this tribute to Bro. and Sis. Berkeley Hackett for their work's sake. We are glad to honor them for their congenial labors with us for the Lord. With pleasure we commend them to the confidence and conscience of our great brotherhood of Christians, both at home and abroad.

The following letter is being sent to contributors to the Hackett working fund.

Dear Brethren:

As you know, the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ has supported Bro. Berkeley Hackett and his family for all their seventeen years in the Kenya mission field. They will be coming home to stay this August. Realizing that they have been out of the country, and will have *everything* to buy for their home in the states, we have agreed to continue his salary for six months after their return. He hopes that within this period he will be able to report to all contributors, and get settled into another work.

Numerous others have provided a "working fund." Without contributors for their working fund, they could not have accomplished all that has been done. His *salary* alone would have been far too little for the numerous necessary items this fund provided. We are grateful to every contributor, and trust you will continue your contributions for his working fund through the month of July.

Inasmuch as his overseas expenses will terminate with their return home, any such gifts received after August 1, 1984, will be returned to the sender.

Respectfully yours,
 ELDERS, Sixth Avenue Church of Christ,
 Jasper, Alabama 35501

WORD of GOD

Fulfillment [New Testament]

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by E-sa'ias the prophet, saying,

sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

The people which

Matthew 4:14, 16

Isaiah's Prophetic Look At Jesus

GARY C. HAMPTON

Isaiah has been called the Messianic prophet because he spends so much time looking at the coming Messiah. Even a brief look at his writing will give us a deeper insight into Christ.

The Holy Spirit tells us Isaiah 7:14 is a prophecy about Christ (Matthew 1:23). In it, Isaiah had foretold of a son to be born of a virgin. Jesus was that son, as Matthew (1:18-25) tells us. Further, that son was to be called Immanuel, which Matthew says means, "God with us." Paul tells us Jesus was God come down to earth (Philippians 2:5-7).

Isaiah 9:6 is another great prophecy concerning the Christ. In it we find a series of names that describe various attributes of God's Son. First, he is called Wonderful. When we consider his willingness to come down to earth and die for lost mankind, this title can easily be seen as appropriate. Second, Jesus is called Counselor (see Isaiah 11:1-2). Unlike other kings and presidents, Jesus has no need of advisors because he is the great Counselor of his kingdom. Third, Jesus is called The mighty God, which is taken from the Hebrew *El gibbor*. This is a traditional name used by the Hebrews only for Jehovah God. (See Deuteronomy 10:17; Nehemiah 9:32; Psalm 24:8; Jeremiah 32:18). Fourth, Isaiah calls Jesus The everlasting Father. Certainly Jesus is eternal (Hebrews 13:8; Colossians 1:17; John 1:1-4). We should also bear in mind that he will be the one through whom we receive everlasting life, thus our everlasting Father (John 14:6; Romans 6:23). Fifth, Jesus is The Prince of Peace. The angels sang about peace on earth at his birth (Luke 2:13-14). Jesus came to tear down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile and between man and God, thus restoring peace (Ephesians 2:11-22).

Isaiah 10 foretells the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians. While Assyria and the worldly forces are pictured as the great cedar forest of Lebanon, Israel is like the stump of a fallen tree. The end of chapter 10 shows that God will bring down the forest. Instead of

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Isaiah's Prophetic Look At Jesus

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the punishment of Israel being permanent and complete, the stock of the tree of Jesse will send forth a tender branch (11:1). That branch is Christ, who was a descendent of David, Jesse's son. He started insignificant, like a sprig, thus Isaiah mentions Jesse instead of David. Of course, Christ was born in little Bethlehem and raised in despised Nazareth (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1,23).

Jesus had the "spirit of the Lord." That is, he had the Spirit without measure (John 3:34; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; Colossians 1:19; 2:9). This Spirit would aid him in every facet of his teaching and kingdom. Chapter 11 verse 3 is easier to understand when rendered, "And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord" (R.S.V.) Christ does not judge man by outward appearance, what others say about him, or what he

says about himself. Instead, verses 4 and 5 picture Christ as a judge whose clothes are held up by divine will and an immovable holding to it. He will judge the oppressors of those who are bowed down by misfortune. He will free from pride in self (poor and meek; Matthew 5:3-12; Revelation 1:5; 3:14).

Christ's reign is now described as a peaceful one (Isaiah 11:6-9). Isaiah draws a picture of peace by describing natural enemies, such as the wolf and lamb, living in perfect harmony with one another. Beasts that could not be controlled by the strongest man are depicted as submitting to the leadership of a little child. All of this change will come because of the "knowledge of the Lord." Christ emphasized the words of God (John 17:8) and a peaceful, loving relationship between the bitterest of enemies

(Matthew 5:43-48; Romans 13:8-14; Ephesians 4:31; 5:2; 2:14-16; Galatians 3:26-29).

Romans 15:12 quotes Isaiah 11:10 to show that the Gentiles would be welcome in this kingdom (compare Isaiah 2:1-4). Out of Christ's small beginning would come a banner for the world to rally around (John 12:32-33). God will recover his people from foreign lands (verses 11-12) and friendship will be restored between Israel and Judah (verse 13). All obstacles to those returning to God, will be removed. Enemies (verse 14) will be defeated, a dry passage will be made through the Red Sea and the rivers (verse 15), and there will be a road to God (verse 16). This road is open to all who will obey him. — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

Four Keys To Greater Growth

DANA WATFORD

All faithful church members are interested in church growth. We desire to see the church of our Lord grow and prosper that lost souls may share in the abundant life we now possess. We know of no better way of bringing glory to God than through bringing one who is lost in sin into the body of Christ through obedience to the gospel.

But we will have to admit that we could do a better job; that, while in some cases we have had growth, we could have had greater growth. Because we all desire greater growth, I want to share with you from the Bible, what I believe are four keys that are necessary to achieve greater growth.

The first key to greater growth is personal evangelism. The mission of the church of our Lord is to teach the gospel to the lost. This is in keeping with our Lord's mission (Luke 19:10). Growth comes as a result of planting the seed (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of people and allowing God's power to work. If we sow sparingly we will reap sparingly (II Corinthians 9:6). The more we sow the seed, the more growth we will have. Sowing the seed, or teaching the lost, is something each of us must be involved in. The Great Commission of Jesus places that responsibility on each individual (Matthew 28:18-20). Evangelism is not complete until the evangelized become evangelists. If you have wondered about the lack of growth, let me ask: how many people did you personally teach this past year? Apart from teaching the gospel, there can be no growth. Greater growth will result from greater numbers teaching the lost.

A second key to greater growth in the church is benevolence. The New Testament teaches us that this is an avenue through which we can reach the lost. "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care" is an expression that experience teaches us is true. Helping those in need affords us a great opportunity to sound out the gospel of Christ. Benevolence is both a congregational activity and an individual activity. While we admit to the former we often overlook the latter. Being benevolent individuals is what being a light of the world and the salt of the earth is all about. A willingness to do God's will in benevolence will help bring souls to Christ. A failure to do so will cause souls to be lost (Matthew 25:41-46).

The third key to greater church growth is every member working. Whether we are talking about the work of evangelism, the work of benevolence, or any other work of the church, the common denominator in all of it is "work." But there can be no *work* in the church unless there are *workers*. The success of any business is dependent upon its employees working. If an industry has only 75 percent of its workers showing up on a regular basis, and only 15 percent of those

workers actually working, how long could it survive? Yet we somehow expect to carry on our Father's business in much that way! In Matthew 20:1-6, Jesus teaches us by way of a parable that the church is not a dormitory where people sleep, but a place where people are to work. The point of this parable, that is often missed and which is the basis of the reward, is the fact that we who have entered the church have agreed to work. Many church members will lose their reward because they have broken their agreement with God (James 1:25). Every member working in God's kingdom, the church, is a key to greater growth.

A fourth key to greater growth in the church is an effective discipline program. Many, if not most, church members have a misconception of church discipline, often equating such only to a withdrawing of fellowship. While *discipline* and *withdrawing* are connected, they are not the same. Effective discipline will more often bring about a restoration instead of a withdrawing.

Discipline is defined as "the teaching or training which corrects, molds, strengthens or perfects." Every time we meet in Bible study, encourage a weak member, or approach an erring member about his sin, we are practicing discipline. If, through positive exhortation and training, we can help people from being involved in sin, we have practiced discipline in an effective way. But where a member persists in sin, a congregation must take corrective measures which may lead to withdrawing fellowship.

In an effective discipline program withdrawing fellowship may be necessary and should be carried out for two reasons: One, the Bible demands it (Romans 16:17; II Thessalonians 3:6,14,15; I Timothy

5:20). Anyone who says we can not withdraw fellowship is either ignorant of what the Bible teaches, or has arrogantly placed himself in opposition to the Bible. Secondly, love demands it. We use corrective discipline on our children because we love them. We should do so with our brethren, or just admit that we don't love them. This is not a waiting game to be played. We can not wait two (or five) years to see if a sinful church member will "straighten up" and come back on his own. If you told your young child not to play in the busy street, but he does, will you wait two (or five) years to see if he will come back into the yard on his own? Even if he doesn't get killed, how many brothers, sisters, or young friends will be killed by following his example and influence?

There must be the promise of corrective discipline, even the withdrawing of fellowship, if a congregation is going to have an effective discipline/teaching program. The reason many congregations are ineffective in restoring erring members is because such members know that the congregation is not really serious, and that nothing will be done if they do not correct themselves. Is it not hypocritical to approach an unfaithful member, to encourage him to follow God's will, when *we* are unwilling to obey God if he refuses to correct the wrong in his life? A key to greater church growth will be an effective discipline program.

If each of us in our respective congregations will work toward teaching the lost, helping the truly needy and helping the church carry out an effective discipline program we will be able to experience greater church growth. — 1850 McFarland Blvd. N., Tuscaloosa, AL 35406.

Could The Lord's Church Become A Denomination?

RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

In the restoration of New Testament Christianity, the plea has been that we *must* remain above the dogmas of men's teachings so that the Lord's church will not be a denomination; but that it will rather be the one true way and body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4; 8:22,23). But there is always the danger of allowing men's traditions and men's doctrines to corrupt the pure way and thereby make it into just another denomination. There must be the constant "beating back of the jungle" of error which would continuously

Some dangers are evident. We usually develop what we might consider the best ways of accomplishing some work in the church in an expedient manner. For a particular locale or congregation it seems to be the best way to do it. But, it is very easy for that *expediency* or judgment to become a tradition and be

Continued on page 4

The Sincere Preacher

Every congregation is looking for, wants, and should expect sincerity in its preacher. "The English may be horrible," said Jack Exum, "the posture may be pitiful, the voice may even be like gravel — but when the heart is sincere people listen and are moved to action."

One of the great keys of a successful ministry is sincerity. Preaching, perhaps more than any other profession, needs sincerity. The gospel preacher must be free from dissimulation, adulteration, and hypocrisy. He should be honest, pure, true, and genuine. A commitment to preach includes pledging oneself to sincerity.

Some in the first century were insincere in their preaching. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi,



JIMMY EDWARDS

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel" (Philippians 1:15-17).

Undoubtedly there were some who were jealous of Paul and wanted to weaken his cause and strengthen theirs. They had gone to great lengths to do this. They had stooped to the low level of insincerity. These men were not preaching with the right motives. Their real purpose was not to preach the gospel but to stir up trouble. They were selfish and had no regard whatsoever for the church or the truth.

Paul was a man of sincerity. He always acted with moral purity. He was the exact opposite of his opponents. The reason was because his ministry originated from God (II Corinthians 4:1). Paul emphasized his honesty twice to the church at Corinth. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward" (II Corinthians 1:12). And

again, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:17).

Paul's preaching was honest and simple. It was not deceitful. David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd summed it up this way: "Paul acted from pure motives and honest feelings, in opposition to corrupting admixture. He could bear looking at through and through, for he was actuated by unmingled honesty and sincerity of aim."

The apostle is an excellent example. His ministry stresses that the gospel preacher must be a man of absolute sincerity. If the man who preaches God's word wants to influence others mightily there can be no obscurity, no doubt. If insincerity does exist, one's preaching can have no persuasive power or impact. "Preaching," said Willard L. Sperry, "can survive countless honest errors; it cannot stand insincerity."

A gospel preacher can strive for eloquence, knowledge, courage, the best delivery possible, style, and rapport. But no trait is more important than sincerity. — 512 Gardendale Drive Montgomery, AL 36110.

The Church Versus Denominationalism

(No. 1)

What are denominations? When we contrast the Lord's church with denominations, it does not resemble a denomination in any way, shape, or form.

Denominations are built by the teachings of men, and not God. Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13). The Jews used a plant or seed to describe a doctrine (cf. Luke 8:11). The Jews accused Jesus and his disciples of breaking the commandment of God by not washing their hands before they ate. Jesus turns the argument around on them: he speaks about honoring father and mother, something that the Jews were not doing (vv. 4-6; Cf. Mark 7:11). They were overlooking the commandment of God and keeping their traditions. Jesus then says, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (v. 9). The Jews were substituting the "precepts of men" for the word of God, and God did not accept their worship. Dear Reader, if the teachings of your church differ from the Bible, then that teaching is built on the precepts of men, and not the word of God.

Denominations have a worldly head or governing power. The Catholic church has its pope. The Mormons have their president. Other denominations have their synods, conventions, or conferences to govern them. No man nor group of men has a right to govern the Lord's church. Jesus Christ directs the affairs of his church through his inspired word (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:3).

Denominations have unscriptural names. The Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, and Lutherans, etc., all have names which one cannot find in the New Testament. In order to have the Lord's church, you must wear and practice only what is authorized in the New Testament. It is possible to wear the right name, yet practice the wrong doctrine.



GEORGE REED

The church in New Testament times wore the following titles: Church of God (I Corinthians 1:2; 10:32), Church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23), Churches of Christ (Romans 16:16), Body of Christ (Colossians 1:18,24; Ephesians 1:22,23), Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2), and House of God (I Timothy 3:15).

Does the church where you attend wear one of the above titles? If so, does it also practice only what is authorized in the New Testament? If not, it is not the Lord's church.

Denominations have earthly headquarters. The Catholics have Rome; the Mormons have Salt Lake City, but the Lord's church does not have any earthly headquarters. The apostle Paul said, "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). To say that Rome, or Jerusalem, was the church's headquarters is not teaching what was taught in the New Testament.

Denominations wear unscriptural titles. There is no such thing in the New Testament as *the* pastor. The word "pastor" is mentioned only one time in the King James New Testament (Ephesians 4:11). Preachers are not pastors. The qualifications for elders, bishops, or pastors are given in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon of*

the New Testament says with reference to the word pastor, "That they (pastors) did not differ at all from bishops or overseers" (p. 536). The Baptists, who have a "pastor system," give a biblical definition to the word, "pastor," in the book *A History of the Baptists*: "The shepherds or pastors of the Apostolic Churches were known as Presbyters, or Elders, from *presbuteroi*; and as Bishops, or overseers, from *episkopoi*. This fact should stand in its own order of New Testament time; for if we take it out of its historical surroundings and throw it backward or forward into another century, it will lose its distinctive value" (p. 134). Even the Baptists admit that there is no difference between elders, bishops, and pastors.

Jesus forbids us to use religious titles. "And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9). Yet the way the Catholic church uses such titles you would think Matthew 23:9 is not even in the Bible. Today we hear of preachers being introduced as "Reverend." This is not what the Bible teaches. The word "reverend" is only used one time in the Bible (Psalms 111:9), and it is used with reference to God's name: "Holy and reverend is his name," not man's. — To be concluded. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Could The Lord's Church Become A Denomination?

Continued from page 3

viewed as the *ONLY* acceptable way. If we take tradition and make it law, we err! And, we do just what the denominations have done. It would be disobedient to Jesus who says: "In vain do they worship me; teaching for *doctrines* the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

When we get "set in our ways," expediencies turned tradition become "law" and we tend to frown on any congregation or individual who breaks our traditions. THAT IS WRONG AND IF WE DO SO, WE AT THAT TIME BECOME DENOMINATIONAL IN OUR THINKING!

Please know that I do not advocate change just for the sake of change. I suppose some cry "traditionalism" simply because they don't want to bow to the elders' authority in matters of judgment. That is rebellion and will divide the body of Christ. But I do detest traditions being bound as law, viewed as matters of faith, and lines of fellowship drawn over them. So should *every* New Testament Christian oppose it. We simply *MUST* keep the true way pure and *non-denominational!* — P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507.



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

Birth

, 26:25

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Christ — The Suffering Savior (Isaiah 53)

GARY C. HAMPTON

The Ethiopian eunuch read from this chapter (Acts 8:25-26). Philip used the passage as a springboard into preaching about Christ. God had, in the long ago, planned for Christ to suffer so that sin's debt might be paid and we might be saved (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 1:9-10; 2:15-16).

Delitzsch says that a "we" introduced suddenly in prophecy, as in verse 2, is always Israel speaking, along with the prophet. So, verse 1 wants to know "who hath believed the report that was common among us?" This is parallel with the second question, "and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (The word "arm" is used to designate power and might. For instance, one who made flesh his arm trusted in man's power instead of God's (Jeremiah 17:5). God's arm is strong and will break the arms of his enemies (Deuteronomy 4:34; 5:15; Ezekiel 30:21). Israel should have seen God's power in the works of Jesus (John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; Matthew 12:22-30; Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 15:1-8). Those who reject Jesus today have simply closed their eyes to the truth as revealed through that powerful display (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

Jesus grew up under God's watchful and protective eye (Matthew 2:1-23; especially 12-13). Jesus had a lowly beginning in a land of conquered people and from a house as good as dead, thus he spring up like a tender plant from the root of a tree cut down and now in dry ground. Yet, God had promised a savior from the house of David (Acts 2:29-31; Psalm 132:11). The people looked for someone with a special background and attractive appearance (see I Samuel 9:2; 10:24; 16:12). Instead, as Delitzsch translates, "We saw Him, and there was nothing in His appearance to make us desire Him, or feel attracted by Him." Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a feed-box for animals (Luke 2:1-7). Joseph was a carpenter, not a king (Matthew 13:55). He was not born in Jerusalem, but was born in lowly Bethlehem and reared in Nazareth (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:23; John 1:46; 7:52). His teaching was contrary to that which was desirable to man (John 3:19-21; I Corinthians 2:4). Ultimately, Christ was crucified, which was not an end most had in mind for a ruler (I Corinthians 1:21-24; Luke 24:21). Jesus asks his followers to admit they are sinners, which is a blow to pride, and to put self last, which is

contrary to man's normal selfishness (Luke 13:3; 9:23).

Christ was looked down upon and held in contempt (meaning of "despised"), even by the very people he came to save (John 1:11; Hebrews 12:3). He experienced all forms of sorrow, such as, the death of a close friend, betrayal and desertion by his closest companions, denial and, last, separation from God (Hebrews 2:9-10; 5:8-9; John 11:1-38; Matthew 26:47-50, 56, 69-75, 27:46). The idea at the end of verse 3 is that Jesus' face was repulsive, so we turned away and refused to look at him. Also, we counted him as being worth nothing.

"Griefs" were illnesses, or diseases; and "sorrows" were pain and mental stress. Jesus did spend considerable time helping the people with these and his miraculous healings are said by Matthew to be a fulfillment of this (Matthew 8:16-17). Remember, Isaiah 53 is Israel looking back at the proofs of Christ's Messiahship and bemoaning the fact that she ignored them. Miracles were a proof of Christ's deity (Hebrews 2:1-4). They counted him as a sinner being punished by God because he endured such hardships.

Verse 5 says, literally, he was pierced and crushed on account of our iniquities. This describes the horrible death he suffered (Matthew 27:26). He suffered the chastisement, or discipline, which leads us to peace with God. The scourging he endured forms the healing medicine for our sin-sick souls (II Peter 2:21-25; 3:18). Israel, in verse 6, is described as a scattered flock of sheep without a shepherd. They had come to their exile because of selfish rebellion against God. The punishment for their guilt fell upon Christ (Matthew 20:28; I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14). As Bales says, "Through his sacrifice for our sins, through his suffering love, Christ calls men from their own ways to God's way" (see again I Peter 3:18).

Jesus endured the suffering voluntarily, like a sheep led to the slaughter. He made no defense at his trial, but stood like a lamb dumb before its shearers. Jesus had already proved who he was by his actions, so said nothing in his own defense at the trials (Matthew 26:57-68; 27:11-14; Luke 23:1-11; John 19:1-13). He was carried out of the unjust judicial system to death for the angry mob's sin (II Corinthians 5:21).

Christ should have been buried with the wicked since he was crucified between two thieves and was accused of blasphemy, which called for a disgraceful burial. However, the Romans let Joseph of Arimathea have the body (Matthew 27:57; John 19:21). Man intended to bury him with the wicked, but God would not allow it because of his innocence.

Though man wickedly put Jesus to death, God was using it to his purposes (Acts 2:23). Jesus was an offering for sin (I Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:10; 12:24; 13:10; I Peter 1:2). While he did die for our sins, Isaiah foretells God's plan to raise him; else how could he "see his seed?" The meaning here is that he would see children come out of that sacrifice (Hebrews 2:10-13; I Peter 1:23). God's "pleasure" is to save man (John 3:16-17; II Peter 3:9), and Jesus would see that purpose prosper because of his work, says Isaiah. Because of his sacrifice (verse 11) Jesus will see God's purpose fulfilled and be satisfied. Those who learn from Christ and do his will, will be saved (John 6:44-45; Romans 1:16-17; Colossians 1:13-14).

Verse 12 describes a conqueror who will receive the spoils (Philippines 2:5-11). Jesus' death stood as a part of his exaltation (Luke 24:25-27). In fact, his suffering and death had to come for him to triumph (Acts 2:36-42). He was a great conqueror in that he bore the sins of many (Hebrews 9:28) and made intercession for those who transgressed in crucifying him (Luke 23:34). But, they had to repent and turn him to receive his help (Acts 3:12-19). — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Al. 36606.


WORD of GOD

Seek the Lord

With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:

for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Isaiah 26:9



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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Training Of Youth

TIMOTHY KIDWELL

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

The inhabitants of this world are continually changing. Generations of men have lived, died and gone into eternity. Our young people will rise to fill the positions of responsibility that we now occupy. Because of this we should feel a very deep interest in the welfare of our youth.

There are four points of observation in our text we will discuss:

1. There is a way in which we should go, and from which we should never depart.
2. In this way children should be carefully trained.
3. Youth is the best time in which to do this teaching.
4. The consequence of this training -- the promise of success.

I. THERE IS A WAY IN WHICH WE SHOULD GO, FROM WHICH WE SHOULD NEVER DEPART.

This life is just a journey (Hebrews 11). It is a journey that will take us to heaven if the right directions are followed. Let us suppose that you were to take a trip. Your destination is a place that you have never been to, and about which know nothing. Would you set out hoping that you were headed in the right direction? and that with a little "luck" you would eventually get there? Certainly not! You would acquire a road map and study it to make certain that you know best how to reach your destination. Our spiritual journey is mapped out in the Bible. At every turn there are directions. This is the way of wisdom and holiness; the way in which by traveling onward with steady perseverance we rise to moral dignity and excellence. This can not be said of any other path.

II. IN THIS WAY CHILDREN SHOULD BE CAREFULLY TRAINED.

The word "train" is translated from the Hebrew which literally means: to put in mouth; to feed, as you would an infant. All parents recognize the need their children have for suitable nourishment. They begin when the child is born to feed that baby the only food

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Discipline Is Commanded

In its broadest scope, "discipline" is teaching, instruction, or training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects morals and character; and it also includes punishment or chastisement. Some of the discipline required by God is *preventive* in nature. Admittedly this is much to be preferred over the other kind, *punitive* discipline. But "punishment" is also authorized when the first type discipline fails.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). Here is an apostolic order that is often neglected. The church is commanded to take punitive action, but it is not *corporeal* punishment. Rather, it is the withdrawal of our fellowship and association from the one in error. After the same apostle directed another congregation to take similar action, he later, upon the repentance of the erring brother, wrote them: "Sufficient to such a man is this *punishment* . . ." (II Corinthians 2:6.) This clearly establishes the fact that some discipline in the church is *punitive* in nature.

Let us see who are proper subjects for such action. In Corinth a man had taken his father's wife, and the church was taught to withdraw from him because of his fornication (I Corinthians 5:1-13). This chapter lists the following which are proper subjects for punitive church discipline:

- fornicator, v. 1,9,10
- covetous, v. 10,11
- idolater, v. 10,11
- railer (AVS: reviler), v. 11
- drunkard, v. 11
- extortioner, v. 10,11

The chapter ends with this admonition: "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (v. 13). The Holy Spirit specifies that "every brother that walketh disorderly" be withdrawn from (II Thessalonians 3:6). "Disorderly" comes from a military term which includes those out of step as well as those who quit the ranks or desert the army. Thus one should not be allowed merely to 'resign from' the church, nor simply to 'quit the church' -- the church should take steps to 'punish' such a member for his (the erring brother's) salvation.

Brother Guy N. Woods in the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman College was asked: "Is forsaking the assembly grounds for church discipline?" In his response he quoted Hebrews 10:23-25 from the American Standard Version, which reads: "let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh."

Note his comments:

"It is often assumed that the meetings some were forsaking in that day were the Lord's day meetings of the church only; but, there is nothing in the text or context that justifies such an assumption. The admonition of the apostle was and is applicable to any assembly of the disciples for religious purposes; and those who ABANDON (such is the significance of the Greek word translated "forsaking" in the foregoing text) ANY such assembly, are in disobedience to the apostle's injunction. Thus, people who flagrantly disregard their duty and refuse to attend any of the meetings of the church are subjects of discipline. Obviously, the level of disinterest would determine the extent and degree of apostasy and consequently the measure of discipline exercised; those who attend regularly on Lord's days, but no other meetings of the church are not as far along the road to apostasy as are those who never attend at all; but all members who are remiss in duty and who are not faithful in attendance at all services, are subjects of the church's discipline.

"This does not mean that people who attend only Sunday morning, ought immediately to be withdrawn from! It is unfortunate that the view is widely current that the ONLY discipline which the church may exercise is withdrawal of fellowship. Discipline is a term of much wider import than this; it means, among other things, "teaching, instruction, training which corrects, molds, strengthens or perfects" (Webster). The action thus involves an approach the design of which is to correct what is lacking in one's character and conduct and, by instruction, warning and chastisement, eliminate the weaknesses, imperfections and defects involved." -- *Questions and Answers: OPEN FORUM*, pages 135, 136.

We should recognize the difference between a "brother that walketh disorderly" versus one who makes occasional mistakes but is eager to correct them. The one who sets out on a wrong course, and will not return to the right course, is to be excluded from fellowship (II Thessalonians 3:6).

WORD of GOD

Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Psalm 28:6-9

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Seek the Lord

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

Psalms 14:2

The Sincere Preacher

Every congregation is looking for, wants, and should expect sincerity in its preacher. "The English may be horrible," said Jack Exum, "the posture may be pitiful, the voice may even be like gravel — but when the heart is sincere people listen and are moved to action."

One of the great keys of a successful ministry is sincerity. The gospel preacher must be free from dissimulation, adulteration, and hypocrisy.

He should be honest, pure, true, and genuine.

Some in the first century were insincere in their preaching. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of



JIMMY EDWARDS

contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel" (Philippians 1:15-17).

Undoubtedly there were some who were jealous of Paul and wanted to weaken his cause and strengthen theirs. They had gone to great lengths to do this. They had stooped to the low level of insincerity. These men were not preaching with the right motives. Their real purpose was not to preach the gospel, but to stir up trouble. They were selfish, and had no regard whatsoever for the church or the truth.

Paul was a man of sincerity. He always acted with moral purity. He was the exact opposite of his opponents. The reason was because his ministry originated from God (II Corinthians 4:1). Paul twice emphasized his honesty to the church at Corinth. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward" (II Corinthians 1:12). And again, "For

we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:17).

Paul's preaching was honest and simple. It was not deceitful. David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd summed it up this way: "Paul acted from pure motives and honest feelings, in opposition to corrupting admixture. He could bear looking at through and through, for he was actuated by unmingled honesty and sincerity of aim."

The apostle is an excellent example. His ministry stresses that the gospel preacher must be a man of absolute sincerity. If the man who preaches God's word wants to influence others mightily, there can be no obscurity, no doubt. If insincerity does exist, one's preaching can have no persuasive power or impact. "Preaching," said Willard L. Sperry, "can survive countless honest errors; it cannot stand insincerity."

A gospel preacher may strive for eloquence, knowledge, courage, the best delivery possible, style, and rapport; but no trait is more important than sincerity. — 512 Gardendale Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110.

Training Of Youth

Continued from page 2

which that baby can "eat" and live at the present. Then as that baby grows and develops teeth, other food is chosen and carefully prepared. This responsibility does not cease until the child is fully grown. Parents have the responsibility also to *spiritually* feed their children. This training can be done through instruction. Your youth should be trained to know God, to know Christ, to know the Bible. Do you study the word of God with your children? Is there time set aside in your daily life to study with your family? Parents who are too busy to study with their family are too busy!

This training can be done also through your example to them. Children begin to imitate at a very early age. They begin to do what they see before they begin to say what they hear. Children are often smarter than we give them credit for being. One small boy returning from church services one Sunday said to his father, who did not go with the boy he sent: "Guess what I learned in Sunday school today, hypocrite?" The best way to train your children is to train *yourself* first; for what you are, they will become. If your hands are morally dirty, your children's lives will be made dirty by the handling they get.

This training can be done through proper discipline. Our heavenly Father corrects his children because he loves us. "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loves he chastens" (Hebrews 12:5-6). You should discipline your child for the same reason. Some have said, "I can't bear to spank my child. It hurts me so much!" How selfish can a person be? The moment of anguish that parent goes through is nothing compared to the anguish that child will suffer in his life because of the lack of proper correction. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him" (Proverbs 13:24). Do you love your children as God commands it? Pray while you are engaged in this training. Attempting to train a child without prayer is an attempt to do this without God. It has been said, "He that has the ear of God has the arm of God."

III. YOUTH IS THE BEST TIME TO DO THIS TRAINING.

Our text says, "train up a child." Begin training from the start. Make sure those first steps are in the right direction. Make sure YOU teach them what they should know. There are many advantages in

beginning to train while they are young. The young mind is tender and pliable. It is as a young plant that can be twisted and turned to make it grow in the direction we want it. But if you leave that plant alone till it is grown and then try to bend it, you may find it unyielding, and pressure may cause it to break.

A young mind is open ready to be filled with ideas. A mind left alone is left open to wrong ideas; ideas that run against Christian morals. If you wait till your child is older to begin instruction, you may find that while you slept an enemy sowed tares.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS TRAINING

"When he is old he will not depart from it." This is the rule. There are exceptions but this doesn't

invalidate the rule. The text does not say "If they do depart, when they are old they will come back." Naturally early training may be a means of recovery. Many indeed have departed from good training. Solomon did, but his early training was a means of recovery. The general rule is "That when he is old he will not depart."

Catholics claim that if you will give them a child till he is seven years old, that person will always be a Catholic. We should be ashamed that Catholics can train their children to be more devoted than we can. This exalts a false system over the truth of God. There is a way in which we ALL should go! — P.O. Box 24, Fayette Church of Christ, Fayette, AL 35555.

Romans

The theme of the epistle to the Romans is set out in the very first verse: "the gospel OF God" (Romans 1:1).

Romans tells us of the "Son of God" (1:4); the "will of God (1:10); the "power of God (1:16); the "righteousness of God (1:17); the "wrath of God (1:18); the "glory of God" (1:23); and, the "truth of God (1:25). These words, "of God," are also applied to the following: "judgment" (1:32); "goodness" (2:4); "forbearance" (3:25); "love" (5:5); "law" (7:22); "word" (9:6); "severity" (11:22); "knowledge" (11:33); "patience" (15:5); and "commandment" (16:26), etc. Hence, Romans indeed tells us of the gospel "of God."

Key words in Romans, are: "sin" (3:9; 4:8; 5:12; 6:1; 7:7; 8:2); "death" (1:4; 4:17; 5:15; 6:2; 7:3; 8:11); "grace" (1:5; 3:24; 4:4; 5:2; 6:1; 12:3; 15:15); "faith" (1:5; 3:3; 4:5; 5:1; 9:30; 10:6; 14:1); "law" (2:12; 3:19; 4:13; 5:20; 6:14; 7:1; 8:2); and "righteousness" (1:17; 2:26; 3:5; 4:3; 5:17; 6:13).

Romans' theme is salvation from sin, by grace

through faith in Christ Jesus. We have sinned; and sin brings death. We cannot earn our salvation by means of law; we are saved by God's grace through our faith. Righteousness is not acquired through law-keeping, but through faith in God.

Of course, salvation by grace does not exclude obedience. We have received grace "for obedience to the faith" (Romans 1:5).

Central to the book of Romans is the universality of sin and death. Since "all have sinned," all need salvation from sin. This salvation is obtained by grace through faith in Christ. God's plan for redeeming mankind includes both Jews and Gentiles.

The following passages show the universal need of mankind for the gospel: "among all nations" (1:5); "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (1:16); "for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (3:9); "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also" (3:29); "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (10:12); "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (16:26).

Friend, if you are in need of salvation from sin, you should turn in faith to Jesus. He died for you. Your sin-penalty has been paid. Will you not accept God's saving grace? — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

The Church Versus Denominationalism

(NO. 2)

Every seed produces after its own kind (Genesis 1:12). Whatever one plants, whether in the material kingdom or the spiritual, he will reap what he has sown (Galatians 6:7). In the parable of the tares, Jesus explained to his disciples that the tares are the sons of the evil one (Matthew 13:38), and the good seed are the sons of the kingdom (v. 38). Tares are false doctrines. Any doctrine that is contrary to the sound doctrine is a doctrine of demons: "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (I Timothy 4:1). In order for denominations to be established, one must teach something he cannot read in the Bible.



GEORGE REED

Denominations forfeit the fellowship of God. Only those who are walking in the light can have fellowship with God (I John 1:7; Psalms 119:104,105; Proverbs 6:23). The truth, at all costs, must be sought. No matter what you have been taught in the past, error must be forsaken and truth obeyed (Proverbs 23:23; James 1:18; I Peter 1:22). Let us note a few things that error does: a. Error makes void the word of God (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:8). b. Belief and practice of error will bring about destruction (II Peter 3:16,17). c. Error makes one leave the commandments of God (Mark 7:8). d. Error causes both teacher and student to fall into the pit (Matthew 15:14). e. Error makes our worship vain (Matthew 15:9). f. Error, if not stopped, will only bring about more error (II Thessalonians 2:9-12).

EXAMPLES OF PLANTING DENOMINATIONS

The first denomination to come from the Lord's church was the Roman Catholic church. This is just as the apostle Paul predicted (Acts 20:29,30; I Timothy 4:1-5; II Timothy 4:3,4). The first distinction that was made was between the elders and bishops. Unwarranted authority given to the "bishop" was gradually extended beyond the local congregation, and he assumed authority over a plurality of congregations designating them into districts. Error kept growing until the first pope came about in 606 A.D. (He was Boniface III). Such titles were given to him as, "Our Lord," "God the Pope," "Another God on Earth." Hear the pope himself: "We declare, say, define and pronounce to every human creature that it is altogether necessary to salvation to be subject to the Roman pontiff."

The Greek Orthodox church came about on July 16, 1054. The split came about by "Photius, who became Patriarch of Constantinople in 858, made powerful attacks on the claims of the Roman Pope.

He pointed out that the pope had approached idolatry in his attitude toward the use of images and claimed that he was a heretic by his changing the doctrine set forth in the first ecumenical council at Nicaea" (*The Eternal Kingdom*, p. 204).

The Greek Orthodox church uses leavened bread in the Lord's supper; permits their priests to marry (only the bishops, archbishop, and patriarch cannot marry). The Greeks do not permit images in their worship, and forbid the use of instrumental music in worship.

The great reformation came about in the days of Martin Luther. On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the church at Wittenburg, Germany. He was opposing the sale of indulgences (paying to have your sins forgiven) as

preached by Tetzal. Luther did not seek to restore New Testament Christianity; he wanted only to reform the Catholic church.

The four main beliefs of Luther are: (1) justification by faith only; (2) the priesthood of all believers; (3) the right of the individual to interpret the Scripture; and (4) the final authority in religion is the Scripture itself. Luther did not want his followers to be called Lutherans.

The Presbyterian church was started by John Calvin, a Frenchman, who was driven out of France because of his opposition to the Catholic church. He became its founder in 1535, which began in Switzerland. At first the Presbyterians did not use instrumental music; Calvin believed it was a departure from the faith. He laid down a strict moral code against cursing, adultery, playing cards on Sunday evenings, spending time in taverns, dating a Papist, and wife beating.

Listed by their initials, the five points of Calvinism spell "TULIP."

1. *Total Depravity*. This is the doctrine of original or inherited sin, and that man is so wicked only God can change his nature.

2. *Unconditional Election*. Basically, God chose some and rejected others for no apparent reason.

3. *Limited Atonement*. Christ's blood was shed only for the elect. Christ did not die for all men.

4. *Irresistible Grace*. The Spirit comes to the elect (who is now hardened by sin) and softens his heart. There is nothing he (the sinner) can do to resist.

5. *Preserverence of the Saints*. This is the doctrine of once saved always saved. If one falls from his salvation, he was really never saved to begin with.

The next two major denominations to come along were the Baptists and Methodists. Originating in Holland in 1624, the Baptists were started in America in 1639 by Roger Williams. John Wesley, in 1729, started the Methodist church. It started in America on December 24, 1784, in Baltimore.

The Lord's church is not a denomination. It was started by the Lord (Matthew 16:18), and is governed by him. Its practices are only what is authorized in the New Testament. To go beyond that which is written (I Corinthians 4:6) is to sin. We hope all will see the need of becoming a member of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). — 17691 PeSante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Major Decisions Of Youth

Most of the major decisions of life are made while in youth. Some decisions that are made by young people are: (1) Whom will I marry? (2) What will be my occupation for life? (3) How much education will I obtain? Children are born to youthful parents. Therefore, children are reared, or brought up, by comparatively young people.

In order to be successful and please the Lord, young people need to be trained in the wisdom of God. Some major decisions which should be made by youth are: (1) Decide to associate with good people. Paul taught, "Be not deceived: evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33 A.S.V.). We are influenced by our companions. Those who are our "bosom pals" must be those who will help us be good. This keeps down the problem of evil. (2) What kind of daughter or son am I going to be? The two kinds are: the obedient, and the rebellious. Paul said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). Be the kind of young person your father and mother can be proud to call their son or daughter. (3) There is the need to develop character. Character is what you are, while reputation is what others think about you. We must allow God, through His word, to mold our character. Paul taught, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). In other words, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold" (Phillips). (4) What are your educational plans? Learning should occur as long as one lives. The amount of learning may be limited to ability. Each one should use the ability that God has given. Paul said, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unot men"



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

(Colossians 3:23). I recommend our Christian schools and colleges. There you can grow *spiritually* while learning your chosen vocation or profession. (5) How am I going to make a living? Go in the direction to encourage faithfulness to God. Will this job allow me to worship and serve God? Will it allow me to serve my fellow man? (6) Whom shall I marry? A Christian is the first consideration. It is well nigh impossible to be a Christian when one's most basic loyalties are divided. When a decision must be made (as, what religion shall the children be taught?) a major problem looms into focus. Jesus said, "For this cause shall man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). The "cause" is the marriage. Involved is the union of mind as well as the union of flesh.

The *greatest* consideration should be, What shall I do with Jesus? All other decisions of life must be influenced by this decision. Solomon said, "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). Youth is the time to become a Christian, before sinful relationships develop and choke out the word from the heart. One of the songs we sing is GIVE OF YOUR BEST TO THE MASTER: "Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor into the battle for truth.

Jesus has set the example: Dauntless was he, young and brave; Give him your loyal devotion, Give him the best that you have." — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

WORD of GOD

5th Commandment
Honor thy father
and thy mother:
that thy days may

be long upon the
land which the Lord
thy God giveth
thee.

Exodus 20:12



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 21

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Cooperating With Grace

(No. 1)

Life apart from grace is fantasy, not reality. Man's very existence is irrevocably attached to grace. Grace is not a lifeless attribute of deity. God's grace is active, perpetually manifesting itself to man in countless ways. The wardrobe of grace is variegated, and is as vast as eternity. Incessantly God exhibits his favor toward man by giving him "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 13:17). A portrait encompassing every good thing on earth is a portrait of grace.

Grace did not originate with the loss of innocence in the shade of the forbidden tree. Prior to the entrance of sin, Adam and Eve were recipients of God's undeserved favor. Their very existence and presence in the beauty of Eden was a manifestation of divine grace. However, with the entrance of sin, the concept of grace was clothed with new life and meaning.

Grace and the revelation thereof in *Christ and the cross* constitute the "basis" of redemption. Apart from such grace, man is helpless, hopeless, doomed, and damned for both time and eternity. Salvation by human effort and merit is unthinkable. If all the good works of all people of all ages could be compressed into the life of one person, that person could not merit God's favor.

However, divine grace does not nullify the necessity of human response. Grace "teaches" man that there are positive and negative demands that must be met in order to claim the fruition of God's promises (Titus 2:11-14). Therefore, man must cooperate with God in order to receive the blessings of grace. The Bible describes this act of cooperation as the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26). Bible faith is composed of two basic elements: trust and obedience. In the "obedience" of faith, the "trust" of faith is in *God and his grace*, not in the act of



FRANK CHESSER

obedience itself.

This distinction is crucial! There is a vast difference in conditions that appropriate God's gifts of grace, in contrast with actions that attempt to merit what God does for man. The thing that prevents an action on man's part in obedience to God's will from being a meritorious work, is in the attitude of his heart, the object of his heart's trust. When man performs an act of faith in obedience to a command of God, his trust is in God and his grace, not in the performance of the act itself.

God cannot manifest his grace in the salvation of those who are living in open defiance of his will, in hot pursuit of sin. To do so would negate other aspects of his will, such as his holiness, and divine justice. Persistent sin calls for the exercise of divine wrath, not divine grace. Thus, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness" (Romans 1:18).

God wanted to pour out his grace upon the world of Noah's day. However, he was unable to do so because "he saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Why? Because Noah was a "just man and upright in his generations and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). Did Noah's righteousness nullify God's grace and transform his gift of salvation into human merit? Most certainly not!

God instructed Noah to build an ark. Could Noah have been saved from the flood had he adopted the rebellious spirit of his neighbors in refusing to follow God's instructions? Was not the construction of the ark an essential act of obedience in the salvation of Noah and his family? "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, and prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Hebrews 11:7).

Noah cooperated with God by responding to his will in obedient faith. Noah's trust was not in the ark, nor in his construction thereof, for his salvation. His trust was in God and his grace. Yet he knew that his salvation by God's grace could not be a reality apart from his obedience of faith.

When God foretold the judgment to befall Egypt in the death of the firstborn, his announcement was

tempered with grace. He promised to spare the firstborn in every house where the blood of the lamb had been applied to the doorposts (Exodus 12:13). Did not the slaying of the lamb and the application of its blood to the doorposts involve human effort? Was it not essential to the salvation of the firstborn within the house? Did their obedience of faith in the performance of God's instructions nullify God's grace, and transform his gift of salvation into human merit?


Certainly their obedience was necessary; but it did not "earn" for them the favor of God in the sparing of their firstborn. Their act of complying with God's instructions, though necessary, was not the object of their trust. The object of their faith, hope, and trust for the salvation of their children, was God and his grace. It was, however, their obedience of faith that enabled them to appropriate the provisions of grace to their homes.

Naaman was a leper. He was enjoined by Elisha to dip seven times in the river Jordan. When he complied with the specified condition, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II Kings 5:14). Was it not necessary for Naaman to follow the prophet's directions in order to be healed of his leprosy? Did not his obedience involve human effort? Did Naaman's obedience of faith rescind God's grace, and convert his gift of healing into human merit?

At first Naaman refused to comply with God's instructions through the prophet (II Kings 5:11). His refusal left him a leper. He was not healed until his faith became visible in action. James said, "Show me thy faith" (2:19). That is what Naaman finally did. Thus, when God saw his faith, he responded by expressing his grace in the removal of his leprosy.

The water of Jordan was important as far as Naaman's leprosy was concerned. The power to heal, whether physical or spiritual, is God's alone. In his obedience of faith, Naaman was not attempting to nullify grace; he was cooperating with grace. His trust for healing was not in the water of Jordan, not in his dipping therein, though both were necessary. His trust was in God, his grace, and his power to heal.

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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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Cooperating With Grace

Continued From Page 1

However, it was Naaman's obedient faith that enabled him to appropriate the blessings of God's grace and power to his disease-ridden body. It is true that the degree of Naaman's faith increased subsequent to his healing (II Kings 5:15). However, his faith was sufficient prior thereto to benefit from the opulent provisions of grace.

It is imperative that the Bible student recognize the distinction between *works of merit* versus *works of faith*. (1) Works of merit have man trusting in himself and his own efforts. Such an attitude cancels out grace and leads to self-righteousness. The Pharisee of Luke 18:10-12 is a classic example. It was this very kind of "works" that Paul had in mind when he said, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Romans 4:4); and again, "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9).

(2) In contrast, works of faith characterize the man who trusts in God, his grace, and the provisions thereof in Christ and the cross. Though recognizing the necessity of complying with such divinely-ordained "works" man's trust is not in himself, nor in his performance thereof. Though the obedience of faith is indispensable to man's participation in the blessings of grace, man's "trust" must ever remain firmly riveted in God and not in his act of obedience. This is the kind of "works" James discusses in James 2:14-26. The various Bible examples used in this study are all illustrative of this very principle. — Route 5, Box 31, Thomson, Georgia 30824.

Self Control

ARNOLD SEXTON

Man has learned to control land erosion, flood waters, insects, rodents, and numerous other things. Accomplishments have been made in recent years we never dreamed possible. Man truly is a unique, intelligent creature made in the likeness of his Creator.

However, with all his intelligence, resources, and ability there is one creature he usually can't control: Himself! History is filled with incident after incident which testifies to this. In sacred history, Cain,

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Childhaven Faces Its Problems

Unfavorable publicity has turned the news spotlight on CHILDHAVEN, at Cullman, Alabama. Physical abuse, mental harassment, and unreasonable treatment are intolerable; but the accusation that one staff member was guilty of sexual abuse (second degree sodomy) is repulsive and abhorrent. Of course, so long as human beings operate homes, schools, and other institutions, mistakes will be made. But the Board of Trustees at Childhaven acted quickly to cooperate with the Department of Pensions and Securities (who have supervision of all child care in Alabama) to correct the alleged wrongs. I received the following letter:



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

APRIL 27, 1984

Mr. Flavil H. Nichols
1500 6th Avenue
Jasper, AL 35501

Dear Mr. Nichols:

We are sure that many of you have heard of the recent problems at Childhaven. While investigations were in progress, we felt obligated to make no comment on these matters. Now, however, we want to tell you what the current situation is and what our plans are.

Over a month ago, we were informed of accusations against some of our group home parents being made by some of the children. We investigated these, with the help of the Department of Pensions and Securities, and we terminated the employment of many of our group home parents at our March meeting.

The grand jury in Cullman County also began an investigation into these charges. Last week, the grand jury returned indictments against two of our group home parents, and a third person whose name has not yet been released, all of whom had already been dismissed.

At our April board meeting, it was determined to accept the resignation of the superintendent and to dismiss other employees of Childhaven based on the recommendations of the grand jury, the Department of Pensions and Securities, and our own determination that these individuals had failed to properly supervise the group homes and to report these problems to the board. Manuel Whisenant was appointed acting superintendent and a search was instituted for new staff.

When the grand jury returned the indictments, they also made certain recommendations to Childhaven to improve its operations. Many of the recommendations had already been instituted, and the other recommendations are going to be instituted during the next three months. These recommendations include retaining new, better qualified house parents, social workers, and senior administration; improving communications among the staff, children, Department of Pensions and Securities, and the Board; establishing better communications with the Cullman community, including the city schools, and providing better in-service training for the Child-

haven staff.

The grand jury further recommended that, if children are placed at Childhaven who are already established in a certain religion at the time of their placement, and if transportation is available, the children should be allowed to attend the church of their choice. It appears to us that forcing a child to attend the services of a Church of Christ, when he would prefer to attend services of the religion in which he was raised, is neither an effective nor a loving way to attempt to convert that child. While we remain dedicated to the idea that religion is an essential part of a child's upbringing, and we hope that all children at Childhaven will ultimately become members of the Church, we will permit those children who have an established church preference to attend the services of a congregation of their religion. We will continue to teach all children New Testament Christianity on campus.

We are starting over with a clean slate, and taking the steps that we feel are necessary to prevent any recurrence of the problems that we have had in the past.

Now, more than ever, we need your prayers and continued support to make Childhaven a work that you can all be proud of.

The Board of Trustees at
Childhaven, Inc.
John E. Evans, Jr., Chairman

STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF CHILDHAVEN, INC.

APRIL 21, 1984

The Board of Childhaven, Inc. has committed to make major changes in the operations and personnel of the Children's Home to conform with recommendations of the Cullman County Grand Jury and State and local departments of Pensions and Securities. The Board wishes to express its gratitude to the offices of the Cullman County District Attorney and the Cullman County Grand Jury for their part, along with the Department of Pensions and Securities, in exposing certain unknown and unacceptable conditions which previously existed in the operation of the Home. Most of these conditions have already been eliminated, and the process of improving the operations of the Home will continue for some time. Plans include implementation of such recommendations as employing more professional social workers, more carefully screening house parents, and improving communications with the children. In accordance with the recommendations of the Cullman County Grand Jury, the personnel of the Children's Home will be almost completely replaced within ninety days in a rebuilding process. New standards of operation will be required of the new supervisors and staff. The Department of Pensions and Securities will work closely with the Board and a new staff to improve the services offered by the Home. The Board will begin new operations with a clean slate, and by vigilant oversight of the administration and staff, intends to avoid any recurrence of the problems recently discovered. Childhaven will endeavor to continue to provide needy children a good home with a Christian environment.

This prompt response by the Board to the demands imposed on it has been followed by the letter below to those who have supported Childhaven.

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Self Control

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Lamech, Balaam, Saul, and Solomon come to mind. Even some of the finest men (such as Noah, Judah, David, and Peter) had problems in this regard. Profane history is filled with examples like Alexander the Great, who conquered most of the civilized world, but he never conquered himself. In a fit of anger, he killed his close friend, Clitus, while drunk. He is said to have died of malaria compounded by his eating and drinking habits.

Controlling one's self is the most difficult of disciplines. Most of us can analyze the other fellow and tell him how to master his life. But, indeed, we do have trouble with ourselves. What better man to realize this problem than Solomon. He said: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

The world preaches against this philosophy. It says, "Do what feels good." It tells us not to be enslaved to the controls of God's word. It promises us liberty through dissipation. This is not anything new; it was around in the first century. Concerning this false concept, Peter said: "While they promise liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption . . ." (II Peter 2:19). The only sensible approach to life, and certainly the only way to please God, is by self-control. Christ promised us liberty through this means. Now let us look at how we can go about this.

One of the first things essential to self-control is the ability to analyze one's self. Unless one knows where his weaknesses are, he will not be able to successfully confront them. Everyone should realize there is a possibility he may lose control of one area of his life or more. Paul gave this perpetual warning: "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). The idea that one must "take heed" implies knowledge of the things he must heed. This shows that one should study his weaknesses so he will not give in to them.

Christ pointed out man's inclination to give in to the weakness of his flesh by saying: ". . . The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). There is a wide divergence in the ways men are tempted. Some are tempted by strong drink, and others are not. Some are tempted to commit adultery and fornication, while others are not. Examples could be multiplied, but these should be enough to make the point that one's inability to be tempted in one area does not immunize him from being tempted somewhere else. Therefore, one should catalogue his weak areas so he can avoid situations which would cause him to sin until he has overcome the inclination to be tempted by these things.

We are fortunate to have a savior who is understanding and sympathetic about our vulnerability. He can have empathy because he "was in all points tempted as we are (Hebrews 4:15,16). Yet, one must understand Jesus faced his temptation, and cannot sympathize with that which we will not face. Christ stands ready to help us; but he will help only the one who will make the effort to help himself (Philippians 2:12).

As one analyzes his weakness, he should remember he is no spiritual superman. He should expect to lose an occasional battle. Such Bible greats as Moses, Abraham, David, Peter, and others did. But these losses can become learning experiences to those who are desirous of pressing on to the ultimate victory (I John 5:4).

The second thing essential to self-control is self-discipline. There is an interesting contrast made in Galatians 5:16-26 between dissipation and discipline. Dissipation is called "works of the flesh" and discipline is called "the fruit of the Spirit." The disciplined life is much more difficult to live. The context shows that "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). It is obvious much effort is required

to accomplish this goal.

It is in order to make a suggestion on how this can be done. One reason so many fail in the discipline of their life is that they try to cast away the bad qualities without replacing them with good qualities to take their place. When one corrects a child, he does not remove the knife, the poison, or other harmful item from his hand, without giving him something he can use which will not harm him. He takes the negative from him, and gives him the positive. Well, this is what God does with his children. One quits doing things that are harmful to his spiritual well-being, and begins to replace them with positive qualities. Think of the things Peter said one must add to his faith (II Peter 1:5-11). These qualities will more than fill the empty place left due to the casting out of sinful habits. It is true these things are obtained by much effort. But what kind of person would expect the rewards of heaven without some sacrifices? The great apostle Paul found self-discipline difficult (I Corinthians 9:27); should we expect it to be different with us?

The last essential to bring ourselves under control this lesson will discuss is self-mastery. Conversion does not immunize one from temptations. One becomes a Christian by obeying God's word; he

remains one the same way. Everyone needs to be aware of the war which takes place between the flesh and the spirit. Paul made this point in Galatians 5:17 by saying: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; And these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." One must go against his own fleshly desires.

It is necessary for the Christian to maintain a constant state of vigilance. The immoral acts he pursued before becoming a child of God will continue to tempt him. He must not allow himself to give in to these things.

There are things which are right within themselves which the Christian must not allow to control him. If one becomes obsessed with sports activities, social events, television, food, etc., beyond the point of moderation, he is allowing the flesh to control his spirit. Concerning these things, Paul said: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. . . ." (I Corinthians 6:12,13). Paul is asserting he would not be brought under the power of the flesh. Every Christian should make the same resolve. — P.O. Box 345, Mabelvale, Arkansas 72103.

Childhaven Faces Its Problems

Continued from page 2

Dear Brethren and Friends,

The Board of Trustees of Childhaven are deeply grieved that conditions developed at Cullman of which we had no knowledge until February 29, 1984. We wish to assure you that we make no defense of any wrong-doing on the part of any of us, or of any of our employees.

All of us are truly sorry that *any* mistakes have been made. Immediate steps were taken to correct the situation, and other steps will be taken as we deem wise. We pledge our very best efforts to correct all such errors -- whether they stemmed from ignorance, misunderstanding, inattention, or carelessness.

Mistakes have been made in every home on earth -- even in our natural homes. No one should expect perfection in any home, although all of us should aim for it. We often fall far short of our goals. Whenever parents in a natural home err, they should not abandon their home nor should their friends desert them -- *provided they are willing to correct their mistakes*. We believe the same attitude should prevail regarding Childhaven.

In this period of re-staffing this home, we need your prayers and your support. Your recommendations of personnel, your moral support, and your wise counsel will be most welcomed. We appeal to you who have supported Childhaven financially in the past not to abandon us now. We urge you to stand by us, rather than to cut off our support.

We not only wish to correct all mistakes but we desire to make Childhaven an even better home than it ever has been in the past. To this end we sincerely mean it when we ask that you please pray for us, and to please continue your support for this worthy undertaking.

Yours in Christian service,
John E. Evans, Jr., Chairman
Board of Trustees
Childhaven, Inc.

Brother Larry Milligan and his wife, Jan, will come from Kennett, Mo., about June 1 to become Superintendent at Childhaven. He graduated from Freed-Hardeman, attended Lambuth College, and has a Master's degree in Counseling from Arkansas State University. His eleven years in the public schools (four of them as a Principal) should serve him in good stead. Two homes in the Kennett area merged, which made him available for Childhaven, and he comes highly commended by those with whom he has worked.

Critics of Childhaven may fail to consider that the children cared for there are not quite 'ideal' children to begin with. Few of us would want to take some of them into our own homes. However, this does not justify unreasonableness in discipline. Let all readers of Words of Truth pray for efforts to make good citizens of all residents of this child-care facility, and give it a chance to become better than ever.

Christ's Death

GARY C. HAMPTON

Central to preaching about Christ is the death of Christ. It seems logical to turn next to that death and see what made it necessary.

Paul writes, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). He states, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23). Later, Paul tells the Roman brethren, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (6:23). Clearly, he was not speaking of physical death, since all men will die physically (Hebrews 9:27). Instead, he was speaking of an eternal separation from God in a lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15), which is contrasted with eternal life that is found in Christ Jesus.

Sin in man's life is a barrier to friendship with God and causes one to be separated from his loving help (Isaiah 59:1-2). Those who abide in sin are spiritually dead, or separated from God (Ephesians 2:1). God

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“You’ll Eat Those Words”

DAN WINKLER

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it *shall eat the fruit thereof*” (Proverbs 18:21). From this verse one learns: (1) The tongue is powerful (Cf. James 3:2-8); (2) the tongue’s power may be dispersed into one of two directions (Cf. James 3:9-12); and (3) one’s use of the tongue as a source of life rather than death.

I. *Death Comes From Improperly Using The Tongue*

Death can result from the words one uses (Proverbs 10:11; 16:27; 18:6,7). For example, there are words of:

(1) *Flattery* (Proverbs 2:16; 5:3; 6:24; 7:21; 12:22; 26:28). Webster defines flattery as, “Excessive, untrue, or insincere praise;” in other words, it is deceit which is gift-wrapped. Remember, all liars will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:7).

(2) *Slander/gossip* (Proverbs 10:18; 11:9-13; 18:8; 20:19; 24:28). Some pat their acquaintances on the back to their face, and then hit their acquaintances in the face behind their backs. Remember, whispering and backbiting are the unfit works of reprobates (Romans 1:28-31).

(3) *Pride* (Proverbs 14:3; 27:2). Said John to Jim,

Christ’s Death

Continued From Page 3

cannot tolerate or fellowship sin (II Corinthians 6:14-17). God watches both the good and evil. He looks with favor upon the good and their petitions, while he looks with displeasure upon the evil (I Peter 3:12). Clearly, man needed a way to overcome sin and be restored to God’s friendship.

John the Baptist saw this as Jesus’ purpose, when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The angel had announced the same purpose to Joseph in a dream: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus verified that this was his purpose when he said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

To fulfill that purpose, Jesus had to divest himself of power, come to earth and die (Philippians 2:5-8). He had to take the form of sin-enslaved man, and conquer death for all men (Hebrews 2:14, 9). Christ, in his final hours, prayed that he should not have to suffer the death of the cross if there were any other way to satisfy the demands of sin (Luke 22:41-44). However, to have true remission of sin, there had to be blood shed (Hebrews 9:18-28). Jesus Christ was the perfect, or sinless, sacrifice for the sins of lost mankind (I Peter 2:21-25). He had to suffer in our stead and receive the punishment which was rightfully ours (Isaiah 53).

Jesus also died to fulfill Moses’ law (Matthew 5:17-18). He came to discharge the obligation of the law and fulfill its purpose. He had to die to bring to an end its ordinances that demanded perfection of man (Colossians 2:14-17). Its purpose was to bring men to Christ (Galatians 3:24). It was like a slave that was responsible for the safe conduct of the children from the home to the door of the schoolhouse. The law was to bring the Jews to Jesus, and to the acceptance of him as the one who would save them from their sins. (See also Romans 7:1-7). Jesus had to die that the barrier of separation between Jew and Gentile might be removed, in the ending of the law, and that both might be brought back to a right relationship with God (Ephesians 2:11-16).

Jesus had to die to open up the way to God for Jews and Gentiles. Like a grain of wheat, he had to die and be raised so that much fruit could be produced (John 12:23-33). His death was the only way for God to draw rebellious man back to him. As Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

“Did any one ever tell you, you are great?” “Why no,” said Jim. “Then where did you ever get the idea?” came John’s stinging rebuke! The mental cases most difficult to cure are those people who are crazy about themselves. Humility is the mark of a true Christian (I Peter 5:5,6; Cf. I Corinthians 10:31).

(4) *Disrespect* (Proverbs 20:20). Father is called, “The old man;” wife is described as, “The old lady.” There is the terse attitude, “I always speak my mind!” When Jesus forbade his disciples from calling another, “Fool,” he was addressing the harsh attitude which motivates such disrespectful speech (Matthew 5:22).

(5) *Hypocrisy* (Proverbs 26:23-27). Consider the hypocrite’s “deceptive ways” (v. 23-25); his “discovery” [sooner or later what one says will not conceal what one is] (v. 26); and his “destiny” (v. 27). No corrupt speech [such would include words of deceit] is to proceed from the Christian’s lips (Ephesians 4:25,29).

Then too, death can result from the way one uses words. For examples, words may be spoken:

(1) *Too often* (Proverbs 15:2,28; 17:27,28). There is nothing wrong with using many words when many words are needed (Cf. Acts 2:40). The real talent lies in never using two words when only one will suffice!

(2) *Too hastily* (Proverbs 13:2,3; 29:20). There are those who speak because they have to say something, while others speak because they have something to say! There is a difference. Christians are to be “swift to hear, slow to speak” (James 1:19).

(3) *Too infrequently* (Proverbs 15:7). Silence is not always golden (Romans 10:14). When the gospel needs to be preached, one should beckon with the hand for the opportunity to so do (Cf. Acts 13:16).

II. *Life Comes From Properly Using The Tongue*

Life may depend on the words one uses (Proverbs 10:11; 12:18; 16:24; 23:16). From the Christian’s lips, there should come words of:

(1) *Encouragement* (Proverbs 12:25). Like premium gas, encouragement helps take the knocks out of life. God’s people should learn “how to sustain with words him that is weary” (Isaiah 50:4; Cf. 35:4, 5).

(2) *Kindness* (Proverbs 15:1). Kindness is a language that even the deaf can hear and the blind

can see. Therefore, “Be ye kind” (Ephesians 5:32).

(3) *Purity* (Proverbs 15:26; Cf. 8:7). God has been extracted from his throne, so to speak, and humbled to a euphemistic exclamation, “O God.” Hell has been transformed from the lake of fire into a byword which, supposedly, seasons one’s speech with maturity. “Be ye holy” (I Peter 1:15), should extend to one’s speech as much as any other aspect of his life (Cf. Leviticus 18:21; 19:12; Matthew 5:34,37).

(4) *Truth* (Proverbs 22:1; 23:12). Untold millions are dying un-told! It is time to put “go” back into “gospel” (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).

Again, life may depend on the way one uses words. For example, Christians should use their words to:

(1) *Defend* (Proverbs 12:6). Fellow brethren [the church] should be defended. Consider the example of Peter (Acts 2:14ff) and Barnabas (Acts 9:26,27). The gospel should be defended (Philippians 1:7). The Christian’s hope should also be defended (I Peter 3:15).

(2) *Comfort* (Proverbs 15:4). All the cards in Hallmark’s inventory fade into the shadows of two never-to-be-forgotten words: “I care” (Cf. II Corinthians 1:3,4).

(3) *Teach* (Proverbs 15:7; Cf. 10:21; 20:15). Nothing compares to the beauty of little eyes sparkling with interest at the story of David and Goliath, or convictions being formed in the hearts of young teens, or adults discussing the simple truths of holy writ (Romans 10:15).

(4) *Counsel* (Proverbs 24:26; Cf. 20:15). People will seek advice. It is an essential commodity (Jeremiah 10:23). How needed are those who can take such an one to the shore of scripture and let him drink from the counsel of deity!

Conclusion

The Christian must learn to guard his speech (Proverbs 13:2,3). There are four scales on which he should weigh each word. He should consider “what” (25:11); “when” (15:23; 25:11); “how” (16:23,24); and “to whom” (20:19; 23:9) he speaks. He will, thus, be able to say, “All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverse in them” (8:8)!—Rt. 2, Woodbury, Tenn.

Communion With Christ

DON WILLIAMS

This memorial feast, set forth by Jesus at the final passover supper before his death (Matthew 26:26-28), has become a focal point of our religion. Jesus Christ came to earth -- he lived -- and he died. Man would be in doom and despair had it ended there. But -- JESUS AROSE -- and he ascended back into heaven. Furthermore, one day he is coming again and will claim his own (Matthew 25:31-40).

For this reason, partaking of the Lord’s Supper becomes a proclamation of our faith in him! When I partake of this feast, my heart and life is drawn back to that day when God showed his wonderful love for me! Because Jesus died and arose, I too can arise from a life of sin and accept his complete forgiveness. As I partake, I recommit to Christ my utter dependence and allegiance to him and his way of life.

Paul tells us how we should observe this great feast. He says that we should partake of it in a worthy manner (I Corinthians 11:27). *Unworthily* does not refer to the manner of life one has lived during the past week. Paul is not giving consent to those who “feel unworthy,” so refrain from partaking the Lord’s Supper. If eating the Lord’s Supper were based on our “worthiness,” how many of us could ever be justified in communing with the perfect Lamb of God (I Peter 1:19)? Who among us could come to the table, having lives untainted by sin? Paul is referring to the way in which one partakes of the feast. Lipscomb and

Shepherd write that “to eat and drink in an unworthy manner is in general to come to the Lord’s table in a careless, irreverent spirit, without a desire to commemorate the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sins, and without the purpose of complying with the obligations thereby assured.” Certainly one’s life needs to be as sinless as possible. A Christian whose sins are unforgiven by God certainly will not receive the benefit and strength that a faithful Christian will receive from the Lord’s Supper.

We are to examine ourselves (v. 28). We need to take a good look at our manner of communing, and make ourselves eat it aright. Paul continues by saying that we must “discern,” or recognize, the Lord’s body (v. 29). Has his death made a difference in our lives? Are we constantly grateful for his death, when he took our sins to the cross? Are we now living for him because he died for us?

The Lord’s supper can be of great strength to the Christian when partaken of in a proper manner. We who do so every Sunday need to prepare ourselves for this wonderful feast and look forward to this time when we can reflect upon what Jesus did for us, and anticipate his coming again.

Memorial feast--inspiring hour
For fuller service, greater power,
For heart and hand are given thee
When faith looks back to Calvary.

934 Florence Street, Lewisburg, Tennessee 37091.



Words Of

(USPS 691-76u)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, MAY 18, 1984

NUMBER 21

We Are Seed Sowers

The harvest was greater in Berea than in Thessalonica, and the response greater in Corinth than in Athens (Acts 17:1-34; 18:8). While the word was well received in Samaria, God instructed Phillip to leave that city to teach one man on the Gaza road (Acts 8:12; 25-39).

It is true that the gospel is more readily received in some sections. Religious, cultural, and educational backgrounds seem to be factors in this.

But the charge is to preach the word -- in season and out; to exercise long-suffering toward those who are slow of heart (II Timothy 4:1-4). The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in the whole world (Matthew 24:14).

Paul's long stay at Ephesus was occasioned by the doors opened to him in that city. One is remiss in his or her stewardship who does not take such things into account. It is obvious that we are not to cast pearls before swine. But since the charge is to preach the gospel to every creature in all the world we may be sure that those laboring in difficult fields are as surely serving the Lord as those who are baptizing great numbers. It is ours to plant and to water. It is God who gives the increase (I Corinthians 3:6).

Whether speaking to one man on the road, or evangelizing in a great metropolitan center, we are sowing the "seed" (Luke 8:11) of the kingdom. This is the first and most important consideration. Sow the precious seed on the hillside, sow the precious seed o'er the fields wide; sow the precious seed by the way. God loves the souls of those in the suburbs, on the street down town; those who live in the small towns and those who till the soil. He is concerned for those who work in the mines, and for those who operate computers in the skyscrapers in our large cities. He has sent us to the intellectual, and to the illiterate. None should feel derelict in duty who sow the seed wherever they may be. It is not ours to discriminate against any in such sowing.



R. W. GRAY

We want to see visible results. We rejoice to see the church growing rapidly. We may be sure that God is pleased with such growth as well. But we need to remember also that angels rejoice when "one sheep" is returned to the fold (Luke 15:4-7). Paul warned of a disposition that would judge the work of another. The thing about which all must be concerned is whether or not the gospel is preached (I Corinthians 3:8-15). The end result of the conversion of one man by the name of Saul was probably more far-reaching in consequence and result than the "many" at Corinth who upon hearing the word were baptized.

In country after country there is a migration to the suburbs. City dwellers and rural tenants meet in these areas. This presents a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity. Some in these "mixing pots" will receive the word. Such areas must not be neglected. But as we seek to go "where the people are" we can't afford to forget those downtown, and those who remain on the farm.

The following observation is not designed as a put-down to those of us who are city dwellers, nor is it intended as a blanket rule: But as we view the church today we find a balance that is needed when the rural area moves into the city. Observation will show that many of the great leaders in the churches are from a rural background. Many of our giants in the political

field, as well as in the spiritual arena, have come from the farm. There seems to be something about a pastoral life that lends itself to meditation and insight that is not as easy to achieve in the hustle and bustle of city life. Of such a person God would say, "while man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

By the very nature of their surroundings those who live in large metropolitan areas become accustomed to changes and innovations, while those in a rural setting tend toward a more conservative view of life. And even though TV is closing the gap between these two elements of society, it yet remains that we need to keep the church strong in our rural towns and country-sides. Let us not overlook the fact that many of the great churches in the cities have as their leadership men who came from the soil. The chances of an apostasy are minimized by the influence of those who came up in a conservative community. We need this balance in our churches. Evangelizing the rural areas of our country will guarantee that the feeder-line is not cut off to great leadership for our city churches in the days that lie ahead. We need a long-range view, as well as a short-range one, in sowing the kingdom seed. Think on these things. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, GA 30344.

Christ's Resurrection

GARY C. HAMPTON


Every Christian's hope of overcoming the grave is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:12-19). Notice also that there is no remission of sins if Christ be not raised. This is because he would not be the Son of God, and we could not be raised to walk with one, in newness of life, who had not been raised (Romans 6:3-4). It is, therefore, evident that we must prove Christ has been raised, or give up our faith.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, writes concerning Jesus, "He was (the) Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them

alive again the third day . . ." (Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVIII.) Why would a historian, and a Jewish one at that, accept Jesus' resurrection as a historical fact? Our answer is that the evidence proves it.

The New Testament stands as proof that Jesus lived, since it records events in his life and words he spoke. Jesus foretold his death and resurrection (Matthew 12:38-40; 16:21; 17:9, 22-23; 20:17-19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:9,31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:31-33; John 2:18-22). We also know he died and was buried (Matthew 27:50, 57-61; Mark 15:37, 42-47; Luke 23:46, 50-56; John 19:30-42). More than five hundred

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

Flavil H. Nichols

God Will Reward Benevolence

God has promised to bless or reward benevolence on our part when it comes from love filled hearts.

Reflective Benefits
Such benevolence in the heart does something wonderful to the GIVER! "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Proverbs 14:21). So for Christians to do good works, makes us happy, There is a reflex influence in our hearts and lives. But there is also an added benefit from the Lord, for "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17). God promises to repay what we do for the needy.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

God Will Reward Our Benevolence

Many passages teach that God will reward every man "according to his works" (e.g., Matthew 16:27; II Corinthians 5:10). But charitable deeds are singled out as a basis for our reward: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10). Because we truly believe this fact we should eagerly do good from our hearts to those in need. "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16). Here the R.S.V. reads: "Do not neglect to do good and to share that what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

When we give, it must be our heart's desire to "honor" the Lord with our substance (Proverbs 3:9). Christ forbids that our deeds of benevolence be done with ostentation, or to "show off" before men; but our Father sees and knows what we do in secret, and shall "reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1-4).

In order to be acceptable, our service to God must be willingly rendered, "not grudgingly, nor of necessity" (II Corinthians 9:7). Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (I Chronicles 29:5). "As the servants of Christ," we must be "doing the will of God from the heart,") and all of this must be rendered "with good will" (Ephesians 6:6-7). Showing "mercy with cheerfulness" is required (Romans 12:8). "Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord" (I Chronicles 22:19).

Good Will To Whom?

Unto whom should our benevolence be directed? To the churches of Galatia the Holy Spirit sent these instructions: "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Note please that this passage does not say 'exclusively unto them who are of the household of faith!' In fact, the very collection which is described by inspiration as being "for the saints" (I Corinthians 16:1-2) was distributed "unto them, and unto all men" (II Corinthians 9:12-13). We must conclude therefore that church or congregational benevolence which is "for the saints" is not restricted or limited to the "saints" ONLY. Individuals or private families "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (I Corinthians 16:15) -- and nobody

assumes that means the INDIVIDUALS must help the "saints" ONLY! We both individually, and collectively as a congregation -- help other people, not because THEY are Christians, but because we are!

Benevolence is an 'arm' of evangelism, for 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).

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

Therefore, my brethren
dearly BELOVED
and
longed for
MY JOY
and
CROWN
so stand fast in the Lord
my dearly beloved

I beseech Euodias
and
beseech Syntyche
that they may be of THE SAME MIND
in the Lord

I intreat thee also true yokefellow
help those women which labored
with me in the gospel
with Clement also
with other
my fellowlabourers
whose names are in the book of life.

REJOICE In the Lord always
and again
I say REJOICE.
Let your moderation be know unto all men.
The Lord is at hand.
— 1202 S. 34th St. NO. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205

IF YOU DON'T SAY ANYTHING, YOU CAN'T
BE CALLED ON TO REPEAT IT.

SOME FOLK SEEM TO THINK "INITIATIVE" IS
DOING THE OPPOSITE OF
WHAT THEY ARE ASKED TO DO.

The world "owes" you a living only
when you have EARNED it.

Before you give anyone a piece of your mind,
be sure you can get by with what you have left.

Like premium gasoline, ENCOURAGEMENT
helps take the 'knocks' out of life.

A lazy man aims at nothing -- and usually hits it, too!

The silence of some people is wonderful to 'listen' to!

Your word, when broken, cannot be mended.

Christian Love And Care Through Brotherhood

In the New Testament the church of the Lord is called his family or "house" (I Timothy 3:15). We are referred to as brothers and sisters in that family (Hebrews 2:12; Matthew 23:8). The ramifications of these relationships are astounding! Many things come to mind as we consider the principles involved.



RONNIE A. MISSILDINE

There is one which ranks very high on the list of considerations; that is the joys, opportunities, and responsibilities of BEING INVOLVED IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. I'm not referring to the pleasure some get in meddling in others' affairs. I am addressing the matter of help, love, concern, and service for which we as Christians may have opportunity in the lives of others.

There is so much hurt, disappointment, and trouble in the lives of many people. And often there is no one to whom they may turn for support and care. But in the brotherhood of believers there is our Christian family, including God, our Father, the "elder brother," Jesus Christ, and all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Often these painful experiences will weaken one's faith and if we are not there to give support they leave the family, or become discouraged. We as their brethren need to respond immediately to those who need us. Don't wait for the preacher to do it for you; he has the needs of many people to try to fill. Don't wait for the elders to do it; for they, too, have the responsibility of the whole congregation. *The needs of brethren should be filled by every Christian who sees that need!*

The problem arises when we get so busy in our own affairs that we fail to take note of the pain with which our brethren are dealing. We need to be more aware! This requires an observant spirit and a genuine care. But most of all it takes love. Isn't that the heart and core of Christian service? — P.O. Box 4171 Pensacola, FL 32507.

Cooperating With Grace

(NO. 2)



FRANK CHESSER

Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 39:2). This gulf cannot be bridged by man's own efforts. Apart from grace, the presence of just one sin in a man's life forever seals his doom. In the redemptive process, man must look to God, his grace, and the provisions thereof in Christ and the cross. It is the "grace of God that bringeth salvation" (Titus 2:11), and the "precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:19) that procures redemption for man's sin-sick soul.

God loves man and earnestly desires his salvation. God longs to express his grace in removing man's sin by the blood of his Son. Conversely, God hates sin. God's holiness and justice will not allow him to save man while he is pursuing sin. Obviously, therefore, man has a role to fulfill in the salvation of his soul. The Biblical portrait of redemption does not picture man sitting calmly in stoic passiveness while God performs regenerative spiritual surgery on his heart.

Consequently, man must be active, not passive, in receiving the benefits of God's saving grace. Peter implored, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40), and Paul admonished: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). How? By cooperating with God's grace in the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26). Two basic elements inhere in saving faith: trust, and obedience. In the "obedience" of faith, the "trust" of faith is always firmly rooted in God, his grace, and the blood of his Son, not in the act of obedience itself.

The gospel of Christ is God's power to save (Romans 1:16). It is the gospel "by which also ye are saved" (I Corinthians 15:1-2). The Romans did not enjoy freedom from sin by grace and blood until they "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine" which they had been taught (Romans 6:17).

The first step in man's "obedience of faith" in response to God's grace is "hearing." Clearly, before man can obey the gospel, he must first hear the gospel; for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14). "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Hearing involves real effort on man's part. Hearing properly performed is work. Real hearing involves both the physical ear and the mental ear. Man must hear with his mind as well as his ear. Having closed their mental ears, Jesus described some as having heard, yet failed to hear (Matthew 13:13). Real hearing is a very demanding process: the information heard or read must be assimilated and meditated upon. Consider the conversion of the Bereans: they heard Paul preach and "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Subsequent to their daily mental exertion, "many of them believed" (Acts 17:12).

Though hearing involves human effort, it is not a work of merit that annuls grace and places God in man's debt (Romans 4:4). The very gospel that is heard, directs man's faith and trust to God, his grace and the provisions for salvation through Christ and his blood. Therefore, the direction of man's faith and trust is upward, not inward.

Hearing leads to man's second response, which is faith; for "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Saving faith is obedient faith. Bible faith involves taking God at his word and doing what he says. Thus, faith is a work (John 6:29).

Paul speaks of the "work of faith" (I Thessalonians 1:3), "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), and the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26).

Three times in the same text, James described faith only, or faith apart from works, as "dead" (James 2:14-26). The Hebrew writer describes the responsive, submissive, yielding nature of faith to the will of God. Abel's faith offered the sacrifice that God demanded (11:4). Enoch's faith walked with God in harmony with his will (11:5). Noah's faith built the ark just like God instructed (11:7). Abraham's faith pitched its tent toward Canaan as God commanded (11:8). Israel's faith marched through the Red Sea, and around the walls of Jericho, just as God directed (11:29-30).

Since faith is a work, does it nullify God's grace and transform the gifts of God into human merit? God forbid! As faith obeys, the trust thereof is embedded in God and his grace, not in the specific action of faith itself. The trust of Abel's faith was in God, not in the sacrifice itself, not in his obedience in the offering thereof. The trust of Noah's faith was in God -- not in the ark, nor in his obedience in the construction of the ark. Even so, when a man expresses his faith by complying with the divinely-ordained conditions of the gospel, his trust is in God, divine grace, and the provisions thereof in Christ and the cross -- not in himself nor his own act(s) of obedience.

One such condition of the gospel (and, thus, an essential action of faith) is "repentance." Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Consequently, a man's faith that does not move him to repent puts him no closer to salvation than are the devils, for they "believe and tremble" (James 2:19).

Repentance literally means "a change of mind" (Matthew 21:28-29). A change of mind about sin always leads to a change of life. The desire for sin is replaced with a desire for righteousness. Thus, John said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). Jesus said the Ninevites "repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Luke 11:32). Their repentance bore fruit, for "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way" (Jonah 3:10).

One desiring to cooperate with God's grace in the obedience of faith must follow his repentance with a confession of Jesus as God's Son. Paul said, "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Regarding Jesus, the "chief rulers also believed in him;" however, their faith was not obedient faith, because "they did not confess him" (John 12:42).

Obviously, repentance and confession involve human effort. In these actions of faith, man is doing something: he is working; he is exerting himself. Consequently, repentance and confession are "works;" but what "kind" of works? Are they works of merit that cancel out grace, detour around Christ's blood, make God a debtor, and offer man grounds for boasting? (Romans 4:4; Ephesians 2:9). God forbid! They are works of faith cooperating with divine grace. Repentance and confession constitute faith at work; faith reaching forth to the cross; faith appealing to God for salvation through grace and blood.

Repentance and confession are inherent elements in the "obedience of faith." The trust of this obedient faith is not in these specific actions of faith. Only the most misguided of souls would trust in his own act of penitence and confession for salvation. Though necessary, they do not constitute the objects of the trust that inheres in saving faith. The sole object of trust is God's grace and the blood of Christ. In these actions of faith, man is cooperating with God's grace, and is thus appealing to the love, goodness, and mercy of God for his redemption. — Rt. 5, Box 31, Thomson, GA 30824.

Christ's Resurrection

Continued from page 1

witnesses could attest to seeing the Savior after he came forth from the tomb.

On the morning of Jesus' resurrection, Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, Joanna and other women set out for the tomb before daylight (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10; John 20:1). They arrived after sunrise, talking about who would roll back the stone for them (Mark 16:2-4). When they saw the stone already rolled away (Luke 24:2-3), Mary Magdalene ran. Meanwhile, the other women learned from two angels that Jesus was risen (Luke 24:4-7). They went to tell the disciples; and Jesus appeared to them on the way, after having appeared to Mary Magdalene (Matthew 28:7-10). When Mary Magdalene came to Peter and John, she told them someone had taken the body of the Lord to a place unknown to her. They ran and saw the empty tomb and folded clothes. This convinced John that Jesus was risen. Peter and John went home; but Mary stood weeping in front of the tomb. It was there that Jesus appeared to her. He assured her that he was really there, it was not just a vision; and he had not already ascended to the Father (John 20:2-18; Mark 16:9-10).

While the women were seeing Jesus, the guards were reporting to the chief priests. When they paid these men to testify that they had failed in their duty, and someone had taken the body while they slept, these chief priests showed their total unwillingness to accept the truth and gave us a great testimony concerning the resurrection at the same time (Matthew 28:11-15).

Evidently, the Lord next appeared to Peter, but we do not have details of this event (Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5). Then, he appeared to two disciples

on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Mark reports that the eleven were next to see Jesus (Mark 16:12-14). We conclude that this group included Matthias, since Judas committed suicide and, as we will see, Thomas was not there. The eleven told Thomas they had seen Jesus, but he would not believe them (John 20:24-25). Until this point, all of Jesus' appearances occurred on the Lord's day of his resurrection (John 20:19). Eight days later, Thomas was with the eleven when they saw Jesus (John 20:26-31; I Corinthians 15:5).

Christ's next appearance was by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25). During this appearance, he directed a special question to Peter, and commanded him to feed his sheep. The next appearance was on a mountain in Galilee, as he had appointed to the disciples and women (Matthew 28:7-10, 16-20; I Corinthians 15:6). We therefore conclude it was this meeting which involved over five hundred people. He also appeared to James, and to all the apostles again (I Corinthians 15:7). This last may be the ascension meeting of Acts 1:3-8 (Luke 24:50-53).

Some might claim the apostles and others were expectantly looking for Jesus, and thus hallucinated. However, such expectation is not exhibited (Mark 16:8-11, 12-13, 14; John 20:24-25). Further, Saul is the case who ends all such speculation. He blasphemed Jesus' name and persecuted the church (I Timothy 1:13; Acts 8:1; 9:1-2; 22:1-5). Yet, he saw Jesus and had to submit to his Lordship (Acts 9:3-22; 22:6-21). Surely his corroborating testimony proves Christ is risen! — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

Are There Sincere, Knowledgeable And Devout Christians In All The Various Denominations?

Contending that there are devout, sincere and knowledgeable Christians scattered in ALL the denominations is NOT New Testament evangelism either in proclamation or in practice. Yet this has become a popular bandwagon which some (far, far, FAR TOO MANY) have climbed aboard and declared full steam ahead. They label as sectarian, right wingers, professional heresy hunters, etc., those of us who refuse to climb aboard. Especially, I find the sectarian charge to be amazingly amazing!! They label as sectarian those of us who have fought sectarianism all our lives and have led many from it into the sunlit truths of pure, unadulterated Christianity.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Let us take a closer look at this error of such egregious proportions. This movement labels people as Christians who in reality are part and parcel of the sectarian world. They have grown up in it; they see nothing wrong with it; they listen to sectarian theology every time they attend a religious service; they give freely (perhaps sacrificially) to support it; they take and read sectarian papers of a religious nature; they wear sectarian names; they might even teach and preach sectarian doctrine. Yet somehow, somehow, somewhere, (according to the deeply-fallacious error under review) they have learned enough gospel truth to become sincere, knowledgeable, and devout *Christians*. Yet look closely at some things many if not all of them do not know.

They do not now know and have never known that there is a basic distinction drawn between denominationalism and the Lord's church. They do not now know nor have they ever known, that denominationalism is wrong -- grossly wrong from beginning to end. Yet, according to this popular and growing error, many in various denominations have obeyed the gospel and are right now knowledgeable, devout, and sincere. But knowledgeable about what? Truth? or, error? Devout toward what? The doctrines and commandments of men? or apostolic traditions of truth and nothing but truth? Sincere about what? -- salvation based on truth only? or truth and nothing but truth? Sincere about what? -- salvation based on truth only? or truth mixed with error? It is impossible for any person to get into a denomination without embracing and espousing some error. For truth and truth only never has led any person unto denominationalism. Yet, amazing as it can be, those of us who oppose this are the real sectarians and those who favor it are non-sectarian!! Now, it is sectarian, according to this novel view, to preach that one must be taught or self-taught correct doctrine ONLY in order to be baptized correctly. I maintain that one cannot be taught or self-taught wrongly, and be baptized correctly. If so, how? How? HOW???

What proof is offered for such? Some go to the sermons and writings of Restoration greats. They need to cite book, chapter and verse authority from Sacred Scripture instead. Some think proof of such is seen in I Corinthians 1:10ff. But these people had heard, believed and were baptized under Paul's preaching and teaching initially during his first eighteen months there (Acts 18:8). They surely did not become a part of a denominational culture by such. When parties later arose over preacheritis, Paul showed clearly what was wrong and condemned (not

condoned) their party spirit of divisiveness.

Another thinks he finds proof for such when John the apostle told the Christ that they had found a man casting out demons in Christ's name and they forbade his doing so because he followed not them (the apostles). Christ told John to forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us. It is obvious from the context (Mark 9:38-40) that this man could not have been doing the miraculous or supernatural work of demon-expulsion unless he had been authorized to do so by the Christ. John was corrected on this point. However, it is a strange type of exegesis to see this man as the equivalent of one today who is in denominationalism and those who oppose his being there as being in the same objecting category as was John on this occasion. The man who cast out demons was NOT in a denomination for no such organism existed. Furthermore, he was doing the work Christ had authorized him to do. People who are part and parcel of human denominationalism are NOT doing the work Christ has authorized them to do for he NEVER authorized anyone's going into such or remaining in such. ALL our work religiously is to be done in the Lord's vineyard -- not in vineyards that belong to John Calvin, Martin Luther, Henry VIII, John Wesley, Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles T. Russell, the Papacy, etc. (See Matthew 20:1ff).

People in New Testament times were taught about the kingdom of God prior to entering it by the new birth (Acts 8:12; John 3:3,5,7). They knew about both the kingdom and the new birth prior to baptism. Not that first one ever thought of himself as being BOTH a Christian and something else in addition. If so, who was he or she? and where do we read about them in the Bible? They were just Christians. They had been taught correctly; they were baptized correctly. And when they were not baptized correctly due to insufficient knowledge prior to immersion, they were baptized properly as in Acts 19:1-7. They were not in the Lord's house or body, *and* in something else also; they were just in the Lord's house or body. But this new movement has them Christians plus something else.

In many, many years of doing personal work with denominational people I have come across multitudes who regard themselves as Christians and yet also as Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Catholics, etc. More than once I have been told by immersionists among these people that they indeed had been baptized FOR the remission of sins. Did that make them Christians? Further scrutiny on my part with them brought out that they really thought they were baptized for the remission of sins and yet they were saved before they got into the water, as per their own claims. With others they had received nothing but plain old denominational baptism to put them into some human institution and in later study had learned that baptism is necessary for salvation. Then they began to attribute to their baptism what neither they nor their preachers attributed to it at the time the watery rite was performed. Future knowledge ten years later does not travel in retroactive fashion and make valid now a wrong baptism received a full decade ago. Friends of mine were recently working with a young Baptist lady. She told them she was baptized for the remission of sins. She discovered she had been baptized, as in ALL genuine Baptist immersions, to get into the Baptist church and had believed she was saved before ever getting into the water. I have a letter before me from a lady who is an avowed Humanist, yet has not cast away all the Bible. She also claims to be a Christian Unitarian. Since Unitarianism rejects the Deity of Christ as one of its

basic dogmas, it would be of great interest to know just how many Christians there are among the Unitarians.

I am grateful for my heritage. I was not brought up in a sectarian background. My godly parents were New Testament Christians for more than a half century each before death claimed them in 1971 and 1979 respectively, I never thought of them as sectarians when I lived under their supervision and have NEVER thought of them as sectarians in any of my adulthood. Brother N. B. Hardeman baptized my Dad in Stephens, Arkansas, in 1918. As these lines are written I am scheduled to preach in a lecture-ship this week near Stephens and while I am there memories will flood my soul of that area where my Dad lived and farmed as a boy and young man and where he confessed Christ and was baptized by the princely Hardeman. A part of my religious heritage belongs in that area. As a beginning gospel preacher I studied under such men as N. B. Hardeman, H. A. Dixon, Frank Van Dyke and a host of others. These three men, now dead, were not sectarians and NEVER taught me to be.

For well over a third of a century I have preached the gospel of Christ. I do not believe I have been sectarian ANY of the time. Souls are at stake when I preach to people and I am not about to encourage anybody to remain with a risky case of past conversion. It is far too easy to make it sure and certain. I can give book, chapter and verse authority for EVERYTHING I ask a person to do in conversion or in living the Christian life. This I DO in my preaching and teaching. If I could not do so, I would not request his/her doing such for a single moment. But I CANNOT give book, chapter, and verse authority for a person's becoming a Christian AND SOMETHING ELSE at the same time; and those who are advocating this error cannot do a bit better in the citing of scriptures for such, either.

Not for a moment will I concede that the views expressed in this article make me a right winger, a professional heresy hunter, the writer of an unwritten creed, a person who is seeking to WHIP all others into line, etc. I deeply resent all such "loving" labels.

I recognize that a person may obey the gospel and later go into denominational error. Then he becomes an ERRING CHILD OF GOD. But there is a vast difference in this and affirming that there are Christians in ALL the various denominations, and not even bother to insert the adjective "ERRING" before such assertions. If there is as many as one erring child of God in any denomination today, he is in the wrong realm! There is a right place for God's children -- in the church that belongs to his Son. There is a wrong place for any erring or professing child of God to be today -- in a church begun by men, sustained by men and which ultimately will face "rooting up" time (Matthew 15:13,14). Knowledgeable Christians who are both sincere and devout are going to *know* where they should be -- and it will not be in denominational settings or frameworks of falsehood. If in the *know*, devout sincerity will not allow their being any place except the Lord's church and that ALONE!! And that is not "right wing" nor "left wing;" it is straight down dead center; it is hitting the mark in the "bull's eye" -- the very center of that eye!! — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

WORD of GOD

8th Commandment

Thou shalt not steal.

Exodus 20:15



Words Of b

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1984

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The Inspiration Of The Bible

(No. 1)

"Is the Bible inspired? Is it really the word of God?" These are questions often asked. The Bible itself is its best defender. The diggings must be analyzed before the assayer can determine what minerals the content holds. So the Bible must be allowed to testify concerning its inspiration.

What does the word "inspire" mean? Young's *Analytical Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines the Greek word translated "inspire" to mean "God breathed." Webster's dictionary says inspire means, "to blow or breathe into or upon."

Some say the Bible was *inspired* as Shakespeare was inspired to write his tragedies and comedies. Shakespeare had a desire which prompted him to exercise his abilities in creating some wonderful works of art; but the Bible writers received messages direct from God. What they wrote was *breathed into* them by the Spirit of God.

Let the Bible speak for itself about inspiration: the word "inspiration" is found first in Job 32:8. The record reads, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." This teaches that God transmitted his wisdom to man.

The writers of the Old Testament declared they were inspired by God. Examples are as follows: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2). "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah 1:2). "The word of the Lord came to me" (Jeremiah 1:4). Amos wrote, "The words . . . which he saw concerning Israel" (Amos 1:1). Many other quotes could be given.

Inspiration is also affirmed in the New Testament. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17). A more pointed statement reads, "For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). Peter said that the Holy Spirit moved the prophets to write what they wrote. Peter said that they prophesied of salvation through Christ, but they did not fully understand it (I Peter 1:10).

Is there any indication that New Testament writers were inspired as were the prophets? Yes. Paul spoke of inspiration: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Corinthians 2:9-13). Luke said that the apostles spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

Another question is, Did the New Testament writers know their writings were scripture? The question is clearly answered. Peter is commenting on Paul's writings, "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter

3:15-16). Peter classified Paul's epistles with other scripture.

There may be objection to our proving the inspiration of the Bible by the Bible itself! Someone may say, "The Bible cannot bear witness to itself. The inspiration must be proven by some external evidence." There is external evidence, but it is not inclusive enough without the internal evidence of the Bible itself.

Let us illustrate. James D. Willeford gives the illustration, "Suppose you own a farm and one day as you are walking over the hillside you notice an outcropping of quartz. Believing that there is a precious metal on your land you rush down to the assayer and exclaim, 'Say, I believe there is gold on my farm.' To which the assayer simply requests that if you will bring a specimen of the rock he will analyze it and tell you if your assumption is correct. But you exclaim again, 'Why should I bring a specimen of the rock from my land? Just take a brick from the building next door and assay it and tell me if there is gold on my land.' You would be lucky if you did not get thrown out of the man's office." Why should we examine some outside material to prove the kind of material examined? We must allow the find to speak for itself. The same is true with the Bible. We must allow it to speak itself to prove its inspiration. (More to follow). — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

Christ's Blood


GARY C. HAMPTON

Every year, the Red Cross makes blood drives, to get a certain number of pints so that the people will have blood available in case of injury or accident during the year. This drive for blood is emphasized because man has come to realize that life is in the blood (see Leviticus 17:11,14). Blood is needed to sustain lives. Similarly, blood is vital to the salvation of lost souls.

We are reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus

(Romans 5:9-11). Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon*, says the word *reconciled* means, "to be restored to the favor of God." Hence, some have said the word means to make friends again (compare Colossians 1:20-22). Two proofs are offered by Paul to show we are reconciled to God: First, God does not impute to us our sins. Second, he has given the message 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

Flavil H. Nichols

A "Golden" Anniversary

On Mother's Day back in 1934 this Editor preached his first sermon. I was only fifteen years old then; but I realized that if Jesus Christ could die for the sins of the whole world when he was only thirty-three, surely a fifteen-year-old can tell people of his divine love. This year I 'celebrated' the fiftieth anniversary of that occasion by participating in the Fifth Annual Lectureship in Visalia, California. This was my first time to be in that State, but I found many readers of *Words of Truth*. Several congregations in that area subscribe for their entire memberships, and some new subscriptions were secured. At least twenty-seven congregations were represented in the attendance, and some sample copies are being made available to them all.

SINFUL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CHURCH

Since the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), all who are saved have divine responsibilities toward the church. Christians should LOVE the church as Christ does (Ephesians 5:25). We are to love all "the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17), not just our own congregation. It would be sinful to intentionally offend the church (I Corinthians 10:32).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Notice some sinful attitudes toward the church.

(1) *It is sinful to shirk our duty to attend the services of the church.* God says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . ." (Hebrews 10:25). Those baptized on Pentecost "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer" (Acts 2:42). Furthermore they continue daily with one accord in the temple" (verse 46).

Those who give the Lord only "one hour a week" by coming habitually only to the Sunday morning worship, should re-examine their basic attitudes toward the church. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Ask yourself, Do I believe this verse? Is it "good" to attend Bible study, and all other services? If I know this, and don't do it, do I not have a sinful attitude toward the church? Can such members say they are "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58)? Are they "steadfast" Christians? (You answer)! The Holy Spirit directs, ". . . be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). Is building up the Bible class attendance a "good work"? If you disobey Titus 3:1, do you not have a sinful attitude toward the church and its work?

The people of Meroz were 'Absentees' and God placed a "curse" (Judges 5:23) against them! In Antioch the church assembled (it seems) daily for a whole year (Acts 11:26). Is it not a sinful attitude toward the church for members to show up only once or twice for its special services, as in revivals? How can such negligent members claim to be "of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32) with the eldership and the rest who strive to build up the church? Does this not apply with equal force to those who

deliberately are absent on Wednesday nights?

(2) *Another sinful attitude toward the church is to sow discord.* The Holy Spirit said, "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him" and the seventh item is "he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). It is wrong to agitate trouble in the church. It was to the Lord's church that 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" (I Corinthians 1:10). God's plan to accomplish this perfect oneness of believers in matters of "judgment" is for us to "obey them" (the elders) "that have the rule over you and submit yourselves . . ." (Hebrews 13:17). In the very shadow of the cross Jesus prayed that "all who shall believe on me" may "be one" (John 17:20-21). By doing this, we can apply the slogan of an earlier era:

In matters of faith, unity;
 In matters of opinion, liberty;
 And in all things, charity (love).

It is wicked to press even a rightful opinion to the point of dissension or division.

(3) *A "Don't-Care" attitude toward the church is also sinful.* To be indifferent toward the church, not caring if it succeeds or fails, indicates a lack of love for the body of Christ. Because some do not care about the effectiveness of our worship in song, whether the singing is excellent, mediocre, or poor, they refuse to sing as commanded (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). When the house is not filled, for those present to 'scatter out' over the auditorium suggests a "Don't-Care" spirit, and contributes to lessening the effectiveness of our singing. For members to spend generously on ourselves, to keep up with the latest fashions and styles, or to gratify the desires and appetites of the flesh, yet be tight-fisted givers, indicates a lack of concern for the church and its program(s). It still is true that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). It is sinful to be unconcerned about the lost (Matthew 16:26), and not to care if the outreach of the church is hampered by our stinginess.

Let all of us become vitally interested in the total program of the church. May our love for the church grow until it becomes like the love Christ has for it -- enough to die for it (Ephesians 5:25).

Even when he is SILENT, a wise man says more than a fool when HE speaks.

Some live in 'all-electric' homes: everything in them is 'charged.'

The roots of evil are often very firmly planted.

A 'sharp' person seldom has an axe to grind.

One of the most wonderful things a man ever makes, is a living for his family.

If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it?

Truth needs no crutches! So if a story limps, it is a lie.

Cooperating With Grace

James (1:17) pointed to God as the source of all good things. Every good thing that man enjoys is a gift from God and a manifestation of his grace. God does not owe man anything. If a man could live a million years, he could never perform enough good deeds to place God in his debt. Whatever God does for man is based on grace, not merit. The very nature of grace stamps man as an eternal debtor. In spite of all his efforts, man remains an "unprofitable servant" (Luke 17:10).



FRANK CHESSER

The holiness of God disallows the possibility of one's standing in his presence with even a single uncovered sin. It was sin within the camp that necessitated the removal of the tabernacle, wherein dwelt the presence of God, and pitching it "afar off from the camp" (Exodus 33:7). When sin moves in, God moves out.

God loves man with an unfathomable love, and fervently desires his salvation. Subsequent to the entrance of sin, grace (Genesis 3:15) preceded judgment (Genesis 3:16-19). The "seed of woman" blossomed and bloomed in the person of Christ who bruised the head of Satan by his death and shed blood, thus making it possible for God to be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Salvation by grace through blood appropriated to one's soul in the obedience of faith includes baptism. Jesus joined baptism with faith as a part of gospel obedience essential to salvation (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus put water in the new birth (John 3:5), and man has been trying his best to remove it ever since. Peter joined repentance and baptism and declared both to

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Christ's Blood

Continued From Page 1

reconciliation to carry to the world (II Corinthians 5:18-21). Such reconciliation is conditioned upon our being in Christ (verse 17). We must be baptized to be in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). Further, we must walk in God's way if we are to enjoy the constant cleansing his blood affords (I John 1:7-9).

Christ's blood is also able to release us from the bondage of sin, or give us remission (Matthew 26:28; Luke 24:46-47). Such remission is only possible through the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22). It was Christ's blood that was shed (Romans 5:9). He shed that blood in his death (John 19:33-34). We reach his death in baptism (Colossians 2:12). No wonder Peter gave repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ as pre-conditions for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Paul told the brethren from Ephesus that re-

demption is through Christ's blood (Ephesians 1:7; also, Colossians 1:14). *Redemption* describes one's release through the payment of a ransom price. That price was paid for people living empty lives of sin. Our freedom was not obtained through the hoarding up of perishable items, but with the highly-valued blood of God's own Son (I Peter 1:18-19). Again, we find redemption to be conditioned upon our calling out to God for a clean conscience through baptism (I Peter 3:21).

Christ's blood is also able to cleanse us from sin's defilements (Revelation 7:14; 1:5). Saul learned that he must not wait, but arise and be baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism is clearly the means of our calling on the Lord's name to be saved (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13-15).

John says Jesus is the propitiation for our sins

and the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2). It was God who sent him to play that role (4:10). God, being just, had to require an appeasing sacrifice to enable him to look favorably upon man (compare Isaiah 59:1-2). We are able to find such favor in Jesus, through faith (Romans 3:25). Such faith is produced by hearing God's word and is shown by our obeying it in baptism (Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:26-27).

Christ's blood also gives us boldness to approach God's throne (Hebrews 10:19-20). Through Christ, we even have the assurance that we are on the way to heaven (John 14:1-6). Like all the other blessings the blood gives us, this one is conditional: We must do the will of the Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

Thank God for the blood of Christ and all the blessings it supplies! — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

"How Much More... The Blood Of Christ"

LARRY R. YURK

As one reads the Old Covenant recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch, he is struck by the number of bloody sacrifices which were commanded. As an example, Numbers 28-29 enumerates some of the public sacrifices. During the eight-day period of the Feast of Tabernacles alone (Numbers 29:12-38), a total of one hundred ninety-nine bullocks, rams, he-lambs, and he-goats were offered for the nation. Central to these sacrifices was their blood which was shed and sprinkled on the horns carved into the four corners of the brazen altar. From the Old Testament perspective this blood made atonement for sins (Leviticus 17:11).

The number of sacrifices multiplies when one understands that the Old Testament required *eleven* different regular public sacrifices. They were: (1) the daily sacrifices, (2) the additional ones for the Sabbath, (3) those offered at the New Moon, (4) the Passover, (5) When the sheaf was waved, (6) Pentecost, (7) with the bringing of the first two loaves, (8) at New Year, (9) on the Atonement Day, (10) during the Feast of Tabernacles, and (11) on the day following that feast.

Other special days warranted sacrifices above and beyond those specifically prescribed in the Law. A most noteworthy occasion was the dedication of Solomon's temple. On that occasion twenty-two thousand oxen and one-hundred-twenty thousand sheep were offered (I Kings 8:63)!

Beside the public sacrifices which were offered for the whole nation, private sacrifices were offered on an individual basis. Some were commanded by the Law while others were voluntary acts which originated in the heart of the worshiper. During the offering of the bloody sacrifice, the blood from the animal was sprinkled on each of the four horns of the altar of burnt offering. In the offering of some sacrifices, a small amount of additional blood was used in other ways. The rest of the blood was poured out at the base of the altar and was conducted through two funnels which drained into the Valley of Kidron adjacent to the temple. Josephus estimated that the number of Jews who assembled at Jerusalem for the three major feasts often exceeded two million! He based his estimate on the number of personal sacrifices which were offered, adding that the drainage

funnels from the altar provided a continuous river of blood from the thousands of sacrifices offered daily!

The blood of bulls and goats, poured out like a river, marked the Old Covenant. But inspiration concludes, "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin" (Hebrews 10:4). Countless sacrifices offered by the sinners themselves could not take away *one* single sin. In contrast, the reader is pointed to the efficacy of one single sacrifice, offered by God himself, providing the power to take away *all* the sins of the world (Hebrews 10:8-14). The river of blood which flowed for centuries from the altar at Jerusalem could not, in actuality, atone for one single sin. Rather, it pointed to the marvelous power of the blood of the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29; I Peter 1:19).

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

— 2416 Hull Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50317.

The Inspiration Of The Bible

(No. 2)

If the Bible is the product of mere man, it should not be regarded any higher than other productions of man. If God is its author, no book can be compared with the Bible. May we continue our investigation.

Did God inspire only the thoughts of the Bible writers? or, did he give them the very words they uttered? The following passages and others state clearly that God inspired the words used to convey his message.

David said, "The spirit of the Lord, spake by me and his word was in my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2). To Jeremiah the Lord said, "Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak . . . behold I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:7-9). To Ezekiel



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

the Lord said, "Thou shalt speak my words unto them" (Ezekiel 2:7). In the New Testament Paul said, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Corinthians 2:13). God promised to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). Paul, speaking of God's promise to Abraham, said: "Now to Abraham and his seed was the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). He said that God promised Abraham a seed, not seeds. In the original autographed copies of the scriptures, God gave the writers the very words they used.

How much scripture did God inspire the Bible writers to write? Was it a complete revelation for all time to come? or just for the first century? Jesus answered this question when he promised the apostles the Holy Spirit. He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). This promise was kept. Jude was inspired to write exhorting them to "contend

earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered . . ." (Jude 3 A.S.V.). God completed his inspiration to man in the first century! Paul said the inspired word of God is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17). If our practice is not supported by the scripture, it is a bad work. The scriptures are a perfect guide to direct man until the end of time.

The all-sufficiency of the word of God revealed in the New Testament is seen in what it did for men like Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John. They had no more scriptures than we have today, yet they were spiritual giants. Peter in the first century said God's "divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3).

Let us ask some questions about the sufficiency of God's inspiration: (1) Does the scripture clearly set forth the Lord's plan for salvation? The great commission of Christ instructed the apostles to teach men that they must hear God's word, believe in Jesus as God's son, repent of their sins, and be buried with

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Cooperating With Grace

Continued from page 3

be "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Preaching Christ involves baptism in water (Acts 8:35-38). Jesus shed his blood in his death (John 19:34), and Paul specified baptism as the consummating act of gospel obedience that puts man into the death of Christ so as to be cleansed by his blood (Romans 6:3-4). Newness of life and freedom from sin by grace and blood come after one has been baptized into Christ, not before (Romans 6:3-7).

Is baptism a *work of merit* that nullifies grace? Does baptism transform salvation as a gift, into a divine debt? A thousand times no! How could man possibly "earn" even the most humble expression of God's grace by allowing someone to immerse him in water and raise him therefrom? The very idea is preposterous!

Baptism, like repentance and confession of Jesus as God's Son, is an act of faith that appeals to God's grace and the blood of Christ for salvation. Baptism is faith at work; faith complying with God's instructions; faith entreating God for forgiveness through grace and blood. Biblical baptism is irrevocably tied to the cross of Christ. It is a symbolic reenactment of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-5), which is the very heart of the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4). The issue is not baptism, nor any other necessary action of faith; the issue is the cross! Once a man really understands the cross, he will have no difficulty with baptism, attendance, giving, etc.

It is indeed tragic that ever since the Reformation Movement of the Sixteenth Century, this aspect of Biblical teaching has been a stumbling block to many people. A failure to view baptism in relation to faith, grace, and blood has led to a five-hundred-year feud with this simple and meaningful condition of the gospel.

Various religious groups are eager to file baptism under the "law of works" (Romans 3:27) that eliminates grace and nullifies blood, instead of leaving it under the "law of faith" (Romans 3:27) that cooperates with grace and relies on Jesus' shed blood. Therefore, they view baptism as a meritorious work that leads to boasting; a work opposed to salvation by grace and faith; a work that attempts to earn salvation as payment for a debt -- instead of receiving salvation as a gift of grace.

(However, in striking irony, many of these same groups require baptism as an essential prerequisite for membership in their church. Thus, they consider baptism as non-essential *for salvation*, yet essential *for affiliation with their particular denomination*. By such action, according to their own philosophy, they have placed their church under the "law of works," the very system that they oppose with such fervor!)

Moreover, a crucial distinction is drawn between the *before* and *after* events of salvation. Any work or human effort *prior* to salvation is viewed as meritorious in nature and thus an attempt to nullify grace and blood, and place God in man's debt. Man is encouraged to accept salvation by faith alone. However, *subsequent* to salvation, the saved person is urged to lay aside his "faith only" and clothe himself in "obedient faith." He is impressed with the necessity of giving, attending, sharing his faith and a host of other good works. Is not divine grace and blood just as essential and operative *after* salvation, as *before*? If any work or human effort *prior* to salvation cancels out grace and blood, why does it not have the same effect *after* salvation?

Consistency would demand that advocates of salvation by "faith only" implore their spiritual constituents to desist all their religious activities. "Stop attending, giving, sharing and helping. Cease your efforts to make void the grace of God. Stop trying to earn your salvation. Recline in the arms of *faith alone*, and let God's grace take care of you!"

"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that

not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). God's grace is active and expressive, not passive; and man's faith must match it in kind; not degree, but kind. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15), the glorious gift

of his Son, whereby, in cooperation with grace through the obedience of faith, man might enjoy redemption from sin, and hope of eternal life! — Route 5, Box 31, Thomson, Georgia 30824.

Inspiration Of The Bible

Continued From Page 3

him in baptism to be saved (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47). From Paul we learn that there must be a confession of faith, baptism into the death of Christ and a resurrection to a new life (Romans 10:10; 6:3,4). Three thousand obeyed these commands of a loving Lord on the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2:41).

(2) Is the New Testament scripture all we need to guide us in worship? We learn that the early church met on the first day of the week to worship; they sang and made melody in their hearts to the Lord; they prayed earnestly; they gave of their prosperity; they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine; and they communed with Christ and with each other in the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; I Corinthians 6:1,2). This is acceptable

worship.

(3) Did God inspire enough scripture to direct our steps as Christians? Men and women in every age who have followed the teaching of Christ have been the greatest people. The gospel of Christ has transformed drunkards, cheats, gamblers, liars, thieves, and libertines into respectable, peaceful, citizens. Broken hearts have been mended, husbands and wives have been brought into a closer bond, children have been loved, and communities have been changed through the influence of the inspired word.

WE PLEAD WITH YOU TO STUDY AND BELIEVE THE BIBLE! — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

PHILIPPIANS — WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFE

Be careful for nothing,
but

in everything

by prayer and supplication

with thanksgiving

Let your requests be made known unto God;

and

the peace of God

which passeth all understanding

shall keep

your hearts and minds

through Christ Jesus.

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.

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.

— 1202 S. 34th St. No. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205



Words Of



(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

Man, The Worshiping Creature

Of the several characteristics and traits that distinguish man from the other creatures, worship is one of the most pronounced. In every culture in every age, most men worship something. In their ignorance, the proud Athenians worshipped the unknown God (Acts 17:23). Even the atheistic humanist Auguste Comte proposed a Religion of Humanity complete with his own suggestion for sacraments, saints and rituals Another unbeliever wrote "Religion of some sort is probably necessary Instead of worshipping supernatural rulers, it will sanctify the higher manifestations of human nature in art and love . . ." (Julian Huxley Ed., *The Humanist Frame*, London, George Allen and Urwin Ltd., 1961, p. 44). A few years ago I read of a government newspaper editorial in Russia exhorting the masses not to adore the statues of Lenin.



JOHN WADDEY

Why is man incurably religious? Solomon writes that God "hath set eternity in their hearts" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The Creator made man to worship and serve him. Although most men are living in rebellion to Jehovah, they cannot escape their need to adore something or someone greater and more powerful (at least, in their opinion) than themselves.

Revealed Worship

The God who made man as he is did not leave his need for worship unfulfilled. He revealed himself to the human family. In Eden he came down and talked with them (Genesis 3:8-21). The created universe helps man to perceive God's power and divinity (Romans 1:20). While nature can inspire us to worship, it can never tell us how to worship. God revealed his will for worship through divinely-guided prophets who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21). The ancient Hebrews were taught to worship by the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 6:4,13). The details of acceptable worship were spelled out further in the Old Testament. Christians

are under the New Testament of Jesus (John 12:47). Their worship is based on the commands of Christ and his apostles (Matthew 28:18-20). The reader should note that Christian worship is not the same as the Hebrews' worship. In both cases worshipers were warned against adding to or taking from God's directions (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19).

Our worship is not optional. Jesus commands that we *must* worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). If we would please God and hope to live in eternal bliss we will worship as he directs.

The Meaning of Worship

While most everyone has worshiped at some time, not all have thought out a definition for the term. Our English word "worship" means *worthship*, and suggests the worthiness of the person who receives special honor (*Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, p. 560). In the Hebrew and Greek tongues in which the Scriptures were first written, two thoughts are reflected in worship: 1) to serve, to render religious service; 2) to adore, to show reverence to (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 235-236). Under the old law, worship consisted of elaborate rituals, tied first to the tabernacle, and later to a magnificent temple, and to a professional priesthood. Such a system made its primary appeal to the physical senses.

Under Christ our worship is "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Christian worship is simple and unpretentious, and may be offered to God anywhere. Its entire appeal is to the heart. Paul the apostle argues that the old system was taken away at the cross, and we Christians should not feel bound to follow it (Colossians 2:14-18). In our public worship we are to adore the Father and his Holy Son in our songs, prayers, gifts, and communion. In our daily life we

serve him joyfully.

Different Kinds of Worship

Not all worship is acceptable to the great Jehovah. He speaks of "vain worship" (Matthew 15:9). *Vain* suggests emptiness, worthlessness. Some worship in "ignorance" (Acts 17:23). Such are exhorted to know and serve the true God through Jesus. There is an acceptable worship that is offered "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Christ put it plainly in Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Surely this is true of our worship. Good intentions, a heavenly feeling and general approval of one's fellows is not enough. Worship must be *scriptural*, i.e., according to scripture, to be acceptable.

The Church and Worship

The church is God's family of saved people upon the earth. Her primary reason for existence is to worship the Lord. In public assemblies she adores God. In her daily activities she serves. We reflect true discipleship and true worship when we "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15); when we remember the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions (James 1:27); and when we work to strengthen our fellow Christians (Ephesians 4:12).


The God who made man, planted deep within him many powerful urges or drives, such as the need for food, shelter, sex, companionship, and worship. In any of these cases, there is a right and wrong way to fulfill them. May all who love the Lord seek his will for worship on the pages of the New Covenant of Jesus; and may we be "true worshippers" who adore and serve him "in spirit and in truth."

Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage."
--But most of us are under-rehearsed!

Watch out for temptation:
the more you see of it the better it looks.

When one imagines that liquor will bring happiness,
he is already 'drunk' on something else.

You do not have to choose between two evils,
nor, look up a third one; do right!



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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Christ's Memorial Service

GARY C. HAMPTON

One has only to go to a grave-yard, town square, city park, or museum to discover that memorials are common to man. They are erected to remind future generations of the men and events that have made the present what it is. For Christians, no memorial surpasses the one we observe weekly in partaking of the Lord's supper. After Jesus took the bread and gave thanks, he told them: "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." He also took the cup containing the fruit of the vine, declared it to be his blood, and told them to partake of it remembering him. Then he said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:24-26; Luke 22:19-20). It is a feast commemorating the death of Jesus.

The Passover was a shadow of this great feast. The Passover memorialized Israel's release from bondage (Exodus 11:4-5; 12:25-27,46). It stood as a yearly reminder of their captivity and the One who delivered them. In I Corinthians 5:7, Paul calls Christ "our passover" who was slain, or sacrificed, for us. Like the Passover lamb, Jesus did not have a bone broken during the time of his death (John 19:36). His body was offered as a means of delivering us from the bondage of sin (Hebrews 10:1-14).

There are two elements in this memorial feast: the bread, and the fruit of the vine. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). Jesus is using a metaphor here (much like he used in Matthew 13:38-39). Remember, Jesus was present with his disciples when these words were spoken. They could see his literal body, and the bread which was to symbolize it (I Corinthians 11:24). Since they were eating the passover meal immediately before this incident (Matthew 26:17-20), we know that the bread was unleavened (Exodus 12:15). Such may well symbolize the sinless nature of Jesus (I Peter 2:21-23; I Corinthians 5:1-8). In regard to the second element of this feast, the writers often used

Continued on page 3



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Is Thy Heart Right With God?

We sing: "Is thy heart right with God?"

Washed in the crimson flood?

Cleansed, and made holy?

Humble and lowly?

Right in the sight of God?"

Man's physical "heart" is in his chest-cavity, "between his arms" (II Kings 9:24); but his spiritual "heart" is higher up. The Bible "heart" *thinks*, for Solomon said: "As he *thinketh* in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Of the Scribes, Jesus inquired: "Why *reason* ye in your hearts?" (Mark 2:8; also verse 6). Moses called upon Israel to "Know therefore this day, and *consider* it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else" (Deuteronomy 4:39). The power to *imagine* is also an intellectual function of man's heart, for we read: "The *imagination* of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21). Also, David prayed: "Let the words of my mouth, and the *meditation* of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord . . ." (Psalms 19:14). Jesus said that it is with the heart that man *understands*: "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should *understand* with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15).

Bible facts appeal to the intellectual part of man's HEART; and with his heart he responds to those facts. "With the heart man *believeth* . . ." (Romans 10:10). Like the Ethiopian, man today must "believe with all thine heart" (Acts 8:36-37).

SEAT OF EMOTIONS

The Bible "heart" is also the center of man's emotions. The law of Moses stated "Thou shalt not *hate* thy brother in thine heart" (Leviticus 19:17). From that law Jesus identified as the *greatest* commandment the one which says, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . ." (Matthew 22:37; cf. Deuteronomy 6:5). Solomon cautioned his son against an evil woman, saying: "*Lust* not after her beauty in thine heart" (Proverbs 6:25). Other emotional capacities of the heart include its ability to be *grieved* (I Samuel 1:8), to *rejoice* (I Samuel 2:1; Acts 2:26), to be *glad* (Exodus 4:14), or to be *merry* (Ruth 3:7).

The fathomless love of God (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10) appeals to human hearts; and to that our hearts respond with genuine love for God. "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). The apostle Peter wrote: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:23). God's love for us begets in us a reciprocal love for God, and a fervent love for one another.

CONSCIENCE

The judging faculty of a man's heart is called "conscience." Man's conscience is not -- cannot be -- a "guide." Instead, CONSCIENCE is a *judge* which approves when man lives up to whatever guide he



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

has accepted, and disapproves when he departs from the guide which he professes to accept. Although "whatsoever is not faith, is sin" (Romans 14:23), one may imagine a thing is right, while all the time it is wrong. Those who accused the adulteress (who has been called the "Bad Samaritan") were "convicted by their own conscience" (John 8:9). The apostle John wrote: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (I John 3:20, 21).

When man understands and believes with all his heart the will of God, he cannot have a good conscience until he obeys the gospel. This is why Peter says baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter 3:21). The American Standard Version reads: ". . . the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." The Revised Standard says, ". . . an appeal to God for a clear conscience."

Therefore we have seen (1) that Bible *facts* change man's intellect, (2) God's love changes man's emotions, (3) repentance changes man's will (or volition), and (4) baptism changes man's conscience.

EACH RESPONSIBLE FOR OWN HEART

"Keep thy heart will all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Just as each farmer, or gardener, is responsible for the condition of his soil, so each individual is responsible for the condition of his own heart. "The plans of the heart belong to man" (Proverbs 16:1, A.S.V.). We read that Solomon's son, Rehoboam, "did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (II Chronicles 12:14). He was, you see, responsible for the condition of his own heart. This is true of all human beings. A prophet of God urged: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 18:31). Thus, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7,8). Simon the sorcerer was about to "perish" because, as Peter told him, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:20,21). He-- himself-- was to blame for the condition of his own heart.

GOD KNOWS OUR HEARTS

Peter's statement to Simon reveals that God knows the condition of our hearts. He told Simon: "Thy heart is not right IN THE SIGHT OF GOD" (Acts 8:20,21). Solomon wrote that God "knoweth the hearts of all the children of men" (I Kings 8:39). At a time when Israel imagined God had forsaken the earth (Ezekiel 8:12), Jehovah said: "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them" (Ezekiel 11:5). As it was true in David's day, so even now "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Jesus said, "God knoweth your hearts" (Luke 16:51).

Aware of this truth, the apostles later addressed God in prayer as follows: "Thou, Lord which KNOWETH THE HEARTS OF ALL MEN" (Acts 1:25). Peter preached of "God, which *knoweth* the hearts of all men . . ." (Acts 15:8). Truly, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13)! He indeed "knoweth the secrets of men" (Psalms 44:21) and "searchest all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (I Chronicles 28:9).

Is your heart right with God?

Christ's Memorial Service

Continued from page 2

the words "the cup." Clearly, the container is not the thing of significance, but its contents. "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:23-25). It represents Jesus' blood, which is the one thing that can take away sin (I Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 1:7).

We know early Christians regularly partook of the supper, along with practicing other acts of worship (Acts 2:41-42). They came together, not to eat of it as a common meal, but to eat of it as a memorial feast in which they recalled the Lord's death and its great importance to them (I Corinthians 11:20-22, 27-34). Their day of assembly was the first day of the week to partake of this feast (Acts 20:6-7). Notice, Paul was in Troas seven days, and they assembled on the first day of the week. The first day we are to assemble upon is clearly understood in the passage. When God

told the Jews to "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8), it was understood to be every sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36). When Paul said to lay by in store on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2), we understand him to mean every first day. When the boss says pay day is Friday, we understand every Friday. Why should it be different with the partaking of the Lord's supper? Obviously, it is a weekly observance to remind us of Christ's sacrifice. — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

Saved By Grace

INTRODUCTION

No Bible subject, perhaps, has been as badly misunderstood as that of grace. Since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God in every age of time has dealt with man by the principle of grace and faith. If we fail to perceive this principle and how it applies to us, it will cause us to be lost eternally. One of the major errors of the religious world is a misconception of grace and how we appropriate its benefits. Without considering all the Bible says on the subject, many false conclusions have resulted. Thus the subject should be studied prayerfully and painstakingly.



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

GRACE DEFINED

Grace is simply the unmerited favor of God given to man. In the English New Testament it is translated from *charis*, which is used 170 times in the Greek New Testament. Since it refers to God's favor, the unavoidable inference is that it is unmerited. Grace is extended to man in every area of life both temporal and spiritual. All the water we drink and use for other purposes; all the air we breathe; the food we eat -- everything that sustains us in our physical lives is by the grace of God. In this study, however, we concern ourselves only with grace as it relates to spiritual salvation. The coming of Christ and his subsequent death on the cross was the ultimate expression of God's grace to man (John 1:17).

ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS

Many have concluded that if salvation is by grace, then it is unconditional. A careful study of the Scriptures shows this to be false. Noah built the ark by grace (Genesis 6:8), but he had certain conditions to meet (Genesis 6:14-22). Joshua and the Israelites were given the city of Jericho, as they began the conquest of the promised land, but they had to meet certain conditions before it came to pass (Joshua 6:1-11).

Another erroneous conclusion is that grace excludes all works or acts of obedience. It is a grievous error to lump all works together without distinguishing what works are excluded by grace and which are not. All meritorious works ARE EXCLUDED (Romans 4:2-5), but not the WORKS OF FAITH or obedience. James said, "Ye see then how that BY WORKS a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Paul said the faith that avails is the "faith which WORKETH by love" (Galatians 5:6). Anything done by faith is a matter of grace. Paul said, "It (justification) is of faith, that it might be by grace" (Romans 4:16). Thus, grace and faith ex-

clude all works of self-righteousness or meritorious works. The meritorious factor in salvation is the death of Christ, not the obedience of faith.

How Saved By Grace?

How are we saved by grace? Conditionally or unconditionally? If unconditionally, then all will be saved, because the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11). If all conditions are excluded by grace, nothing short of universal salvation must be the result. God has never dealt with man on this principle. Anytime something is said to be done by faith, conditions are implied.

If salvation by grace is conditional, then only those who obey the terms of salvation will be saved (Hebrews 5:8,9). We ARE SAVED BY FAITH (Ephesians 2:8), but faith without works (obedience) is dead (James 2:14,24,26). To be saved by faith does not exclude grace, but is the embracing of the grace that God bestows. Hebrews 11 is a commentary on the question of when faith avails. Starting with righteous Abel, he then cites the examples of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, who were all made righteous by faith-- faith that obeyed the stipulations that were made. Not one of them was justified by faith only, but by faith PLUS OBEDIENCE (Verses 4,7,8,20,21,23-29). Remember that anything done by faith is a matter of

grace. (Romans 4:16).

GRACE AND LAW

There are some who teach that grace excludes all law, and label those who bind any law as legalists. Grace does exclude ANY LAW OF MERITORIOUS WORKS, but NOT ALL LAW. There is a law of faith. Paul, the inspired apostle, said so (Romans 3:27). Boasting he said was excluded, not by a law of meritorious works, but by "THE LAW OF FAITH." He also said that to reach others he accommodated himself to those who were without law, although he was not without law himself, but under "law to Christ" (I Corinthians 9:21). James said that the doer of the "perfect law of liberty" is the one who is blessed (James 1:25). Anyone who contends that grace excludes all law ignores these passages and in doing so mutilates the word of God.

CONCLUSION

Truth is so beautiful when it is made to harmonize. In Ephesians 2:8,9, Paul states the two parts involved in man's salvation. "Grace" includes God's part in making salvation available to man; "faith" includes man's part in appropriating the benefits of God's grace. Dear reader, there are some things we can be wrong about and still be saved, but one cannot be wrong about the matter of grace and how to appropriate it and still be saved. Therefore, it behooves every accountable being to study this matter diligently and be sure that he has the right understanding. Our eternal destinies hang in the balance. — 1613 19th Ave., S.W., Decatur, AL 35601.

"What Shall It Profit?"

(Matthew 16:26)

DEAN FUGETT

In Hebrews 2:3 the question is asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" To answer this question personally requires self-appraisal of one's OWN relation to that "great salvation." It is a tragic thing for anyone to neglect the salvation of his soul. The soul is the most precious possession of all. One who loses this, has lost everything, regardless of his success in any other area of life (Mark 8:36-37).

The consideration of the salvation of one's soul is no trivial matter. There is not *trivial* sin, because there is no trivial scripture to transgress. God has never dealt in trivialities. He gave us the "unspeakable gift" of his own "only begotten son" (John 3:16). The greatness of the soul necessitated the greatness of the sacrifice paid for it-- paid for it because of sin. Each needs to learn to hate sin (Psalms 119:104) because of its eternal effect on his own soul.

God gave his best (Romans 5:8; John 3:16; II Corinthians 5:21). On the basis of that sacrifice and the justification it wrought, God by grace (Ephesians

2:8,9) devised a great plan to reconcile man to himself again (II Corinthians 5:19). That plan requires of man: (1) Faith (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24), (2) Repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31), and (3) Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). These actions of obedience will bring one INTO Christ where salvation is (II Timothy 2:10). In Christ Jesus then, one serves the Lord, living daily to give glory to God, and to save himself and others.

Peter's admonition still rings: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The answer to that question will determine each one's own destiny. — Bellefonte Church of Christ, Route 2, Harrison, Arkansas 72601.

If a joke is doubtful, it's dirty.

When you bury the hatchet, don't bury it in the other fellow's back.

Drawing Back Unto Perdition

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39). The word "perdition" means destruction. The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss -- not of being, but of well-being.

There were among the early Christians some who turned from faithfulness to Christ and his church. There are those today who teach it is impossible for the child of God to so sin as to be eternally lost. However, the Bible abundantly refutes this false idea. Paul warned the Corinthians, "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:13). In Hebrews we read, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh,



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6). These and other passages show it is possible for the child of God to so remove himself from faithfulness to God so far he may be unable to repent.

Paul tells us that among the Galatians were those who fell from grace: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). The American Standard Version puts in the place of "become of no effect," "ye are severed from Christ." It then is a fact that the Bible teaches a child of God can so sin as to be finally lost eternally.

What are the cause of drawing back? (1) A lack of personal conviction strong enough to remain faithful: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a CONVICTION of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Jesus tells us how strong our conviction must be: "... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10, A.S.V.).

Some are like the thorny and rocky soil of the "parable of the sower" or soils. They choke the word, and "he becometh unfaithful" (Matthew 13:18-23).

(2) A lack of dedicated study of God's word. Christians are commanded to grow. Peter wrote, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . ." (II Peter 3:18). Paul commanded Timothy: "Study to show thyself approv-

ed unto God, a workman that heedeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Peter urged, "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). Again we read: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12). Far too many are not diligent in their study of the Bible.

(3) Love for the world. Paul wrote from prison, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world . . ." (II Timothy 4:10). John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). The love of the world involves yielding to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the vainglory of life. We must recognize that we are in a continual conflict between good and evil. On every occasion, we must decide for righteousness.

THE BATTLE WILL LAST UNTIL THE LAST BREATH LEAVES OUR BODY. ARE YOU FIGHTING THE BATTLE? OR, DRAWING BACK UNTO PERDITION? — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

The Second Coming Is Good News!

Most people do not look upon the Second Coming of Christ and the final judgment as Good News! When preachers speak on either subject, we hear passages which tell us the day of judgment will be one when there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). It will be a day when Christ will say to some, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). It will be a day in which God will take "vengeance on them that



RAY HAWK

know not God, and that

obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:7). Most folk look upon the day of judgment as a terrifying day and see little *good news* in this Bible subject. Yet, the day judgment is part of the "gospel" or "good news." Therefore, the day of judgment is Good News!

Although Matthew 3:12 speaks of burning "up the chaff with unquenchable fire," the other side of the coin states, "he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner." Matthew 13:49,50 does say, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;" but just before this he said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matthew 25:33 says, "He shall set the sheep on his right hand." Matthew 25:46 states, "And these shall go away into everlasting punish-

ment" but the rest of the passage brightens with "but the righteous into life eternal!"

The day of judgment is Good News for the faithful child of God! Peter says, "God . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:3,4). The faithful child of God has so much to look forward to! The spiritual blessings we enjoy now (Ephesians 1:3) will be amplified then. That day will bring us "a crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:8). *Isn't that good news?* — 1461 East Chester, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

The most important thing a father can do for his children, is to love their mother.

We live in an age of GUIDED missiles, but MISGUIDED men.

First Corinthians

Hence, the first epistle of Paul the apostle to the Corinthians was written in A.D. 57 or 58 to correct the many problems which plagued the Corinthian church.

The problems dealt with by Paul in this epistle include the following:

1. The problem of division (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-7).
2. The problem of discipline (I Corinthians 5:1-13).
3. The problem of debts (I Corinthians 6:1-8).
4. The problem of divorce (I Corinthians 7:10-17).
5. The problem of diversity of spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:1, 28-31; 13:8, 14:1ff).
6. The problem of death (I Corinthians 15:12ff).
7. The problem of duties (I Corinthians 16:1ff).

The book of First Corinthians is so timely that nearly every problem faced by the church today has its parallel in First Corinthians!

Paul established the church of God at Corinth in the house of a certain man named Justus "whose house joined hard to the synagogue" (Acts 18:8).

Having worked in Corinth for a year and a half, and converted many, Paul traveled on to new fields of opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:18).

While in Ephesus, Paul received word from those of the house of Chloe, that there were contentions among the Corinthian brethren.



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

Paul used great boldness of speech toward his brethren in Corinth. He had to use such boldness. "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things." (II Corinthians 2:9). He wanted to know if they were God's children.

Every local church, today, can know if it, too, is "obedient in all things" if it will only evaluate its teaching and practice by the instructions of the apostle Paul to the Corinthian church.

What about your local church, Friend? Is it "obedient in all things?" — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

Since silence is golden, not many people can be arrested for hoarding!

If you want to kill time, try working it to death.



Words Of



(USPS 691-760)

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

forth

— Acts 26:25

Perverted Grace

God's grace is being misused by some as a spiritual "catch all" to give hope for the disobedient and unfaithful. For years we have heard members express their "belief" (without Bible basis) that God may decide to save many of the "heathen" who have never heard the gospel. Although they acknowledge that God has not promised this, they argue that he may do this through "grace." More recently we are hearing some teach that God may overlook doctrinal error on the part of sincere Christians who are ignorant or gullible. The suggestion is that God may accept such as "Christians" who are believing, practicing, and teaching error ignorantly *because they are under the covenant of grace.*



JOE E. GALLOWAY

That we are saved by God's grace (favor) we gratefully affirm. The Bible teaches that God's grace has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11), that it resulted in Christ's death for us (Hebrews 2:9), and that salvation is by grace, through faith (Ephesians 2:8). However, some seem to overlook this important fact: God's grace provided God's revelation of his will for us in the New Testament! To be saved by his grace we must learn, believe, and obey this revealed will (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9). There is no indication that God's grace will save (cause God to accept) anyone, sinner or saint, who does not comply with the stipulations of his will.

After telling us in Titus 2:11 that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men . . ." the Holy Spirit continues the thought by saying, ". . . teaching us . . ." (verse 12). In other words, God's grace tells us what we must do to be saved by God. So, the New Testament is called "the word of his grace" (Acts 14:3; 20:32). Some have tried to make strict adherence to God's word antagonistic to God's grace. They label those of us who teach the need to faithfully obey and live by the Bible as

"legalists," and say that such "legalism" is the exact opposite of grace. Yet the Bible clearly shows that strict acceptance and obedience to God's word is essential to being in God's favor (grace).

A thought often overlooked when God's grace is being considered is the fact that it is "impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18). So, God cannot go against or act contrary to his word! Any concept of grace that suggests that God may decide to set aside, or overlook, that which he has said, is a *false* concept. God has clearly told us that when Christ comes again he will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:8-10), so we can *know* that his grace cannot extend to save the ignorant heathen. Likewise, Christians are told that all that we do in word or deed must be done by Christ's

authority (Colossians 3:17); so, all we do must be authorized in the New Testament. When we teach or practice that which is without such authority (for example, instrumental music in worship), we have neither the fellowship of Christ nor of the Father (II John 9, 10). God's grace does not constitute an exception to this.

Remembering that God's grace is extended to all, and that salvation by that grace is conditioned on each person's learning, believing, obeying, and living by God's word, should keep us from giving false hope for the disobedient and unfaithful. It is not a matter of sincerity and ignorance. Sincere and ignorant people crucified Christ; but God's grace did not save them until they repented and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; 3:17-19). — 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.

"They Found Him Praying"

One common element in lives of the godly is the presence of prayer. The Bible specifically mentions the prayers of Abraham, Job, Moses, Hannah, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elisha, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Daniel, Zachariah, John the Baptist, Anna, Jesus, Peter, John, Paul, Silas, and many others. Read the list again. Think of what a noble list of saints it is! Prayer is always a part of the lives of God's heroes.

In order to see the importance of prayer, consider prayer in the life of just one man -- Daniel. The decree from Darius was that no one could "ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days." With knowledge of this sovereign edict Daniel went into




DAN JENKINS

his house, and before windows opened toward Jerusalem he kneeled in prayer. Note the divine record carefully, "He . . . gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10). Brethren, what would you have done?

His enemies, who had fostered the decree, assembled and found Daniel praying. Think of it! They knew of his prayer; they knew where he would be and what he would be doing. Prayer was such a part of Daniel's life that even his enemies were aware of it. Brethren, does anyone know that you pray?

Later as Daniel read the Bible he understood God's promises and in one of the most noble prayers in the sacred record he besought God with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. Read and meditate on Daniel 9, and your life will be changed. Hear Daniel's heart as it reached out to God! "O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do." Note the urgency as he plead with God to hasten in answering.

Beloved, let's make prayer an even greater part of our lives. It not only will change *things*; it will change *us*! — 1111 36th Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33407.



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(USPS 691 760)
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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen
Flavil H. Nichols

“Prepare To Meet Thy God”

Amos, a prophet of God, urged Israel: “Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12). All must eventually meet God, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (II Corinthians 5:10). This is a divine appointment, for “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). All will be present, because Jesus said, “Before him shall be gathered all nations” (Matthew



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

25:32). “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Jesus Christ our Lord will be the “righteous judge” (II Timothy 4:8). The Holy Spirit tells us in advance that “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Romans 2:16). In his sermon on Mars Hill at Athens, Paul preached that “God hath appointed a day in the which he shall judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). The Lord warns, “There is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that is should come abroad” (Mark 4:22). In view of this, it behooves each man to “Prepare to meet thy God.”

Even our *bodies* must be prepared for heaven. Our flesh-and-blood bodies are not adapted or fit for the kingdom of God. We can't go to heaven in these earthly, or “natural” bodies! Hear the apostle Paul: “Now this say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (I Corinthians 15:50). These earthly bodies are called “terrestrial” (verse 40), from the Latin *TERRA* which means *the earth*, from which man was made (Genesis 2:7). Our earthly bodies are further described by the words “corruptible,” “dishonor,” “weakness,” “natural,” and “earthly” (verse 40-49). They are also called “mortal” (I Corinthians 15:53,54; Romans 6:12).

The *bodies* of the saints will get their change at the second coming of Christ. The apostle Paul wrote by inspiration: “The dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible, and we” (the living saints -- FHN) “shall be changed” (I Corinthians 15:52). To emphasize this more, the Holy Spirit guided Paul to write further: “We shall all be changed” (verse 51). This is necessary in view of the facts stated previously, i.e., that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption” (these mortal bodies -- FHN) “Put on incorruption” (verse 50). The same body that dies, and is put into the grave, will be raised; for Jesus himself assured us: “All that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth” (John 5:28-29) -- but it no longer will be “mortal,” “corruptible,” “earthly,” “natural,” or “terrestrial,” nor will it be characterized by “weakness,” nor “dishonor.” Instead, it will be “celestial” (from

the Latin word *CAELESTIEL*, which means “heavenly”), and is described by the words “glory,” “power,” “spiritual,” “heavenly,” “incorruption,” and “immortality” (I Corinthians 15:40-54).

Admittedly, there are “mysteries” (I Timothy 3:16) regarding the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living ones. Even the apostle John wrote: “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). -- And that will be enough!

Through Adam's sin all mankind lost physical life -- unconditionally on our part (I Corinthians 15:21-24). But what we unconditionally lost in Adam, we unconditionally regain through Jesus Christ -- in the bodily resurrection.

So I say again: our bodies will get their change, to fit them for the celestial clime, in the resurrection from the dead!

However, NOW -- in this life-time -- is the time to prepare our souls or spirits for heaven! “Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2). At the Lord's return, the dead will be raised, the living will be changed, then all -- both good and bad -- will be judged. Only the righteous will be gathered into heaven!

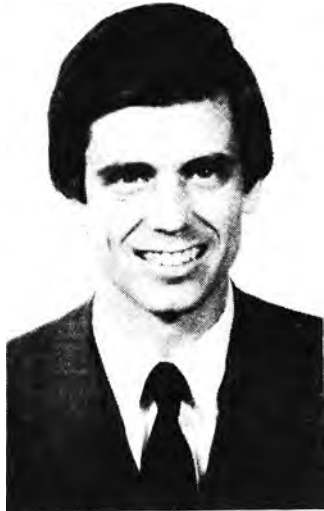
Now is the only time you have to prepare your souls for heaven! “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:7,8). The Holy Spirit urges this again: “But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

Yes, I urge you to “Prepare to meet thy God” this very day.

Christ's Love

In Genesis 12:1-3, God made a great promise to Abraham. The greatest part of that promise was that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed. That part of the promise is lovingly fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 3:8-14).

Jesus came to earth because man was lost in sin. He described his own mission, when he said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Matthew 18:11-14; Luke 19:10). We need to realize that we are, or



GARY C. HAMPTON

were, a part of the lost. Paul tells the Ephesians that God made alive those who were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-3). We must admit that sin is our problem as well as it was theirs (Romans 3:10, 23; I John 1:8-10). David sang, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments” (Psalm 119:176; 51:1-3).

The law of Moses made man aware of sin; but its sacrifices were unable to take away sin (Romans 7:7; Hebrews 10:1-4). Jesus came to shed his blood that Jew and Gentile might be reconciled to God, and that the stain of sin might be removed (Ephesians 1:7; 2:11-18). Jesus came as a sinless high priest to offer his own blood as a sacrifice that we might boldly approach God's throne (Hebrews 4:14-16). Jesus paid the price for our sins that we might be reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:17-21).

This was all done out of Christ's and God's great love for the lost: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8). “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he

Continued on page 3

WORD of GOD

Seek the Lord

With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:

for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Isaiah 26:9

5th Commandment

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may

be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Exodus 20:12

Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

anointed.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Psalms 28:6-9

The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Fellowship with God's People

When Amaziah rebuked Amos for his faithful proclamation of God's revelation, the country preacher responded, "... the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (Amos 7:10-15).

When Jereboam I was made king of northern Israel, Rehoboam sought warriors to go against the ten tribes. But God through Shemaiah said, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel . . ." (I Kings 12:21-24).

Those of Judah and of Israel were brethren in a very real sense. They were alike "the children of God." All of the stock of Abraham, all received the law from God, and all initially pledged themselves to the same covenant; they were brethren. And the Bible so affirms.

The object, place, and order of worship had been changed by Jeroboam I, rendering the service null and void, and causing Jehovah to say of their feasts, "I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies" (I Kings 12:27-33; Amos 5:21). God was to be honored in worship by adherence to the arrangement prescribed in his word.

In an effort to correct the lifestyle and worship of Israel God had sent an unnamed seer to cry out against alters erected by human authority (I Kings 13:1-5). Later Amos visits his brethren in the north with a message of doom, coupled with a promise of hope: God would utterly destroy the northern kingdom. Amos spared no words in setting this forth. But divine mercy still lingered as the man of God pleaded for their return to his way (Amos 5:14-15).

Even though Amos seemed to be void of some of the pathos that would characterize Jeremiah, he prayed earnestly for the objects of his wrathful sermons: "O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small" (Amos 7:2,5). The great prophet was true to the visions that came before him in pronouncing doom upon a sin-cursed nation; but he had no delight in seeing his brethren perish.

There are some valuable and up-to-date lessons for us in all of this: 1. The prophets sent to cry against the moral, social, and religious sins of Israel did not fail to recognize them as God's people. 2. But as God's people in a state of apostasy their only hope of redemption was a complete return to the old paths from which they had departed. 3. God could not accept their worship until they cleaned it up and offered to him as he had prescribed. 4. The prophet's role was to warn, to plead, and to pray. 5. The recognition of these people as his apostate *brethren* did not permit the prophet to engage with them in their perverted worship (I Kings 13:7-10; Amos 4:4,5).

There is a world of difference between recognizing that all who have obeyed the gospel of Christ, i.e., received and pledged themselves to the same covenant, are brethren, and in saying we must extend full fellowship to all who have named the name of Christ. It is our role to warn that the time, place, object, and avenues of worship prescribed by Jehovah must be respected. We may plead with and pray for brethren who have altered the organization, work, and worship of the New Testament church. But we may not, with the approval of the Lord, engage with them in their perverted worship (John 4:23,24).

There was no place for compromise. The place of



R. W. GRAY

worship was Jerusalem. The feast days, burnt offerings, etc., ordained of Jehovah were the *only* religious festivals he would accept. Had the true prophets from Judah sought a reconciliation with their erstwhile brethren on any other basis it would not have pleased the Lord. Were they brethren? Yes. Could they worship together? No, not so long as Israel was married to her idols. The division had *resulted* when some departed from the right ways of the Lord. The division would be *healed* when those who had departed should return to the ground mutually occupied before the rent occurred.

Believing the situation faced by Amos and others presents a reasonable analogy to our current conditions, especially our relationship to our brethren in the Independent Christian Churches, we see both a solution to our division, and our responsibility to them as brethren. We may recognize that they, too, became children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26,27). They, too, pledged themselves to a "Thus saith the Lord." They embraced the restoration concept and pledged themselves to the New Testament as their sole guide in religious life. But like Amos' neighbors to the north, they have not kept that pledge in all things. They, too, turned to the things they "like;" to a personal preference in

worship (Amos 4:5). We can love them, pray for them, warn and encourage them. But we cannot engage with them in a worship activity about which the Lord has not spoken.

Perhaps the analogy does not end here. Was it not the case that Israel's sister, Judah, was not far behind in departing also from the true worship of Jehovah? Wasn't it the case, in fact, that many who still resorted to the Temple, i.e., the right time and place of worship, were making some serious mistakes of their own? Did not Judah need a constant reminder that she, too, was headed into apostasy, following in the footsteps of her sister (Jeremiah 3:7-8)?

What was their answer? It did not consist of mutually recognizing that both had made their share of mistakes, and should therefore recognize one another as equals. It consisted of both returning wholly to the right ways of the Lord. Compromise and/or co-existence with sin is never the solution to division. Some in Judah were as Amos was. And some in Israel departed from the corrupt priesthood and altered worship to return to Jerusalem and the true worship of Jehovah. In so doing they pleased the Lord. And in so doing they were reconciled with faithful brethren from whom they had previously departed. Think on these things. — P.O. Box 90236, East Point, GA 30344.

Living? Or Teaching? Or Both?

John T. Smithson, III, wrote, "Several years ago a member of the church attempted to explain his lack of involvement in evangelism by saying that he thought it more important to live right than to be active in teaching others. The implication was that his good life would be a 'witness' or testimony for the Lord. Perhaps a number of people have rationalized their lack of involvement on this same basis. There can be no

question that the right kind of life and example is an important supplement to evangelism; in fact, inconsistency and hypocrisy in the lives of members have probably closed many doors to the truth. Gene Getz is right when he observes, 'No one can be saved by simply SEEING Christians love each other. They must know WHY Christians act that way.' My personal life is vitally important; but my life merely supplements the gospel, it never supplants it. People are saved when they believe and obey the teaching of Christ."

It does take courage for the beginning worker in personal evangelism to speak to people about Christ and salvation for their souls. Fear of the unknown is always with us. When we consider (1) the value of the soul, (2) the power of the gospel to save, and (3) our individual responsibility, the task becomes easier.

The low estimate of the soul is a great hindrance to personal evangelism. (1) Some who have been baptized do not value their soul enough to be faithful in worship and service to the Lord. We could not expect such people to be interested even in converting their children to Christ. (2) Others are faithful in worship and attend classes. Among some of those we see the attitude: "You take care of your soul, and I will take care of mine." (3) Still others would evan-



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

gelize, but are too timid to speak to others about their soul. (4) There are a few in every church who overcome all obstacles and work to convert souls that they may live forever with God in heaven. May the latter tribe increase.

We must recognize the power of the gospel on the mind of the sinner. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . ." (Romans 1:16). May we not be ashamed, but recognize its power to change people.

Individual responsibility means we have to initiate action on our own. Love is the motive which causes concern in parents for their children souls. It is love extended beyond the home which causes concern for the souls of others. Love for children never stops. Love for those outside the family never stops when it is as strong as it should be.

Christian living is essential. One unfaithful life can hurt the influence of two hundred faithful in life. However, we must communicate the message revealing the source which prompts faithfulness. — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

Christ's Love

Continued from page 2

loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-6). Truly, God greatly loved the world for him to sacrifice his only begotten Son (John 3:16-17; I John 4:8-11,19; II Thessalonians 2:16). The depth of Jesus' love is seen in his dying on Calvary for those who were enemies of his Father (John 15:13). He gave those very enemies a way to be restored to God's love through his obedience in death (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Such great love ought to challenge us to greater love. Our love will be displayed in our obedience to God's will (John 14:15; I John 5:1-3). — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

“You Can’t Legislate Morality!”

There are frequent attempts in today’s society to justify any kind of moral behavior desired by the individual. When one seeks to criticize such behavior from a Christian point of view, he often hears the response, “you can’t legislate morality!” This is designed to disarm the child of God with reference to political, social, and/or religious action. In other words, the response is intended to send the Christian running like a beaten soldier. If the Christian attempts a further reply, he is countered with another well-worn phrase in modern parlance: “you’re just trying to impose your moral views on everyone else!!” Having played his last card, the Christian retreats, thinking that there is simply no way to answer the argument.



DICK SZTANYO

This scenario has been re-enacted hundreds of times. The question, however, is whether the Christian has surrendered too easily, and, most importantly, whether the opposing argument is really true. IS IT REALLY THE CASE THAT MORALITY CANNOT BE LEGISLATED?? Is there really no way to stop the rampant immorality of our age?

I maintain that the argument of our opponents is *false*, for the following reasons: *First*, the Lord has certainly legislated moral behavior (cf. Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:21-48; 22:36-40; Romans 13:8-10). And, if such were *possible* for the Lord, then any attempt to argue the *impossibility* of legislating morality is doomed to failure.

Second, the Lord has obligated every child of God to defend the truth and refute error (see I Thessalonians 5:21; I Peter 3:15; Isaiah 41:21; Jude 3). Since it is obviously possible to legislate morality (indeed, the Lord has done so), then it follows that I am to defend this position. It likewise follows that I am to refute the false argument of the opposition.

At this point it might be deemed advisable to identify the “opposition.” Without exhausting the list, I would certainly include: (1) Secular Humanists; (2) Planned Parenthood; (3) Liberal religionists; (4) Modernists; (5) the ACLU; (6) the American judicial system in *general* (although there are certainly a number of judges and lawyers who oppose current trends in jurisprudence); (7) the national media; and (8) modern education, particularly as exemplified in organizations like the NEA, NSF, and the like (again, there are many good teachers who oppose modern trends in education; but, I fear, their number seems to be small). It is from these directions that the argument is heard, “You can’t legislate morality!”

A *third* argument I would offer takes into account the fact that *any* given social system is either just or unjust. The mere fact that laws exist or are passed in such a society does not alter the truth of my previous statement. The society is either just or unjust. Now, if laws are passed which are in harmony with justice, promote justice, protect those unjustly treated, or enhance just treatment, one would be foolish to say that morality cannot be legislated. In this case, legislation *supports* and does not *oppose* justice! One would argue correctly that the laws are as they *should* (or, *ought*) to be. But, the reverse is also possible. A society could easily pass laws which *do not support* but *do oppose* justice! In such cases, one would argue that the laws *are not as they should be!!* This would be true whether the social system were *completely corrupt* (but, this is seldom the case) or just *partially corrupt*. Any given law either promotes justice or it does not! Any given law either supports justice

or it does not!! If it does, then those who violate the law also act *unjustly*. This is equivalent to being *immoral*. But, persons who respect the law *actually* promote moral behavior in their own lives, as well as encouraging such behavior in the lives of others.

Of course, there are many laws which do not coincide with moral issues at all. I am not framing any argument with those laws in mind. Instead, I am limiting my discussion to those laws which touch upon ethical issues. And, I would insist that these pieces of legislation are becoming more numerous by the day. I would include the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision which legalized abortion in this country; the “Infant Doe” infanticide case recently decided in Indiana; and many other similar cases. Such “legal decisions” *do not* support or promote justice at all. Yet, when we argue against the wanton destruction of human

life, or attempt to reverse the decisions by means of an amendment, we are told, “You can’t legislate morality” and/or, “You are just trying to impose your value system on the rest of society.”

I would urge children of God to reject such false reasoning. May each of us strive with all that is within us to support and promote justice in the world, the nation, the church, the home, and our own lives. This will, of course, entail an active effort to pass legislation which will accomplish such a goal, and an active and aggressive support of current legislation which is, in fact, just! And, may each of us strive to submit to an important piece of moral legislation, as recorded by Paul in I Corinthians 16:13-14: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.” — P.O. Box 865, Hurst, TX 76053.

“Jesus Wept”

When I was a young lad attending the public schools of Alabama it was not at all unusual for us to be called upon to read some passages from the Bible, and quite often we were asked to quote a passage from memory. I vividly recall the most often quote passage, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). Considering our ages at the time it would be safe to conclude that its frequent use was due to its brevity and ease of memory, rather than from any mature appreciation of its genuine spiritual profundity.



ROY FULLER

There is a revelation of immense magnitude embodied in the story of the death of Lazarus, and particularly in the statement “Jesus wept.” In this story we are able to see the manifestation of a living paradox in the person of our Saviour. We can see him both wholly human and wholly Divine as he so strikingly demonstrates both attributes. The one trait of character which distinguished him most on this occasion was his compassion. Why should one weep who holds in his hand the power over life and death? — “Jesus wept.” Why should the Divine Son of God feel remorse and grief when he had but to speak and his friend would come forth? “Jesus wept.” Because of his compassion he was touched by the grief in the hearts of Mary and the other mourners. “Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (John 11:34). Indeed, as was often the case, he was deeply moved with compassion. When he was shown the tomb which contained the body of his friend, he wept. It is implied that his was an open display of deep and bitter grief, for the Jews were somewhat amazed and said: “Behold, how he loved him” (John 11:36).

Others could not understand such an emotional display of grief because of his mighty powers. They asked: “Could not this man who opened the eyes of him that was blind have caused that this man should not die?” (John 11:37). Apparently they could not reconcile both his human nature and his Divine power.

Yes, Jesus raised Lazarus; but not until he had shared with this family the grief and sorrow that they felt on this occasion. He *FIRST* demonstrated two of the most radiant and beautiful traits of character that man can possess; (1) love, and (2) compassion. That my Lord and Savior “wept” over the death of Lazarus is a comforting and consoling message indeed. It tells

us by Divine inspiration that our Lord was just as human as we are, that he is touched by our pain, anguish, and heartache; and that he shares in our grief and suffering. As his children we would do well to cultivate the kind of compassion which characterized our Lord, and share the grief and pain which comes so often to our brethren, our friends, and our neighbors. For such is the nature and will of God (Ephesians 4:32). — Rt. 4, Box 479, Elba, AL 36323.

Two New Books From The Pen Of Thomas B. Warren

GARLAND ELKINS

For many years Thomas B. Warren has been in the forefront of standing for the truth and opposing error. He has done this with love and concern not only for the cause of Christ in general but also for even exponents of error.

His writings against various false views of divorce and remarriage have been extensive, and his book **LECTURES ON CHURCH COOPERATION AND ORPHAN HOMES** did much to keep the church from being “swept” by anti-ism. His work in Christian apologetics has been significant. He is the author and/or editor of many books in addition to his editing **THE SPIRITUAL SWORD** and writing articles for it, as well as articles for other journals.

His latest two books include **CHRISTIANS ONLY — AND THE ONLY CHRISTIANS**, which is an affirmation of both the uniqueness and the essentiality of the blood-bought church of Christ, in connection with the eternal purpose of God. This is explained in the light of God’s law of authority, His law of inclusion, His law of faithfulness, and His law of exclusion.

The second, **321 CRUCIAL QUESTIONS ON CHRISTIAN UNITY**, sets out questions which should be helpful to any thoughtful student in arriving at the truth as to what the Bible teaches about the church, Christian unity, denominationalism, and so forth.

Both of these books are designed for both individual and/or class study guides. They show how these matters can be studied both with deep and abiding concern for the truth and with love for all men. — Getwell Church of Christ, 1511 Getwell, Memphis, TN 38111.



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 Guidelines For Living

CHARLES E. COBB

Life is a very precious thing. In spite of sickness, persecutions, economic problems, taxes, and such like, we want to live just as long as the Lord will allow. This is as it should be, for none of us knows what good we may accomplish — or may possibly be to someone, somewhere. Even in hours of illness, it is possible that life can be a blessing to someone, somewhere. Therefore, life is, indeed, a very precious thing.

Life has been given to us by the living God. He is the source of life. "It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3). But, we are told of life, "... it is even a vapour (mist) that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). God did not prepare us to live on earth forever! However, he does want us to *LIVE WITH HIM* forever.

What, then, should be our concept of life on earth? Surely, it is a time, granted to us by the mercy of God, to prepare ourselves for eternal living. When we think of the words of praise and power that we often sing, "How Great Thou Art," we should include in our thoughts God's greatness because of that which he offers to us — "eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). God can take our worthless lives and, as a potter makes a vessel unto honor, so he can make something worthwhile, beautiful, and eternal of our lives — if we will let him do so. In order that we may be the recipients of God's wonderful blessings, we must follow the guidelines given to us by the living God. Some of them we now observe:

"If ye love me, (ye will — ASV) keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Throughout the history of God's dealings with man, this has been a principle with God. Again and again, God said to the people of old that they were to keep (observe to do, obey) the commandments of the Lord (Genesis 22:18; Deuteronomy 7:11; Jeremiah 7:23). The New Covenant is replete with statements from the Holy Spirit that we are to obey God. In fact, Christ is the "author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). The apostle John declares, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments,

is a liar and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

God's wonderful book closes with these words, as some of the very last words of God: "Blessed are they that do his commandments (wash their robes - ASV) that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). There can be no doubt; those who walk the golden street of the eternal city of God will be those who in their earthly pilgrimage were obedient to the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21).

"Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). One *cannot* live the life of a Christian without prayer! Jesus, the sinless Son of God, prayed often. On occasion, he spent the entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12). How could we possibly expect to survive or prosper in the Christian life without prayer? It is to be and must be a very important part of every Christian's endeavor to live acceptably before God.

Great men of God were men of prayer. Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, and Stephen kept in close touch with God through prayer. One can rejoice or weep before God in prayer and be not afraid nor ashamed, for God understands. "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).

"Keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22). One of the obvious facts of life is that this is a personal responsibility. Mother or Dad can not do this for us. Son or daughter can not accomplish this task for us. Regardless of how deeply one may love another, one can not keep this responsibility for another.

It is true that we can help one another to maintain personal purity. But, in the final analysis, it must be done by the person who wants to be pure.

God's word cautions us: "Follow peace with all men and holiness (the sanctification — ASV) without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). God said also, "Be ye holy for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). God wants us in this life to ever seek to be like him. "Be ye followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

"Give your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). Of the Macedonians the apostle wrote: "but

first gave their own selves to the Lord" (II Corinthians 8:5). Giving is to be the very nature of the child of God. The world is busily occupied with "getting." The Christian is to be involved in *giving*. Our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The child of God will find that *he cannot outgive his Father!* "Give and it shall be given unto you . . ." (Luke 6:38).

A giving life is so much more bountiful than a selfish, indulgent, worldly life of constant getting. What great things we can do when we turn loose of self and go with God who "... gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Real living is never achieved without real giving.


"Let no corrupt communication (speech - ASV) proceed out of your mouth" (Ephesians 4:29). While we live in a time in which it is assumed by many that "corrupt speech" is the way everyone speaks, it should never be so with Christians. Profanity, and filthy speech, are so useless; for nothing is made better by the use of such. Though some seek to intimidate, show their "power," prove their bravery, or sophistication, by corrupt or filthy communication, it falls short of such accomplishment. It simply brands one as lacking in vocabulary or the intelligence to communicate his thoughts without useless punctuation.

Cursing is so commonplace in our society that it no longer seems to be offensive to most people. In fact, *we pay to hear it!* In movies, on TV, and we even read it in "best sellers!" We voluntarily gather in places where it is commonly spoken; God's name is not revered, but profaned!

We have been taught by our Lord that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34). Our Lord also warns, "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). It is always the part of wisdom in our daily living to watch our words.

"A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 13:34). Loving others makes living so much more worth-

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Love Of God, Self, And Others

Some Guidelines For Living"

Continued from page 1

while. Love that reaches out into the lives of others is its own reward, but there are even additional blessings. Other lives are made happier, more responsive. Sadness, depression, emptiness are often overcome — because someone cares. The Hebrew writer said, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1). So let it be! Living is so much better when love of the brethren is characteristic of Christians.

So essential is love to living the life to which God calls men, that the apostle John emphatically says, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8).

Put these guidelines from God into your daily living. You will see the difference! You will find it to be so much better, and God will be pleased. —
613 S. Broad St., Scottsboro, Alabama 35768.

"Sunday Morning Only"

In almost every congregation there are those who only attend the worship on Sunday mornings. There are some who, because of age, or health, simply are not able to be present. However, there are others who *choose* to be absent, and I present the following for their consideration.

If someone were to ask you why you come on Sunday morning, what would you say? Do you come to worship? Do you come to be where Jesus is? Do you come to see your brethren? Do you come to learn about God? Do you come because it is what God wants you to do? Just why do you attend on Sunday morning? Will your answer not equally apply to why you *should* come on



DAN JENKINS

"Love" is defined as "a strong feeling of affection, expressing itself in active good will." The very nature of God himself is presented as LOVE: "God is love" (I John 4:8,16). "Love" is said to be the greatest Christian virtue — greater than FAITH, and greater than HOPE (I Corinthians 13:13). Active good will seeks the best interests and welfare of its object.

Love Of Self

Man needs no command to love HIMSELF; yet proper self-esteem is taught in the Scriptures. Jesus identified the second greatest commandment as, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*" (Matthew 22:34-40). He thus endorsed proper love of one's self. That one has, or should have, some self-esteem is implied in the 'Golden Rule' which says: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them . . ." (Matthew 7:12). This clearly shows that it is not right for one to hate himself. Rather, he should have a due "love" for himself.

However, we are cautioned, "Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think" (Romans 12:3). This implies that one should have a proper measure of self-respect. God has always been against excessive love of self: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). God hates a "proud look" (Proverbs 6:17); therefore conceit and egotism are sinful. Yet, due regard for one's self is right.

Love God With All Heart

The only limit to how much we should love God is



FLAVIL NICHOLS

the limit of our capacity to love him. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," (Matthew 22:37), ". . . and with all thy strength" (Mark 10:34).

Each professed believer can test himself to see if truly he loves God, for Jesus said: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). He also said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (verse 15). Two questions help one to know if he loves Jesus: No. 1. Do I have Christ's commands? No. 2. Do I keep them? If not, Jesus himself declares that I do not love him! (John 14:21). This test is applicable to any and all Bible subjects. We are taught to "Sanctify the Lord God in your heart," or, "Set apart in your heart Christ as Lord" (I Peter 3:15, ASV). Christians must "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:4,5). Christ is either Lord of ALL of our lives, or he is not Lord in our lives *at all!* Even in the matter of giving, compliance with the will of Christ is a "proof of your love" (II Corinthians 8:21). Does the amount of money YOU give each Sunday (I Corinthians 16:1,2) "prove the sincerity of your love" (II Corinthians 8:8)?

Love Neighbor As Self

Jesus said that the second greatest commandment is: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). A limit is here given as to how much we are to love other people: we are not to love THEM any more than we love OURSELVES! Stated positively, we are to love *other people* as much as we love *ourselves!* But, how do we love ourselves? Love for self is sincere, without pretense, and without shame or embarrassment. Do we love one another like this? The apostle Peter wrote, "Seeing that 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 Peter 1:22). Our love for the brethren is to be *unfeigned* or unpretended. It is not to be based on sexual or physical attraction, not on the flesh, but is to be "with a pure heart." It is, nonetheless, to be "fervent" love — which means it is to be intensive, strenuous — almost to the point of being strained or stretched.

The apostle John wrote: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another . . . If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (I John 4:7, 8, 11, 20, 21).

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:1-3).

Soberly evaluate your own love of self, God, and others.

Sunday night?

Have you ever considered the impact of your absence? What influence could you have on your neighbors who know that you *choose* not to attend? What influence could you have on those with whom you work when they hear you talk about where you were and what you did Sunday night?

Have you thought of the impact your absence has on your brethren? You may be able to deal with life's temptations without Sunday night services, but many of your brethren cannot. Your absence is a source of discouragement to them and a stumbling block to their growth. Since Christ's love took him to the cross for them, will you not let your love encourage them toward heaven by your faithful attendance on Sunday evenings?

Consider carefully. Our Lord commanded that we put the church first in our lives (Matthew 6:33). What is first in your life on Sunday nights? — 1111 36th Street, West Palm Beach, Florida 33407.

The Potter And The Clay

We introduce this article with the words of Jeremiah: "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Be-



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

hold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jeremiah 18:1-6).

What was true of Israel is true of each individual. However, the clay had no choice. Since we have a choice, the Master can mold us only as we allow him.

As Paul wrote on this theme, he said, "Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? . . . and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles" (Romans 9:21, 23-24 A.S.V.).

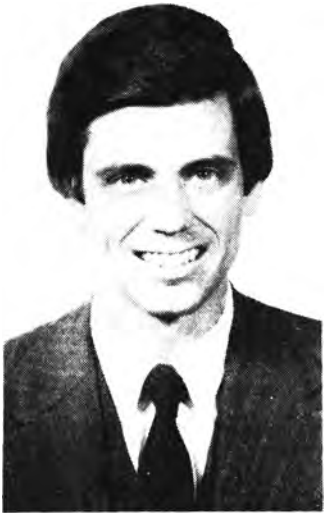
Man has the responsibility to use his volition to choose between false teaching and the truth. Paul said, "If a man therefore purge himself from these" (heretical teachings) "he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Timothy 2:21). The Christian must prepare and use his life "for the Master's use."

God has a plan for the life of each of us. Each is given a set of abilities to use in God's plan. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) reveals that we are responsible for our talents. It also informs us that we may obey God's plan for our lives, or we may reject God's plan. The plaudit for those who have obeyed will be, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23). For those who have failed in the proper use of their talents, the condemnation will be: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

We all have great work to do. May we open our eyes to the opportunities. Our life is a little time (James 4:14). When we read the autobiographies and biographies of men, we are impressed with the brevity of life. Another impression is that we must seize upon the opportunities to do good -- for much is depending upon our services. — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

Christ's Church

Christ's church first existed in the mind of God. For centuries, man did not see the great plan God had for the salvation of man. But now, God has uncovered the mystery in the church, making known his wisdom: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11). Paul could talk about the church and being in Christ as if they were synonymous, because the church is Christ's body (Ephesians 1:22-23). To be in Christ is to be in the church. That church is not an afterthought, but is a part of the plan planned before the world was made (Ephesians 1:3-4, 9-10). God planned the death of Christ so that the price for sin might be paid, the church might be purchased, and the new covenant might take effect (Acts 2:23; 20:28; Hebrews 9:22; 2:9; 9:15-17).



GARY C. HAMPTON

Jesus said he would build his church upon the fact that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-19). On Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that the king is on his throne (Acts 2:29-36). When the people realized they had crucified God's anointed, they asked what they should do (verse 37). Peter then used "the keys of the kingdom" to open the door to the church (verses 38, 41, 47). No wonder Paul could write to the brethren at Colosse and tell them they had been "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:2, 13).

Christ's church is also called the house of God: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). One of its great functions is to uphold and support the truth. Of course, within God's house one would expect to find the sons of God (Romans 8:14; I John 3:1). They call one another brethren (Galatians 1:2; 6:1) and are said to be heirs (Romans 8:16-17).

How do we become part of that house of God? I Peter 4:16-17 lets us know that members of that house are called Christians, and they are the opposite of those who obey not the gospel. Thus, we conclude that Christians have obeyed the gospel. That gospel requires one to obediently believe (John 3:16, 36).

Note: the A.S.V. well translates verse 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." So, the *belief* (of verse 16 and 36) is obviously obedient belief. One is also required to repent (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30). Further, he must confess Jesus Christ as God's Son (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). Having done these things, he must be buried in the watery grave of baptism, for the remission of sins, and in the name of Jesus, so that he may be raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4). New life comes about when there is a birth. Jesus had said one must be born again to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). The kingdom is the church and is composed of Christians; so that birth of water and of the Spirit must be baptism. It is Christ who, upon our obedience, adds us to the church (Acts 2:47). Anyone who follows this gospel plan of salvation will be added by the Lord to the church.

Jesus is the only head of the church: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). The

Father has given him all authority, and we should do all things by his authority (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17). Jesus is the only Lord (Ephesians 4:5). All the members of the church make up the body of Christ, and should submit to Jesus as the head (Romans 12:4-5; I Corinthians 12:12-27). Elders were to be appointed in every church to work as under-shepherds for Jesus (Acts 14:23; I Peter 5:1-4).

Jesus gave directions for the worship of his church in John 4:24, when he said: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Our worship is to God from the heart and it must be as directed in the truth (John 17:17). The first century church studied God's word, had partnership in giving, in the Lord's supper, and in prayers (Acts 2:42). They were instructed to teach and encourage one another in singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Christ's church is the home of the saved (Acts 2:47). It was planned by the Father and purchased with the Son's blood. We become part of it by obedience to the gospel, and submit to Christ as its head. — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

"God Has No Grandchildren"

Most parents with grown children look forward to the birth of their grandchildren. Grandchildren symbolize a continuation of the family. They mean one more generation to carry on the family name. It is a genuine blessing to see the continuation of a family. There is one family (God's Family) in which there are no grandchildren and can never be grandchildren! God has no grandchildren, only *children*!

Parents must not have the idea that they are passing their faith along to their children. Faith cannot be handed down from generation to generation in the same way as blue eyes or dark hair. One can no more



DOUG MILLIGAN

inherit godliness than he can inherit the guilt of sin. Ezekiel (18:20) says, "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."

If we, as parents, desire to see our children become the children of God, then we must *convert them to God* the same way we would convert any other alien sinner. Some may take offense at the use of the phrase "alien sinner," but this is exactly what our unbelieving, accountable young people are. An individual who is baptized to please his parents, or because he is twelve, and figures, "it is time to be baptized," is no more converted to Christ than an infant who is sprinkled by a Catholic priest!

We must get concerned about the mission field in our own homes! We cannot allow these precious children to get the idea that they are Christians be-

“God Has No Grandchildren”

Continued from page 3

cause momma and daddy are! We cannot endanger their souls by *assuming*, “They will obey the gospel in their own good time!” Deuteronomy 6:4-9 tells us what God required Old Testament saints to do: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord! And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, 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. Thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and on thy gates.” Dare we under the New Testament do any less?

Fellow parents, how are we doing in this

vitaly-important area? Can we honestly say we are obeying this command? Have we taken the time to convert those we love more than all the rest of the world? How can we really preach the gospel to the whole world if we fail to teach our own children? Brethren, may God bless us all with a greater zeal toward the lost of our own families! — Rt. 4 Box 391, Hamilton, Alabama 35570.

“Evangelistic Authority”

(NO.1)

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Since the dawn of time, man has had the desire for authority, dominion, and power. In the perfection of the garden of Eden, Satan tempted Eve by saying: “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4,5). In part, this desire to be on an equality with God drove Eve to transgress the will of God. In Numbers 16 we get a glimpse of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who envied the authority of Moses and Aaron. “And they gathered together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” (verse 3). Because of their rebellion, they and those who sided with them were destroyed (verses 31-35). Adonijah, one of the sons of David, was another who desired a prestigious position. “Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him” (I Kings 1:5). Adonijah, however, never set on the throne; the septre was given to his brother Solomon.

In the New Testament we also read of those who desired the place of preeminence. The mother of James and John submitted such a request to the Savior for them: “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom” (Matthew 20:20,21). Another who wanted status and greatness among the people was Simon the Sorcerer. Philip, the evangelist, had come to Samaria to preach to them Christ (Acts 8:5), and many were converted (verse 13). “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done” (verse 13). When the apostles came to the city of Samaria, they, through the laying on of their hands, gave these Christians miraculous manifestations of the Spirit: “(for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus)” (verses 14-17). “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.” The desire for wealth and power led to the sin committed by this babe in Christ. It was only through repentance and prayer that he could be forgiven (verses 20-24). And finally we read of the classic desire for power in the third epistle of John. “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not” (verse 9).

From the above illustrations, we learn over and over again of man’s desire for notability. As one travels the corridors of time, he sees that the names

change, but such wicked desires for eminence do not; the faces are never the same, but the lusts and wishes are not altered. Within the church of Jesus Christ in the twentieth century there is such a movement for power. It is primarily associated with our black brethren, but is also forging inroads elsewhere. This movement is centered in the pulpits of the local body. It is known by the name “Evan-

gelistic Authority.” Our purpose in these articles will be to define this present crusade, offer some reasons for the movement, consider the teaching of the Scriptures upon this subject, and finally to offer some answers to the objections raised by the promoters of this controversy. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

PHILIPPIANS

WITHOUT CHAPTERS AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFEE

Be careful for nothing,
but
in everything
by prayer and supplication
WITH THANKSGIVING
Let your requests be made known unto God
and
the peace of God
which passeth all understanding
shall keep
your hearts and minds
through Christ Jesus
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.
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 rejoiced in the Lord greatly
that
now at the last
your care of me hath flourished again,
Wherein
YE WERE 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.
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.
I can do all things
through Christ
which strengtheneth me.
Notwithstanding
ye have well done
that ye did communicate with my affliction.

1202 S. 34th St. No. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205



Words Of Truth

most noble Festus; but speak forth and soberness."

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 1984

NUMBER 26

Did Constantine Change The Sabbath?

ALLEN ROBERTSON

We are often asked to answer this question: "Did the Roman Emperor Constantine change the Sabbath?" This question keeps coming up because Seventh Day Adventists, and other advocates of sabbath keeping, continue to assert that early Christians kept the Sabbath until the time of Constantine, and that the Emperor changed the Sabbath. Since it is impossible to change a day, the Sabbath Day will always be the seventh day. The question actually is: "Did Constantine change the day upon which Christians worshipped?"

What really happened is stated quite clearly as follows: "As soon as Christianity was protected by the civil government, the Lord's Day was ordered by law to be kept sacred. All proceedings in courts of law . . . and all secular business, excepting such as was of necessity of mercy was prohibited" (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, McClintock and Strong, Volume IX, page 196). "Blue" laws have been enacted in many places, from time to time, without those enacting the laws being accused of changing the day of worship, except for the fact that it suits the "Sabbatarian's" purpose. Let us now take a quick look at history.

FLAVIUS VALERIUS CONSTANTINUS (A.D. 37- A.D. 272) was, upon the death of his father, declared Caesar (general-protector) in A.D. 306. In A.D. 307, he allowed himself to be declared Augusti (Emperor), but the title was not his alone; he shared it with five other men. By A.D. 311 the Augusti were down to four. In April, A.D. 311 three of the Augusti (Constantine, Galerius and Licinius) met and brought the persecution of Christians to an end with the "Edict of Toleration." Early in A.D. 313, the Augusti, now down to two, met at Milan and granted unto Christians full freedom of worship, in what is known as the "Edict of Milan." In A.D. 319 Constantine exempted the "clergy" from "public obligation." In A.D. 321 the Emperor granted the church the right to receive "legacies." Then Con-

stantine finally defeated Licinius in battle (A.D. 323), and became the sole Augustus. That part of the church of Christ known as "catholic" (united or universal) became the state religion.

In A.D. 325 Constantine had the "Council of Nicea" called, at government expense. By political manipulation he, to a large extent, controlled and directed the Council. He forced several changes in the church, and many doctrinal compromises, which set the pattern for the full development of a politico-religious organization of great power and wealth which was to become known as the "Holy Roman Catholic Church."

When Constantine died A.D. 337 that part of the church of Christ over which Constantine had taken control had been so changed that the "before" and "after" bore only slight resemblance. (See *Cesar and Christ*, Will Durant: Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944, pages 653-664). But with all of the change Constantine wrought, one thing he did *not* change was the day upon which Christians met to worship and observe the Lord's Supper. The New Testament and ante-Nicean writers establish that Christians worshiped upon the first day of the week, the "Lord's Day."

Jesus arose from the dead upon the first day of the week (Mark 16:9). He regularly met with his disciples on the first day of the week after his resurrection and prior to his ascension (John 20:19-29). The church was established upon the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-45). (*Pentecost* always came upon the first day of the week, Leviticus 23:15, 16 -- ALWAYS on the FIRST DAY of the week!) The church was established on the first PENTECOST after the Savior's resurrection. Hence, upon the first day of the week that first gospel sermon was preached, three thousand souls were baptized into Christ; and the church began. The early Christians regularly met on the first day of the week; "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came

together to break bread . . ." (Acts 20:7). "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store . . ." (I Corinthians 16:2). Thus, according to the New Testament, the church in the first century A.D. assembled upon the first day of the week to worship. And Constantine did not have one thing to do with it!

ANTE-NICEAN WRITERS:

All ante-Nicean writers who wrote regarding the day of worship agree that the early church observed the first day of the week as the day of special worship.


BARNABAS, A.D. 120 -- two hundred years before Constantine is said to have changed the sabbath -- wrote: "Incense is a vain abomination unto me, and your new moons and sabbaths I cannot endure . . . Wherefore we keep the eighth with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus arose from the dead." (*I Epistle of Barnabas*, Chapter 15).

JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 140 -- one hundred and eighty years before the supposed change -- wrote: "But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day . . . and Jesus, our Saviour, on the same day arose from the dead" (*First Apology*, Volume II, page 116).

EUSEBIUS, A.D. 325 -- about the time of the pretended change -- wrote of some heretics of his day: "With them the observance of the law was altogether necessary . . . They also observe the Sabbath and other discipline of the Jews just like them, but on the other hand they also celebrate the Lord's Day very much like us in the commemoration of his resurrection" (*Esslesiastical History*, pages 112, 113).

MOSHEIM, in writing of the church of the first century, sums it up like this: "All Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Saviour arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This

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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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Did Constantine Change The Sabbath?

Continued from page 1

pious custom, which was derived from the example of the church of Jerusalem, was founded upon the express appointment of the apostles, who consecrated that day, to the same sacred purpose, and was observed universally throughout all the Christian churches, as appears from the united testimonies of the most credible writers" (*Ecclesiastical History*, Edition of 1959, Volume I, page 35).

That settles it! The early Christians observed the first day of the week, the Lord's Day; the Emperor Constantine did not change the day of worship. — 4400 West Tulare Avenue, Visalia, CA 93277.

\$40,000 Per Member?

TOM CHILDERS

A local denominational preacher recently 'bad-mouthed' the Collinsville, Oklahoma, church of Christ because they withdrew fellowship from a confessed fornicator and unrepentant member. Speaking of the lawsuit, he said, "I hope she gets \$40,000 for every member." I think the statement is out of order and displays an ugly and spiteful attitude.

First, almost every religious group in this country has practiced at some time in their history church discipline. Our religious freedom in this country gives us the right to follow what we think is right. If the church of Christ in Collinsville, Oklahoma, needs to withdraw from any member, that is their business. Others may not like it or agree with it; but that is their business and not ours.

Second, to wish a religious group of people financial harm, even though we may differ with them, is in direct conflict with what Jesus said. Jesus said to pray for your "enemies," and do good to them that despitefully use you (Matthew 5:44). What have the 125 members of the church of Christ in Collinsville done to any person in Crockett County, Tennessee? How could anyone claiming to be a disciple of Christ display such an attitude?

Third, does it strike you as strange that a preacher



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Sues Church For \$ 3 Million

In the wake of the now-famous verdict of an Oklahoma jury which awarded a member of the church \$300,000 after she was disciplined for her admitted fornication, now comes word that "A California woman has filed a \$3 million lawsuit against officials of the church she attended for 19 years. Jan Brown named the pastor (sic) and six elders of the Fairview Church of Christ in Garden Grove as defendants. She charged libel, slander, invasion of privacy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. Brown divorced her husband last October. Her legal action is based on a letter read to the congregation in January, urging church members not to associate with her until she repents" (*Christianity Today*, June 15, 1984, p. 65).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

One purpose of church discipline is to "punish" the offender. The Holy Spirit called it "punishment." After the church at Corinth was directed to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Corinthians 5:13), they did so. The action brought him to repentance, and we read of the guilty, but now penitent, fornicator: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many" (II Corinthians 2:6).

Brother Guy N. Woods, distinguished Editor of *The Gospel Advocate* warned that if the Oklahoma verdict is allowed to stand we may expect an out-

break of similar cases of litigation. We also have urged brethren to rally to help the Collinsville church finance the expensive appeals process, and many congregations have responded liberally. An article by brother Frank D. Young was published, and others regarding the Oklahoma case have been received. Because of recent developments in the matter, I am giving Editorial space this week to the following from brother Young.

**COLLINSVILLE, OKLAHOMA,
AND A FURTHER STATEMENT
FRANK D. YOUNG**

When it was first learned that the church in Collinsville, Okla., had been adjudged guilty in their suit brought against them, I wrote some articles, as well as spoke in behalf of this church. I urged brethren to stand behind these brethren, and help them financially. Several thousand dollars have been sent to them. They appreciate the response they have had, and I do also. They especially mentioned to me, the response from the state of Alabama.

I had kept up, in a small way, with this case for several months. When the suit was tried, I talked to brother Ralph Hunter, the Collinsville preacher. He assured me that "when we win, notice I didn't say if we win" all money will be returned to those who have contributed. Now however, we have statements from both the Collinsville church, as well as from the Garnett Road church, in Tulsa, that all such money will be reserved in an escrow account to be used for other churches who may be sued. This is contrary to what these brethren previously had told me. Many churches have also given, understanding that, if the suit is finally won, their money would be refunded. They also understood, and agreed, that should the suit be lost, their money had been freely given.

I want brethren to know that what I said was true, as best I could ascertain the facts. If churches give to such a fund, it is, of course, their business. But as far as I am concerned, I have had no idea of raising such a "trust" fund; neither am I now involved in such an effort. — 500 Third Ave., Jasper, AL 35501.

WORD of GOD

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Proverbs 3:11, 12

“Rebuke Before All”

VICTOR M. ESKEW

First and Second Timothy contain the apostle Paul's advice to young Timothy, a gospel preacher. In the first epistle Paul commands Timothy: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). One definition of *rebuke* is "to convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted." Another definition states: "by conviction to bring a light, to expose." Still another is "to find doubt with, correct, to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove." With these definitions in mind, let us study some important points.

First, we learn that negative preaching has not been done away. In a recent bulletin article one brother said that one of the wrong ideas told in the brotherhood is that negative preaching will win people. A statement from this article was: "A negative, critical spirit does not draw people to Christ; it repels them." It is true that we are not to do all negative preaching for like Paul we must not to shun to declare "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). But negative preaching is not out -- by a long-shot! Paul demanded that those who sin be convicted, exposed, brought to shame, and reprehended severely. This is far from "positive" preaching.

Second, if we obey Paul's statement we will be in good company. *Jesus* rebuked people's sins publicly. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). Matthew 23 is a blanket condemnation of the Pharisees and scribes. Again and again, Jesus' did not hesitate to rebuke sin. The *apostles* were also preachers who rebuked sin. Peter did so in the case of Ananias: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3). And Paul withstood Peter to the face because of his dissimulation. "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" (Galatians 2:11,12). *Moses*, the *prophets* of old, and *John* the Baptist are also to be numbered with those who rebuked sin.

Third, such preaching as this will be unpopular to those guilty of the sin, those who have kinfolk in a sinful state, and even to many who just do not care to hear a preacher who is obeying this command of our Lord. Their rebuttal sounds like the people in Isaiah's day: "... Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10). Therefore, those who will continue to rebuke sin must remember the reassurance given to Jeremiah by God: "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land" (Jeremiah 1:17,18).

Fourth, rebuke for publicly-known sin is to be before all. Some think this is cruel and harsh; others pervert the teaching of Jesus, and insist that we first must go to the sinner. Jesus was discussing personal offenses committed against the individual (Matthew 18:15-18). Public rebukes, however, are demanded by Paul. There may need to be more open rebukes against sin and rebellion, for it serves many very important functions.

The apostle Paul points out that such a denunciation will cause others to fear (I Timothy 5:20). This was the result of Peter's rebuke of Ananias and

Sapphira: "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Exposing the sin of one individual will cause others to seriously contemplate their actions, knowing that sin will be exposed. Another purpose not expressly stated in the verse is contained in the word "rebuke." This purpose is the correction of the individual. A severe rebuke should cause godly sorrow which "worketh repentance unto salvation" (II Corinthians 7:10). Without such a rebuke, an individual may continue in his sins, and his soul will be lost. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19, 20). Another purpose of the warning is found in the book of Ezekiel. If the preacher does not "sound the trumpet", not only will the sinner be lost, but so will the watchman. "Son of man, I have

made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

It has been said that a preacher should read the books of I and II Timothy once a week. Such a practice is good and wholesome. But lest we read in vain, let us also put into practice the rules contained therein. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear unto all" (I Timothy 4:13,15). — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Jesus, My Example

Little children learn by watching others and imitating what they see. The little boy must have a toy hammer like daddy's, while the little girl wants some old pots and pans so she can pretend she is cooking like mama. Many children from families that regularly attend worship services, will sit and pretend they are worshipping together.

Adults also tend to imitate, or follow, someone else. The difference is that we are not pretending, and what we do may affect the lives of all those around us. So, the New Testament writers urged us to follow the example of the perfect one, Jesus Christ. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

Jesus came to serve, not to be served. When the mother of James and John asked the Lord that her sons might have high positions in the kingdom, the other disciples became upset with the two brothers. "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:20-28). After the Passover meal, Jesus took a basin of water, girded himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet. He used this to illustrate their need to serve (John 13:1-17). Paul urged the Philippian brethren to have the same attitude as Jesus, who was willing to give up the glory of heaven to come to earth and take the form of a servant. Jesus even died in obedient service to God and for the benefit of man (Philippians 2:5-8).

Jesus came to do the Father's will, not his own:



GARY C. HAMPTON

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). Throughout the book of John, emphasis is placed on the Son's submission to and carrying out of the Father's will (John 6:38; 7:16; 8:29; 12:44, 49; 14:24; 17:8). Again, that submission was so complete that Jesus was willing to die (Luke 22:42). His obedience shows us the way of obedience, which is also the way of salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Jesus was a man of compassion. The great prophet Isaiah saw Jesus as he would be, and said: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (40:11). Mark describes Jesus casting out an unclean spirit, the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, healing the diseased and demon-possessed, and curing a man of leprosy (1:23-26, 29-31, 32-34, 40-42). When he saw the funeral procession of a widow's only son at Nain, he touched the coffin, thus stopping the marchers, and raised the young man from the dead (Luke 7:11-15). Truly, Jesus felt with others in their sorrow and infirmities. He also had great concern for the lost (Matthew 9:36-38). This great feeling can be seen in his closing words to the scribes and Pharisees: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). I am told that a hen will stand, spread her wings and begin to cluck at the first sign of an approaching storm. She will stay there and cluck until every little chick comes to her, even if she drowns in the rising flood waters while waiting. Jesus loved the lost that much.

Jesus was forgiving. Even as he hung on the cross with the mob mocking him, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Paul encouraged the Colossian brethren to forgive one another as they were forgiven by Christ (Colossians 3:13). Jesus said we must forgive to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).

Jesus gave up his life because of the joy that would result from such giving (Hebrews 12:2). He could

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Jesus, My Example

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see that his death was a substitute for our dying, and also the victory it would give us over the bondage of sin (Hebrews 2:9; I Corinthians 15:51-58). Thus, Jesus shows Christians the way to joyful, sacrificial giving. One should not think of the sacrifice, but

of the good that will result from it. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus is our example in service, in doing the Father's will, in compassion, in forgiveness, and in giving. May we all strive to imitate the perfect One. — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

Service Demands Servanthood

The mother of Zebedee's children, James and John, asked of Jesus: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand in thy kingdom . . . But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:20-28).



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

In a lecture at Alabama Christian School of Religion, Gary Bradley said: "We cannot make personal evangelists until we first make servants." A personal evangelist is one who serves the spiritual needs of his fellowman by seeking to teach him the way of salvation. Unless one is willing to submit himself to the status of servant, he will not be able to be a successful soul winner.

The apostles described themselves as servants. To the Romans, Paul said, "Paul, a SERVANT of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle" (Romans 1:1). James' salutation reads: "James, a SERVANT of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" (James 1:1). Peter's salutation is: "Simon Peter, a SERVANT and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . ." (II Peter 1:1).

Diakonos is the Greek word translated "deacon." "Diakonos is, generally speaking, to be distinguished from *doulos*, a bond servant, slave; *diakonos* views a servant in relationship to his work; *doulos* views him in relationship to his master" (*Dictionary Of New Testament Words*. W. E. Vine, p. 273).

The new convert becomes "the servant of righteousness" (Romans 16:17). This word "servant" is metaphorically used of spiritual, moral and ethical conditions. The Christians' conduct must be controlled by the righteous teaching of God (Romans 1:16-17).

Paul made himself servant unto all men (I Corinthians 9:19). He said, "And unto the Jews I became a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law" (I Corinthians 9:20-21).

We have the same commission which the apostles were under: we are to preach the gospel to "every creature" or "the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). The

gospel has the same power to save (Romans 1:16). The "sword of the Spirit" is still a two-edged sword (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).

Let us not compromise with the devil nor be intimidated by his power. Let us not become "weary

in well doing" (Galatians 6:9).

May we commit ourselves wholly unto our Lord to *serve* him with all our heart. — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, GA 30728.

Circumcision And Baptism

Was circumcision a type (shadow) of which New Testament baptism is the corresponding antitype (reality)? Pedobaptists (those who "baptize" babies) often allege that it is. Their argument goes something like this: Under the Old Covenant, circumcision of a Jewish boy at eight days of age was a "sign" of his being in the covenant (cf. Genesis 17:11). Hence, under the New Covenant a baby should be baptized as a "sign of the covenant" just as Jewish boys were circumcized as a "sign of the covenant." So runs their argument.



PHILLIP GRAY

However, there are several things wrong with that line of reasoning: 1) Although circumcision was a sign of one's being in the covenant, it was not a sign of regeneration. Many Jewish boys who were technically in the covenant did not grow up to be men of faith and obedience; hence, were not in God's good favor (or, regenerated). 2) If there were a true correspondence between Old Testament circumcision, and baptism in the New Testament, then only boy babies should be baptized as a "sign of the covenant" since only boy babies were circumcized. Pedobaptists are inconsistent, therefore, to use this argument while continuing to baptize baby girls. 3) Even under the Old Law, there was a distinction between mere physical circumcision and "circumcision of the heart" (cf. Ezekiel 44:7-9). Unlike the Old Covenant, of which one could be a member without being regenerated or personally obedient, only those who have been "born again" are fit subjects for the New (John 3:5). The Hebrew writer quoted a prophecy from Jeremiah 31:31ff which predicted that under the New Covenant, no one would ever again be told to "know the Lord" (as Jewish children *under that covenant* were instructed), "for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest," said the Lord (Hebrews 8:11). This means that all those who are in the New Covenant will already "know the Lord" by sheer virtue of being in the covenant. Babies, who are not capable of "knowing the Lord," are not appropriate subjects of the New Covenant.

Therefore, there is no parallel (or type/antitype relationship) between Old Testament circumcision and New Testament baptism. The true antitype to the Old Testament rite of physical circumcision is "circumcision of the heart," not water baptism (cf. Romans 2:29). — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441.

PHILIPPIANS

WITHOUT CHAPTERS

AND VERSES

ARRANGED BY PEGGY FYFEE

Now ye Philippians
know also
that in the beginning of the gospel
when I departed from Macedonia
no church communicated with me
as concerning
giving and receiving
but ye only.
For even in Thessalonica
ye sent once and again
unto my necessity
NOT because I desire a gift
but
I desire fruit
that may abound to your account.
But I HAVE ALL
and abound
I AM FULL
having received of Epaphroditus
all things
which were sent from you
an odour of a sweet smell
a sacrifice acceptable
well pleasing to God.
But
my God shall supply all you need
according
to his riches in glory
by Christ Jesus.

1202 S. 34th St. No. 2, Birmingham, Al. 35205



Words Of Truth

the

stus; but speak forth
less."

— Acts 26:25

Evangelistic Authority

(No. II)

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Men have always been hungry for authority. This we illustrated last week by examples found in the Bible of men who desired to have the preeminence. The conclusion of that study stated that there is within our ranks a similar movement which is gaining acceptance by the church, especially among the black brethren. This movement is known by the title "Evangelistic Authority." The intent of this installment is to define our terms. Next week we will advance some of the reasons for the growth of this movement.

The term "evangelistic" is never used in the Bible. The word "evangelist" is used twice. Once it is used in reference to Philip an evangelist. "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him" (Acts 21:8). The term is again used when Paul urged Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Timothy 4:5). The word is also used in the plural one time, where it is said that God gave some to be "evangelists" (Ephesians 4:11). Thayer, the scholarly lexicographer, defines the word "evangelist" as "a bringer of good tidings." W. E. Vine, in his *Epository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, defines an evangelist as "a messenger of good, a preacher of the gospel." Therefore, when the term "evangelistic" is used it denotes something in regard to the preacher of the gospel of Christ.

The word "authority" is to be found many times in the New Testament. W. E. Vine defined this word as follows: "From the meaning of leave or permission, or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of the ability or strength with which one is endued, then to that of the power of authority, the right to exercise power, e.g., Matt. 9:6; 21:23; II Cor. 10:8; or the power of rule or government, the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others." One of the definitions given by Thayer is "the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed)."

With these two definitions before us, we are ready to define "evangelistic authority." Those who promote evangelistic authority stress that the preacher

has a position of power and an arm of authority. They advance the idea that the gospel preacher of a particular congregation has at least as much authority, if not more, than do the elders who are the scriptural spiritual overseers of the local congregation (Acts 20:17,28). Those promulgating this rank propaganda will say that the preacher is not subject to the eldership of the congregation. Thus, they leave the preacher free to act of his own will and of his own accord. He is given the power to demand and command. The evangelist must be "submitted to" by the members of the congregation, just as they

would submit to the bishops of the church. The decisions made and advanced by the evangelist are just as binding as those of the presbytery. This is the "evangelistic authority" to which we will be referring.

Next week we want to discuss some of the many reasons from which this teaching was evolved. Even though we in this series have not yet arrived at the point of the refutation of this concept, let us assert now that this teaching is totally contradictory to the plain teachings of Holy Writ. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Preaching Christ

The focus of all New Testament preaching is Jesus Christ. If we are to truly be a people patterning ourselves after first century Christians, we cannot turn from that one great central theme of preaching. New Testament Christians were not concerned with sex appeal, money, power, or politics. Instead, they "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

The great apostasy Paul warned against was one which would center around a failure to emphasize the preaching of truth. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4). Paul charged Timothy to "preach the word" and watch in all things (II Timothy 4:1-2,5). After telling the Ephesian




GARY C. HAMPTON

elders he was free from the blood of all men because he had declared all of God's counsel, Paul reminded them of the responsibility they had of watching out for themselves and the blood-bought church of our Lord. He then warned them of wolves in sheep's clothing who would, even from within the eldership, draw disciples away by false teaching. He tells them to watch, and states: "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 20:26-32).

What was the word that early Christians preached everywhere? that Paul told Timothy to preach? and that he commended to the Ephesian elders? In Romans 1:14-16 Paul answers our question by telling exactly what he was ready to preach: "I am a 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 everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The word he preached was the gospel, or good news, which is God's power, or dynamite,

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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

The Deity Of Christ



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The apostle Paul rejoiced that "Christ is preached" (Philippians 1:18), because of his conviction that Jesus Christ is Deity, or is one of the Godhead (Colossians 2:9). While many denominations are saturated with "Modernism," we in the churches of Christ are advocating the basic, fundamental/truth that Jesus Christ is the eternal second person in the Godhead.

The Hebrew word (ELOHIM) which is translated "God" in Genesis 1:1 is in the plural form, and includes all three persons of the Godhead. In the same chapter we read that "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." (Genesis 1:26). These plural pronouns indicate that there is more than one person in the Godhead. All who profess any faith at all in the Bible acknowledge that God the Father had a part in creation. Genesis 1:2 mentions the Holy Ghost: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." But the Bible just as clearly proves that Jesus Christ (as he was later called) also was there, and had part in creation.

The New Testament affirms: "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). Whoever this being is (this "Word"), he was "In the beginning" --which is the very same phrase used to describe when creation occurred: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). John does not leave us to guess at the Word's identity, for he says in the same context: "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The apostle John plainly teaches by inspiration that the "only begotten Son" (John 3:16) was "in the beginning." But he teaches more than merely the *existence* of Christ at that time (as "the Word"): he avers by inspiration that "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Therefore he is Divine!

The apostle Paul, by the Spirit's guidance, wrote that Jesus Christ was "in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6). This has to be before the virgin birth, by which he came to earth in human form. Hear the apostle further: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (or, "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped" --A.S.V.). Thus from eternity past until he came to earth, Jesus was equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit; however he did not refuse to give up that position, but for our salvation he came to earth. It should touch the tenderest chords of our hearts to know that one who is himself Deity (or God) "made himself of no reputa-

tion" (or, "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" --A.S.V.), "and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6,7). --simply to be our savior! (Luke 19:10).

Regarding his pre-fleshly existence, and his coming to earth as a babe, we read: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich," --in his pre-fleshly state-- "yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). While here on earth he asserted: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), and "I came down from heaven . . ." (John 6:38). He also prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self . . ." (that is, bring me up to heaven beside thyself) --which will not be a new position for him, for he added: ". . . with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Jesus claimed he was in heaven with God the Father, and had glory with the Father, "before the world was." In the same prayer he was the apostles "have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (verse 8). In a petition to the Father on behalf of his apostles he prayed "that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (verse 24).

God's own "dear Son" (Colossians 1:13) participated in the creation of all things. He is described as "the image of the invisible God," and Paul adds: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15,16). If words mean anything at all, this establishes the Deity of Christ!

The book of Hebrews opens with a reference to Christ's part in creation. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high . . ." (Hebrews 1:1-3). Thus it was "by" his Son that God (the Father) "made the worlds." This proves that Jesus is himself Divine.

In the light of all this evidence, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). We plead for the Deity of Christ!

WORD of GOD

New Testament
Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
James 5:14, 15

Preaching Christ

Continued from page 1

to save. In verse 17 he went on to tell them that God's way of righteousness was revealed in that gospel.

The gospel, or good news, is that God's Son came down to earth, died, was buried, and was raised the third day (I Corinthians 15:1-4). It is that word, or message, that was continually preached in the New Testament. The message included an appeal for men to die with Christ and be raised up to live a new life.

In Acts 2 Peter told those assembled on Pentecost that they had crucified God's Son (Acts 2:22-23). He went on to tell them that God had raised him up, just as he had promised through David, and set him upon a throne in heaven (verses 24-36). Recognizing Jesus as Lord, the assembled Jews asked what they should do (verse 37). Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (verse 38).

Those who obeyed Peter's instruction participated in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as they were lowered into a watery grave: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

Again, in Acts 3, after the healing of a lame man, Peter told the people who crowded around that they crucified Jesus, and God raised him from the dead (Acts 3:12-15). When called in question about the healing, Peter again declared Christ as resurrected Lord, and as the one through whom salvation came down to man (Acts 4:8-12).

In Acts 8 Philip preached Christ; and those who believed the message died to sin through repentance and were buried with him in baptism (Acts 8:5-6,12). Later in the chapter, Philip was sent by an angel of the Lord to join the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch (verses 26-29). Philip began from the prophecy the eunuch had been reading from (Isaiah 53), and

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Did Abraham Worship Idols?

When Abraham is introduced in the Bible, he was a worshipper of Jehovah God. The question is, "Did he worship idols in Ur of the Chaldees which was also called Mesopotamia?" This statement found in Joshua 24:2 incites the question: "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus said the Lord God of Israel: your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: AND THEY SERVED OTHER GODS." W. EDWIN KEARLEY



Abraham was the tenth generation of man after the flood. His father was Terah, who had two other sons, Nachor and Haran. Haran died prematurely "before his father" (Genesis 11:28). He left a son, Lot, and two daughters, Milcah and Iscah (Sarai) (Genesis 11:29-30). Sarai became the wife of Abraham. Therefore, Lot was both nephew and brother-in-law to Abraham.

Now let us discuss whether Abraham worshipped idols. Weil's *Biblical Legends* influenced McClintock and Strong to state, "Thus it is intimated in Joshua 24:2, that Terah and his family 'served other gods' beyond the Euphrates; and on this has been found the romance that Terah was not only a worshipper, but a maker of idols; that youthful Abraham, discovering the futility of such gods, destroyed all those his father had made, and justified the act in various conversations and arguments with Terah, which we find repeated at length" (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. I, p. 28). Remember this is tradition handed down.

The apocryphal book *Judith* states: "This people are descended of the Chaldeans: And they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days" (Judith 5:6-8). This then speaks of a change or conversion.

Adam Clarke commented on Joshua 24:2, stating:

Preaching Christ

Continued from page 3

preached Jesus to him (verses 30-35). The message he delivered resulted in the eunuch's being baptized into Christ's death (verses 36-39).

On the road to Damascus, Paul had to learn to submit to Jesus as God's resurrected Son (Acts 9:1-9). Peter told Cornelius of Jesus, and how God raised him up from the dead (Acts 10:34-40). Paul preached about a resurrected Lord in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:30-34).

No wonder Paul could say, in I Corinthians 1:23-24: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

"Probably Abraham as well as Terah, his father, was an idolater, till he received the call of God to leave that land" (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. II pgs. 92-93).

Some seem to hold the idea that if one is righteous, he will be righteous from birth and never live an unrighteous life. This is why, perhaps, some want to believe that Abraham was never an idolater. Abraham was flesh and blood like all men.

Others seem to believe one who grew so strong in the faith could never have worshipped an idol. Really, it matters not to us whether he did, or not.

Conversion is necessary for any one now to be a Christian. "Conversion" involves a change of affec-

tions. One must cease to love sin, whatever it may be. It may be immorality, idolatry, etc. One must come to believe in God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit. He must embrace the teaching by the inspired writers of what we call the Bible. He must obey from the heart the form of the death, burial and resurrection. The Lord then adds the one converted to the Lord's church.

Abraham was evidently converted from idolatry to faith in God. His faith was real and genuine. It stood the test. Do you truly and genuinely believe? Jesus said, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, GA 30728.

Discipline And Churches Of Christ

Recently, in my home State of Oklahoma, the elders of the Collinsville church were sued by one of the members of the congregation. Marian Guinn won a suit against the elders and was awarded a judgment of \$390,000. What had the Collinsville elders done? They had tried to help Marian by restoring her to fellowship with Jesus Christ and his church (Galatians 6:1). You see, by her own admission, she was guilty of adultery. When one will not repent of such sin, the unrepentant party must be withdrawn from if we are to be faithful to God (I Corinthians 5:4,5,11). If the party will not repent, the church cannot ignore the sin nor the guilty sinner.

First, the elders tried to restore Marian to fellowship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. She refused to be restored to that fellowship, but indicated she was resigning from Christ. One may leave Jesus. Marian is not the first and she will not be the last (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:25-29, 38,39). This however does not relieve the church of its responsibility to try to restore the fallen (James 5:19,20). This does not negate the duty of the faithful to withdraw from the unrepentant (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14,15). Brother Ron Cosby, evangelist with the Northeast Owasso church of Christ in Oklahoma attended the trial. He says of the three Collinsville elders, "Many of those who heard the testimony in the trial from Marian, Marian's sister, and the elders, know how lovingly and caringly the elders tried to persuade Marian to repent before they took the final step of withdrawing fellowship." *Time* magazine reported (March 26, 1984, page 70), that Roy Witten, one of the elders, said: "If Marian were to come back tomorrow, we would welcome her with open arms and the angels in heaven would join with us." How appropriate!

What is sad about this whole affair is that Marian stated to the court, "I'm not saying I wasn't guilty. I was. But it was none of their business." (All emphasis mine, RH). Collinsville is a small town. How can anyone believe people did not know about Marian's actions? It becomes the church's business when a member lives a lifestyle that brings shame and reproach upon the name of Jesus Christ. If the person will not hear the church's call to repent, he is to be publicly withdrawn from (Matthew 18:15-17). How strange that Marian did not want a congregation of 110 people to hear about her sin, but she did not mind the whole world hearing



RAY HAWK

about it, nor hear her say she was guilty of fornication. Now she reportedly has been offered a deal to make more money by selling the movie rights to this sordid affair! I can imagine what kind of rating the movie will have -- and it will not be G or PG!

Another sad note is the effect this judgment will have upon all churches, especially those which practice church discipline! As Gordon Smith, evangelist with the Rainbow Drive church in Gadsden, Alabama, said, "We have reached a sad state of affairs in this country when a person can live in open sin and the courts rule that the church to which they belong has no right to publicly rebuke that sin. We have also reached a sad state of affairs when people can circumvent the First Amendment by suing individuals rather than the church. Because the elders were sued as individuals makes this no less of a church affair than if the church itself had been sued. If excommunicated Catholics sue their bishop or priest as individuals does that eliminate the Catholic church from the incident?"

Lee Brown, evangelist with the Waverly, Tennessee, church stated in their bulletin, "I wonder if the citizens of this nation have really thought this thing through? Do you know what the court and the nation are saying? Think of this: Someone needs money desperately. (And that is true of so many of us). One sure way to get a large sum quickly would be to become a member of the church, get involved in an illicit and sinful relationship, make it public enough that the church has to do something about it, and then sue them for a fantastic amount! Many physicians are threatening to stop practicing medicine because their malpractice insurance premiums are so exorbitant. Could it be that the church will find it essential to have it to protect itself? Shades of the dark ages!"

If this suit is not struck down by the Oklahoma Supreme Court or the U.S. Supreme Court, all churches are in danger of losing their religious freedom! Just think, if a woman wanted to preach in the church of Christ and the congregation would not allow it because it is unscriptural (I Timothy 2:11,12; I Corinthians 14:34,35), she could sue the elders as individuals and probably win that suit, based upon the Oklahoma suit. Although she would not be allowed to preach, she probably could bank a large amount of money instead!

Whatever happens, we must continue to do the will of God (Acts 4:19,20; 5:29). We may have some who cannot see any good from this, but I believe it will give us an opportunity to show what God says on the subject, to stand for the word of God, even though persecuted; and perhaps some will begin practicing discipline as commanded by God, although they have ignored these passages in the past. Let us keep in mind that the church always grew more rapidly when being persecuted than it has when there was none! — 1461 East Chester, Jackson, TN 38301.

Shining For God

"This little Christian light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine . . ." So goes a children's song that we have sung for years. The song continues, "Don't let Satan blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine . . ." Most Christians I know don't have to be concerned about the extinguishing of their light, but rather its quality. Jesus says, "Don't put it under a bushel basket, but put it on a lamp stand so that all can see."



DON WILLIAMS

It can easily become a problem in our lives. You see, Jesus says we are the light of the world. The glorious gospel that can shine forth in our lives will dispel all the darkness of sin in this world. We, if we let our light shine, can "give light to all that are in the house" (the world). But we have to let these examples be seen in order for this to happen. And isn't it so easy to just hide those lights under the baskets? Is it not easier not to stand up for the cause of right at work, or at home, or especially in public places?

I recall hearing of a preacher who studied with a potential convert. The man said, "I see what Jesus has done for me; but if I become a Christian, I shall be laughed at by my fellow-workers. I work with some of the most vulgar men you could ever find." The preacher responded by telling him that Jesus suffered, too, and that was part of the price of following him. Finally, the man agreed and became a Christian. On the following Sunday, the preacher asked him how his trials in Christian living were coming along at the office. "Oh, just great," said the man. "Do you know, not one of the men at work has found out yet I'm a Christian!"

Bushel Basket Christianity!

The people of Jesus' time could understand talk about lamps and baskets. The houses in Palestine were very small and dark, possibly having only one circular window, perhaps not more than eighteen inches across. The lamps they used were like a sauceboat filled with oil, with a wick floating in it. It was very hard to relight, so if the family were going to leave the house for a time, they would take the lamp off the lamp stand and put it under an earthen bushel measure, so that it could burn without risk until they came back. Jesus, in painting this vivid picture, said, "You are not to hide your lamps. But as shining lights you are to live so that people can see your light and be drawn toward the glory of God." This is the idea that Paul wrote of in I Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Our lights are not only to be seen; they are also to serve as guides for others. From our lights and lives, others can see how they also need to live. When a person refuses to go to an event that many others are going to (dance, tavern, wild party, etc.), it makes it easier for those who do not want to go to stand up say, "No!" also. When Benjamin Franklin tried to sell the idea of lighting the streets of Philadelphia, he did so by action and not just by words. Outside his home he hung a beautifully polished brass lamp. He kept the glass highly polished and every night would light the wick of the lamp. People traveling up and down the streets would use the lamp as a marker and as a guide to get them where they were going. The light helped them to see the rough rocks and stones and holes that they now could miss in walking. Before too long, others hung out lamps also, until finally all Philadelphia

streets were lighted.

We are to be lights and guides for the world. We want to point people in the direction of our power source -- God, the Father of lights (James 1:17). We want people to say, "I want to follow your way of life, not because of who you are, but because of Christ who

is within you." Let us, therefore, be careful never to allow our example to be hidden under any bushel basket, but strive to let it glow and shine so that a dark world of sin can be attracted and drawn toward the everlasting light -- Jehovah God (Psalms 90:2)! — 934 Florence Street, Lewisburg, Tennessee 37091.

The Cost And Dividends Of Worthy Church Membership

It is always right and proper to count the cost of any worthy endeavor, whether business or educational or religious. One should never venture into any calling blind. Jesus taught his disciples the importance of counting the cost (Luke 14:25-33). The Devil does not want you to count the cost of true and worthy discipleship. Rather, he wants you to decide that following is too costly, so you will become unhappy and being disappointed, fall by the wayside.

Any thing worth having *costs* in time, effort and or money. Is "worthy church membership" worth what it costs?



W. A. HOLLEY

IT DOES COST

Let us think about what his plan of salvation cost God Almighty. It cost God the giving up of his Son. This act was a manifestation of his marvelous grace (Titus 2:11-14). It cost Jesus Christ his life upon the rugged cross where he shed his precious blood for the sins of the world (Hebrews 2:9; I John 2:1-2; 4:14; John 3:16-17). In making the gospel of Christ available to the sons and daughters of men, it cost the apostles toil, suffering, and death, with one possible exception . . . that of John (John 16:2; Acts 8:1; 9:1; 26:9-11). Faithful preachers of the gospel deserve much honor for their struggles and sacrifices that the sunlight of truth may shine brilliantly in our day.

If you are contemplating becoming a Christian . . . a *worthy* church member . . . it will cost *you*? It is not a free ride. Are you ready to pay the price? Saul of Tarsus "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:3-11). "Worthy church membership" will cost you the following:

(1) Self-denial. If you expect to follow Jesus, you cannot have your way (Matthew 16:24-25). Since Jesus denied himself and suffered death for us, surely we can deny our fleshly and worldly desires and serve him unencumbered!!

(2) Getting out of the sinning business. Repentance is here demanded. Jesus Christ has said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). What is repentance? A fine example can be found in Matthew 21:28-30. The two sons here mentioned may represent the Jewish leaders and the common Jewish people. The first promised to follow, but did not; the last first said he would *not* go, but afterward repented and went. "Repentance is a change

of mind that results in a change of life for the good" (Cf. II Peter 3:9; Acts 2:38).

(3) Obedience to the gospel of Christ is a price that must be paid. Jesus is the "Author of eternal salvation" to all who will obey him (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

(4) If need be, one must give up his relatives, friends, and job to follow Christ in complete obedience. One who thinks more of his parents than of the Lord cannot be his disciple (Matthew 10:34-40; Luke 14:26,ff). Jesus knew how difficult it would be for members of Jewish and pagan religions to give up the religions which they had been taught for centuries, and embrace an entirely new religion. This is the exact principle that applies today! We must give up Roman Catholicism and Denominationalism and thus become a simple New Testament Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). This is exactly what Saul of Tarsus did (Philippians 3:4-11). This is what you must do to follow Christ!

(5) Worthy church membership will cost the true disciple the proper use of his time, talent and money. Time is required to read God's word and spend a few hours in prayer each week (I Timothy 4:13; Acts 2:41-42). One's talents must be put to use for the Lord (Matthew 25:14-30). Those who bury their talents become unprofitable servants of the Lord! "Money" is not a dirty word for the true disciple! Jesus taught the holy principles of sacrifice. Jesus became poor that we might become rich (I Corinthians 8:9). Money is needed to promote and sustain the kingdom of God. The church of Christ is not a begging institution! Her members are required to support the church in all righteous endeavors (I Corinthians 16:1-2). We would not degrade the banner of Christ by dragging it in the streets, setting up roadblocks asking for money.

(6) Faithful members of the Lord's church must set the finest example before the world (Matthew 5:16). In the New Testament influence is likened unto salt, light and leaven (Matthew 5:13-16; 13:33). Each individual exercises an inevitable and silent influence, whether he recognizes it or not! No person can live without influencing another! The idea that what one does -- whether good or bad -- does not affect others, is foolish!

WHAT ARE THE DIVIDENDS?

There are priceless dividends! This word refers to rewards or blessings that shall accrue to faithful servants of the Lord Jesus. Those who serve him have remission of sins. There is the wonderful promise of a home in heaven. We serve him throughout eternity in the sweet home of the soul. In that happy land there can be no pain, no sorrow, no separation, no death. Your soul is worth more than the whole world! (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:38). Mark 10:30 and Revelation 21:1-4 should be read. In heaven one gains every thing, but in hell one loses every thing. When will you spend eternity?? — P.O. Box 274, Parrish Ala. 35580.



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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Preachers And Titles

What to call the preacher seems to be a problem to many. The religious world uses many titles. Usually a particular denomination will prefer one or more titles over others. Most of us realize the sinfulness of many of these appellations. Sometimes we may be unaware that we may, also, by using other titles, make distinctions contrary to the teaching of the Bible.



JOE E. GALLOWAY

Unscriptural Titles

Probably the title denominations most commonly apply to the preacher is "Reverend." Sometimes such adjectives as "Right," "Most," and "Holy" are used to precede "Reverend," as well as the definite article, "The." Although some members of the Lord's church may occasionally use this designation due to lack of teaching (perhaps having recently come out of some denomination) or through lack of concern for "speaking as the oracles of God," most of us repudiate this designation -- and rightly so. (1) There is no Bible authority for its usage. (2) The only time this word appears in the KJV it describes God's name: "holy and reverend is his name" (Psalms 111:9). (3) The word itself suggests being worthy of reverence, profound respect, awe or deference; and we believe that only God rightly deserves such.

"Father" is a designation used by millions of religious people. Seldom, if ever, do we hear our brethren use it, and with good reason! Jesus said, "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9).

In the same context Jesus forbade the use of "Rabbi" and "Master," designations still applied as religious titles by some groups. Although these terms are not usually used by us, we do see and hear a similar term being used more and more frequently. This is the term "Doctor." We recognize an acceptable usage of this term when applied to those of the medical profession, or to those in the educational field. The term "master" could be properly used in

Bible times regarding the master-servant relationship in society (Colossians 3:22), but was wrong as a religious title. Surely we can see the same application with regard to "Doctor." Is it possible that pride may enter the picture, causing us to want to advertise some speaker as "Doctor," or possibly causing one to want to be so announced at a religious gathering?

The world commonly calls a preacher "Pastor." This term is found in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11), but refers to the *elders*, not to a gospel preacher. It comes from the word *poimen*, a word more ordinarily translated "shepherd." It is possible that a preacher could also serve as one of the elders (I Peter 5:1); but even then he would simply be one of the pastors, not "the Pastor."

Misuse of Scriptural Designations

As we have noticed in considering the misuse of the word "Pastor," a word does not have to be unscriptural to be out of place in usage. Often "pastor" is applied to the wrong person, the preacher, instead of to one of the elders. We now give attention to two terms which can be, and should be used by us. They are designations which should be used to describe all faithful Christians, so are misused as *titles* to describe the preacher, exclusively.

"Brother" is the first of these designations. When Jesus said, "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ," he then said, "and all ye are brethren" (Matthew 23:8). All who, through obedience to the faith, have been baptized into Christ, are God's children (Galatians 3:26,27). Being God's sons and daughters, they are related to each other as brothers and sisters. I like the warmth and closeness suggested by referring to my fellow-Christians as brother and sister. These words appear many, many times in this sense throughout the New Testament.

But, I fear that many in the church are misusing this good designation by making it a *title* applying exclusively to *preachers*. Sometimes I am introduced as "Brother Galloway," while at the same time some other fellow-Christian is introduced as "Mr." My wife and I have even been introduced as "Brother and Mrs. Galloway"! Such distinctions are unscriptural! That *all the church* (not just the preacher) were referred to as "brother" in Bible times may be shown by many such scriptures as Acts 15:32,33.

When writing the word "brother" in connection with some Christian's name we err in capitalizing it (Brother), making it a religious title, rather than using the lower case (brother), which simply describes relationship.


"Minister" is a second misused New Testament term. Although the young preacher, Timothy, was called a "minister" (I Timothy 4:6), all faithful Christians are also called "ministers" (Hebrews 6:10). Even a civil magistrate was called a "minister of God" in Romans 13:4,6. The word simply means "one who serves another." We all should be doing this. So, while I am willing to be called "a minister," I am not willing to be designated "the Minister." I am not any more a minister than any other faithful member of the church. This term was never used as a *title* for the *preacher* in the New Testament.

Specific Designations

Since such terms as "brother" and "minister" are not to be used as religious titles, some may ask, "What can we call a preacher when we need to single him out from others?" Not to be facetious, I would first suggest that you call him by his name, just as you would anyone else. If it is a matter of introducing him to a non-member call him "Mr." if you would do this regarding a non-preaching acquaintance. When introducing him to a fellow-Christian you might call him "brother," just as you could any other Christian.

If there is a need to identify the preacher's work or function you can simply say he is a preacher, or that he is an evangelist. Both of these words were used in the Bible to describe the work of those who preached (see I Timothy 2:7 and II Timothy 4:5). These words were not titles, but simply described what the man did.

The New Testament does not teach the clergy-laity idea of the denominational world. When we learn this we will neither need nor desire titles or honor to apply to preachers. They are fellow ministers and brethren with all the rest of God's family. In specific function, they work as preachers (evangelists). We should respect and honor faithful preachers of the gospel for their work's sake, just as we should honor faithful elders (I Thessalonians 5:13) and other faithful workers; but let us never "think of men above that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:6). — 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.



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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Authority Of Christ

After Jesus died for our sins, he was raised from the dead by the Father's glorious power. This was the climaxing proof that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 1:4). He was seen of the apostles during the next forty days (Acts 1:3), and before he returned to heaven he made this claim: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). This is the boldest claim to power that human ears ever heard. Is it valid?



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that "ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:18-23). This text informs us that upon his ascension Jesus Christ was seated at God's right hand, "far above" all others. God hath "highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

Jesus Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" (Colossians 1:15,16). This claim on his behalf is consistent with his own claim to have "all power" both "in heaven and in earth." The apostle continues to show that such authority is consistent with Christ's part in creation: "all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16,17).

This exaltation of Jesus Christ upon his ascension to heaven was foreseen by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Daniel was inspired to write: "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: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13,14).

The prophet Zechariah also foretold Christ's exaltation: ". . . he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zechariah 6:13). From Hebrews 4:14 we learn that Jesus is priest NOW -- therefore he is on his throne NOW! -- And, "if he were on earth, he should not be a priest" (Hebrews 8:4), so his throne is not on earth! On Pentecost day (Acts 2) the apostle Peter preached the 'coronation

sermon' for our Lord, and quoted from Psalms 132:11. There we read: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Hear the apostle Peter: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on David's throne; his seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [Hades], neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:30-32). In commenting on this text, Peter said: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted . . ." (verse 33), and "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (verse 36). "In the name of Jesus Christ" Peter commanded them to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (verse 38) --which three thousand did that day (verse 41). Each of us must, in his own heart, "set apart Christ as Lord" (I Peter 3:15, ASV), and "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5).

Christ "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:25,26). Christ is reigning now, and will reign until the resurrection from the dead --then he will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." But this shall not be done until "he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (verse 24), or conquered all his foes, which he is doing now by the gospel.

Christ now is "head over all things to the church" (Colossians 1:18), and now has "all power in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18-20). God spoke from heaven saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). The word which originated with God the Father was given by him to Jesus Christ, so that Jesus could say: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16). In his prayer to the Father Jesus said of the apostles: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me," and "I have given them thy word" (John 17:8,14). Christ gave this word to his apostles, who were guided by the Holy Spirit to reveal and confirm it in the New Testament. We must be faithful to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), for Paul warns: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

Since Jesus Christ has "all power in heaven and in earth," (Matthew 28:18-20), he is the "author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). We plead for all men to respect the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord.

WORD of GOD

Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Psalms 28:6-9

To My Mother With Love

T. C. CARR

There is a name that can never be taken by a man;
Whether young or old, you take her by the hand;
The name holds meaning like no other,
When you look into the eyes of your loving mother.

When the child calls out in fright
At the scary things that come out at night,
It's Mother that can still the fear
When she answers, "I am here."

Knees that get cut and scraped
On rocks and things that grate,
Love can wipe away the tear
When Mother says, "I am here."

When the boy comes in from play or school,
And wants a drink of something cool,
It gives him a feeling warm and dear
To hear his mother say, "I am here."

The young man has a broken heart
Over the girl whose love has turned dark;
He needs a caring and sympathetic ear,
A tender smile, and Mother says, "I am here."

He's got his first "set of wheels"
With loud mufflers and gasoline bills;
He needs a small loan for a new gear,
Mother frowns, but says, "I am here."

Every night she kneels by her bed,
With closed eyes, folded hands and bowed head,
She calls my name out to the Lord, low and clear,
And says, "Oh, Lord, let my son know I am here."

From child, to boy, to man,
I still like to hold that hand
And look into loving eyes so dear
And hear Mother say, "I am here."

When I cross over the brink into Glory,
With the streets of gold and robes so snowy,
And call out the names I've held so near,
I'm sure I will hear Mother answer, "I am here."
—3709 Hilndale Dr., Selma, AL 36701.

“THE END OF THE WORLD” IN MATTHEW 28:20

W. GADDYS ROY

It is advocated by some that “the end of the world” in Matthew 28:20 has reference to the end of the Jewish Age. One writer stated that this passage of scripture does not have reference to us now. He gave Thayer’s definition of the Greek word “aion” which means *age*. It is translated in the King James version “forever,” “world,” “eternal,” “age,” and “ever and ever.” All this is correct; but *which* “age” is Jesus referring to? Let Jesus tell us. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, “the age” is the age in which Jesus is king, and has “all power.”

Jesus gave the commission to the apostles to “go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” What had Jesus commanded? He had just previously commanded them to teach and baptize all nations. Therefore, those who were taught and baptized were to do the same. This arrangement is to last until the “end of the world” or “age.” What age? The age in which Jesus has all authority or power.

THESE BRETHREN MEAN WELL

I believe these brethren who have espoused this error mean well. They think “the end of the world” means that Jesus would be with the apostles in *miraculous power* to “the end of the (Jewish) age.” One brother in commenting on the statement “lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world,” said it “is simply the promise of inspiration to the apostles,” to the end of the Jewish Age. This argument is based on the pronoun *you*, which refers to the apostles. I do not deny that the apostles were inspired, nor that Jesus was speaking to the apostles; but neither Holy Spirit *baptism*, nor the Jewish Age, is mentioned in the “Great Commission.”

“Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world” refers to the age of regeneration in which Jesus sits on his throne (Matthew 19:28; 28:20). Jesus promised the apostles thrones “in the regeneration” when he would “sit on the throne of his glory” (Matthew 19:28). Jesus is on his throne now (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore, Jesus is with the apostles now, and they are ruling by their teaching and influence now.

The Jewish Age ended *before* Jesus gave the commission. It ended when Jesus made the sacrifice on the cross for our sins (Hebrews 9:26; Colossians 2:14). Miraculous power ended when the New Testament was all revealed and complete (I Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:8-14). The miraculous is not mentioned in Matthew 28:18-20. If the Holy Spirit did not guide Matthew to even mention the miraculous, why should uninspired men today interpolate the miraculous into the text of God’s word? The Holy Spirit has warned against that very thing (II John 9-11; Revelation 22:18-19).

Some of the brethren who have espoused this new doctrine say that Jesus blotted out the law on the cross but “34 years later the law is ready to vanish away.” For their reference some will sight Hebrews 8:13. But this makes them have two covenants in force at the same time. The Bible plainly says that Jesus took “away the first *that he may establish the second*” (Hebrews 10:9). The truth is, the law ended at the cross, only the Jewish state continued as a civil government; and that ended at the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus was not speaking of the Jewish state in Matthew 28:20. Jesus was speaking of his spiritual reign (Matthew 28:18).

In order to get the miraculous into Matthew 28:20 some say that Mark speaks of the miraculous and that Matthew is explaining Mark’s record of “The Great Commission.” The book of Matthew and the book of Mark were written by two different men, to different people, under different circumstances, and our Lord may have spoken the words at different times. One thing is sure: Mark 16:15-20 is not a part of

the context of Matthew 28:18-20. How was Matthew *explaining* Mark, when Matthew was likely written *first*? Neither writer tells us when the miracles ceased, nor did either writer mention the Jewish Age which ended when Jesus was crucified (Hebrews 9:26).

We must not teach error to refute error. If we overcome error with error we have error left. If we overcome error with truth we have truth left.

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF THIS NEW DOCTRINE

These brethren will not accept the consequences of the doctrine that the “end of the world” in Matthew 28:20 has reference to the end of the Jewish Age. This is a dangerous doctrine. The doctrine denies the Bible, dethrones Christ, and negates God’s plan for redeeming man. First it denies the Bible. Jesus “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself at the end of the (Jewish) world” or age (Hebrews 9:26). The text does not say “about,” nor “near” the end of the age, as these brethren would like for it to say. They have the Jewish “world” ending at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, which was forty years after the Bible says it ended. The Holy Spirit did not make a mistake of forty years! Jesus had already been sacrificed, or crucified, before he gave “The Great Commission.”

Second, the theory dethrones Christ. Jesus has “all authority,” and is priest, *while on his throne* (Matthew 28:18; Zechariah 6:12-13). Jesus is to reign on his throne until “the end of the world,” at which time all the dead will be raised; then Jesus will “deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father” (I Corinthians 15:20-24). The “age” or “world” to which Jesus refers in Matthew 28:20 is the age in which he has “all power” or authority. Jesus states this in verse eighteen. The authority or power of Jesus certainly did not *end* before he *received* that authority or power. Nor did it end at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Two different “ages” are not mentioned nor contemplated in Matthew 28:18-20.

Third, this new doctrine negates our Lord’s plan of salvation which is given in “the Great Commission.” “The end of the world” means the end of the “age” in which Christ reigns as king, and the end of the “age” for which God’s plan for redeeming man is in effect (Matthew 28:18). It is the end of the age of regeneration (Matthew 19:28). This is the Christian Age. (This is also the position taken by the late H. Leo Boles in his Commentary on Matthew). It is not harmonious to say that Jesus has “all power” or “authority” for *one* “age,” and in the same breath say to the apostles “lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world,” and mean *another* “age” without introducing that age.

THE NEW DOCTRINE AND PREMILLENNIALISM

The brethren who have espoused the doctrine that “the end of the world” in Matthew 28:20 has reference to the end of the Jewish world are not premillennialists. However, in some respects the doctrine leads to some of the same conclusions. Both doctrines deny the Bible, and both dethrone Christ. If Christ is not now on his throne, the church is not his kingdom. Therefore, we would not have Christ as our king, nor our high priest to intercede to God for us; because Christ must be priest upon his throne (Zechariah 6:12-13).

CONCLUSION

In this article I have called no names, nor have I mentioned any books or papers in which this new doctrine is taught and from which I have quoted. I could have done so, but I am not interested in exposing individuals when good can be accomplished otherwise. It seems that, in the main, it is not the older preachers, not even the one who started the doctrine; but it is the younger men who have gotten the seed of error, and are preaching it. I hope this article will serve to influence brethren to give up and renounce this new doctrine which is obviously false. To hold to and teach this false doctrine could cause another splinter in the church. May God help us to avoid that! — Rt. 1 Box 680, Dora, AL 35062.

An Absentee Ballot

GORDON V. HERRMANN

This is an election year, and I have noticed that Christians have a tendency to “vote” by their actions, giving support to the church with their “yes” or denying it their support by their “no.”

When Christians buy a box of “Brand C Cornflakes” at the local market, that is a ‘vote’ for that particular item. It gives the product a basis on which to grow and succeed in the market-place. If the Christian attends an “R”-rated movie, that vote is added to others who attend, and gives the producer assurance that the public wants that type entertainment. But just suppose the cornflakes are not purchased, or the movie is not attended --but that the ‘vote’ in conjunction with others added up to a “no” vote: would that not tell the producers in no uncertain terms their products were not acceptable?

Yes, Christians ‘vote,’ too. They ‘vote’ “FOR” Sunday morning worship services when they are present to serve and to fellowship with one another. A large “pro” vote stirs the spirit, and builds joy, and adds to the enthusiasm of the ‘electorate.’ A landslide can be created by bringing friends and neighbors. If, however, Christians begin to ‘vote’ “NO” on Sunday morning, the elders may have to look to the preacher as the losing ‘candidate.’

By not attending on Sunday EVENING, Christians cast their ‘vote’ “AGAINST” this particular hour of worship! That makes a vote *against* late-hour singing, against after-noon prayer, and against another message from the Bible late in the day. Does

the world see Christians as a group that votes “NO” on Wednesday evening classes? against devotionals? and “pro” work-days --that is, if the TOTAL possible vote is considered?

Probably any personal attendance election would be overwhelmingly in favor of recalling such traditional observances on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. And any ‘vote-count’ of “appearance only” would be a ‘mandate’ for Sunday morning --contrary to the reality of the Christian life (Hebrews 10:25).

Obviously, there is a minority ‘non-vote’ for Bible classes, where the Christian may learn more about the word of God, and enjoy close relationship with his fellow-Christians. Probably every teacher-candidate would prefer a plurality in favor of such classes, so that continued support of God’s promises may be maintained.

But, rest easy, Voters! We are not going to have a ‘mark-your-choice-ballot’ at this time! We want to assume that most of you, if asked to do so, would vote “YES” for all the items listed on the church ‘ballot!’ *Christians* are in favor of them all; but such a ‘ballot’ would not tell us what we need to hear! Our ‘vote’ should be cast by the presence of each member in every service. That gives the true result in any election. “. . . give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (II Peter 1:10). — 507 S. Lucas Drive, Santa Maria, CA 93454.

Preaching Like Jeremiah

The prophet Jeremiah lived approximately 100 years after Isaiah. Jeremiah was called by the Lord to be a prophet at a very early age (Jeremiah 1:6). Jeremiah became aware of the fact that God had chosen him before his birth to be a prophet in the thirteenth year of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:2), about 626 B.C.

Jeremiah was more than a prophet. Alvin E. Bell, in *The Gist of the Bible*, describes him accurately: "He was a statesman, a patriot, and a martyr. His was the sad ministry of accompanying a doomed nation to the death chamber for its execution. He was a pathetic lonely figure giving God's last message to the city of Jerusalem, a city which had hopelessly attached itself to idols."

For almost half a century Jeremiah warned the king and the children of Israel that destruction would come upon them because of their persistent idolatry. Despite his consistent warnings, the people would not repent. As a result Jerusalem was destroyed about 586 B.C., and Nebuchadnezzar carried the people away into captivity in Babylon for seventy years.

Because of his preaching, Jeremiah was charged with treason, beaten, and put in the stocks, where he was exposed to the ridicule of his many enemies. Jeremiah's imprisonment caused him to be despondent and depressed. He was so discouraged that he said, "I will not make mention of him (God) nor speak any more in his name" (Jeremiah 20:9). He resolved to forsake his prophetic office, return to his home and retire to private life.

Jeremiah knew deep down inside he really could not do this. He discovered that God's word was in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones (Jeremiah 20:9). Jeremiah realized that no matter to what great extent he wanted to quit preaching, he could not bring himself to resign. Regardless of how strong he desired to "throw in the towel," he could not conscientiously do so. Jeremiah realized his resolution was hasty and disobedient. God's word was inside him as a raging fire. He felt obligated to preach the message of God. For Jeremiah there was no option. His life was to be dedicated to bringing God's message to a desperately wicked nation. There was to be no abandoning his calling.

Jeremiah had begun his ministry with apprehension, doubts, and timidity. In fact, at first, he tried to excuse himself because of his youth, and incapacities for the work. God overruled. Jeremiah took on the task, and preached with enthusiasm and faithfulness. Though he was continually persecuted, reproved, and endangered by his own people, he was strong and courageous. Jeremiah could have compromised with the enemy and had a much easier life, one with fewer tears at least; but he, like Moses, decided to stay with his people and share their fate.

There are many lessons for preachers from the life and ministry of the prophet Jeremiah. Notice three in particular. First, at times the gospel preacher will grow weary, tired, discouraged, and may be undersupported; but he should never quit preaching. Men who low-rate the brethren, who habitually speak unkindly of the Lord's church, who are "sour-on-the-brotherhood," who preach for reasons other than the right ones — these should quit. The man who has God's word "in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones" should never seriously contemplate giving up preaching the glorious gospel (II Corin-



JIMMY EDWARDS

thians 4:4).

Second, the man who would preach the gospel should be realistic and realize there will be times of depression. This is true in any work of life. Gospel preachers will suffer, as anyone else does, from this "black dog," as Sir Winston Churchill called depression. The preacher should expect the "Monday morning blues" to affect his life on occasions. There will be some isolation. Disappointments will come. David, Jeremiah, Job, Moses, John the Baptist — all these great men had periods of depression. But, they were able, with the Lord's help, to overcome their depression. Preachers now can, too.

Finally, keep on preaching even if you do not get numerous visible results. Your message from God's word may be helping a few. The children of Israel had exhausted God's mercy. They were extremely

wicked. Their hearts were hard. They were given to idolatry. A more spiritually disgusting people would be hard to find. After they were taken away by the Babylonians for seventy years only a small group made it back to Jerusalem. Jeremiah's preaching was not in vain just because the majority rejected him and did not accept the message of God.

Some may think Jeremiah was a failure. True, he did fail to save the city of Jerusalem from Babylon. But Jeremiah was no failure in God's eyes. Jeremiah, from the Lord's viewpoint, was a complete success! He was a "preacher" in the truest sense of the word. His devotion to God and dedication to preaching God's word is absolutely unquestioned.

If there is a desperate need in the church today, it would have to be a need for more preachers like Jeremiah! — 512 Gardendale Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110.

Jesus Is Coming Again!

A short time before his death, Jesus told his disciples he would go away and prepare a place for them. He reassured them that if he went, he would also come back to get them so that they might be with him (John 14:1-6). In Acts 1:9-11 it is reported that Jesus ascended, and two men in white apparel told the disciples that he would come again as they had seen him go. Revelation 21:1-22:5 describes in beautiful terms the place that Jesus has gone to prepare. The description of that prepared place, heaven, makes us long to go there.

If we want to go to heaven, we must be prepared to meet the Lord at his return. The parable of the ten virgins makes it plain that some will be aware of, and even looking for, the Lord's return, yet they will not be prepared (Matthew 25:1-13). Those who would be ready must keep on obeying the Lord's commands. Paul told the Thessalonians, "... 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 Thessalonians 1:7-9). To "know" in scripture is more than simply being aware of. It would include those who refuse to know God intimately by refusing to obey his will. "Obey not" would be better translated, "do not keep on obeying." In this group would be those who have put on Christ in baptism but who have now turned aside from obedience to God (I Corinthians 9:27).

Not only should we be prepared for his coming, but we should look forward to it, and long for it (I Corinthians 11:26; II Peter 3:9-14). The word "hasting" in II Peter 3:12 means to "desire earnestly." Paul prayed that the Lord would come quickly, which is the meaning of the word "Maranatha" in I Corinthians 16:22. Since we should long for the day of his coming, it might be good to observe what will take place on that day.

First, the Lord will come. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thessalonians 4:16). Paul told the Thessalonian brethren this descent would take place at the sounding of the



GARY C. HAMPTON

trump, and the dead in Christ would rise. He told the Corinthians the same thing, except he called it the "last" trump (I Corinthians 15:52).

Second, the dead shall be raised. In John 6:39-40, Jesus taught, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (see also verses 44 and 54). Clearly Jesus is saying that the good will be raised in "the last day." Paul tells us that the dead in Christ will rise first, followed by those in Christ who may be yet alive. We shall all be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). John 5:28-29 tells us the good and bad will be raised the same hour; so the bad also will be raised "the last day."

Third, judgment will be on the last day. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). This judgment shall be for all people, good and bad (Matthew 25:31-32; Hebrews 9:27; Acts 24:25; Revelation 20:12-15). Christ will come in judgment to punish those who have not obeyed, and those who did not keep on obeying (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). Notice, he will also come to be glorified in his saints.

Fourth, the world will end the last day. In Matthew 24:35, Jesus declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Peter foretold a day in which people would doubt and make fun of the end of time because everything was still standing (II Peter 3:3-4). He then went on to note the destruction of the world by water in Noah's day and remind them the world was reserved for a fiery destruction the second time (verses 5-7). The Lord will keep his promise in his own time. The Lord will come again unannounced, like a thief; and the earth will be burned up (verses 8-10). Because of this, we ought to live good lives in accord with the Lord's direction so we will be found in the Lord and be taken home (verses 11-14). — 2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36606.

WORD of GOD

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Proverbs 3:11, 12



Words Of T

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 29

Evangelistic Authority

(No. III)

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Last week's article defined the dangerous concept which among us is called "evangelistic authority." The word "evangelistic" has reference to the preacher of the gospel. "Authority" means "power, rule, the right to command." Therefore, when speaking of "evangelistic authority" we are referring to that teaching which says that the preacher's position is one of rulership. It refers to the authority of the preacher as being equal to, or even above, the authority of the eldership of the local congregation.

Our intent in this article is to investigate some of the reasons this movement has been initiated. One of the primary causes for this teaching has been a failure to understand the Scriptures. Passages are taken from Holy Writ with meanings attached to them which were never intended. Meanings of particular words are not thoroughly sought out, and definitions are given to them which they should not have. This results in twisted applications and improper inferences being made. Associated with this cause, are also the attempts to argue from the silence of the Scriptures and to place human reason above the revelation of God.

A second cause for this crusade is that some elderships in practice have allowed evangelistic authority. Rather than performing their God-given responsibilities as they should, many elderships have "passed the buck" to the preacher. In this same vein, many preachers "itch" to get such responsibilities. Therefore, when the buck is finally passed, they grasp at the opportunity with great delight. Wherefore, the brethren also become warped in their thinking concerning the work of the elders and preachers, and a "pastor system" develops. The elders become figureheads; the deacons do nothing; and the preacher is left holding the bag of authority and decision-making.

As stated before, this concept is largely held among our black brethren. It has developed because few can be found among the membership who meet God's qualifications to serve as elders. When qualified men are not found for the office of bishops, some one naturally assumes this leadership position. In most instances, it is the preacher. We must commend our black brethren for not allowing unqualified men to

serve as the overseers of the flock; but to allow the preacher to have free-reign is not God's plan either.

Another reason for the advancement of evangelistic authority can be found in the "Crossroads Movement" of Gainesville, Florida. In order for this movement to gain the foothold which is needed, they must usurp the authority of the elders. Therefore, a preacher comes in and gains the favor of the people. This soon results in his being able to advance his divisive doctrines. When many of the members fully imbibe in the wells of this heresy, the faithful

eldership is removed. The preacher then steps in as "Director." He rules until the congregation can be fully indoctrinated and elders can be appointed, whom the preacher feels are competent to steer the ship in his (unholy) course.

These are some of the reasons why evangelistic authority has become prevelant. Next week we will begin to show that evangelistic authority cannot be harmonized with God's will. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Is That True Love?

Love is such an elusive quality so difficult to define. Everybody knows what it means, yet few can adequately convey in words a perfectly satisfactory definition. Perhaps the best way of defining it is by describing what it will or will not do for its object. Paul wrote the great "love chapter" (I Corinthians 13) by this method.

Love can be described from a negative standpoint. Take the family relationship for an example. A loving father will *not* refuse to provide for the needs of his loved ones. A loving wife will *not* refuse to lend support to her working husband. A loving child will *not* flagrantly and continuously disregard the wishes and desires of its parents. Most of us understand this.

Let us be even more specific. The father who shows true love for his wife and children will not decline the opportunities of giving to them of his money, energy and -- especially -- time. In fact, he will often sacrifice




PHILLIP GRAY

in his work or favorite recreation in order to spend quality time with his loved ones. We understand why he does this -- he loves them. Thus, whenever we see a situation in which a father is neglecting this all-important responsibility (or privilege), we have reason to suspect that he is not in that instance manifesting true love for his family. The husband who allows all his interests and concerns to lie outside the home, and who rarely includes his wife and children in his time, is depriving them of what they so often need most -- his presence. For you see, time is one precious commodity given to us by God which we can freely share with those whom we love most in order to demonstrate our love.

Now if you believe what has just been said, then pause for a few moments and ask yourself this question. If I refuse to give of my time to the Lord and his cause, am I showing true love? Think specifically. If I fail to be in attendance for the services of his church more than once per week (for example, Sunday morning worship only), is that true love? Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15, ASV). The Hebrew writer commanded, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye

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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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Is That True Love?

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see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). This of course was Christ's own commandment through the mouthpiece of this inspired writer (cf. John 14:26).

If therefore you miss wilfully the morning Bible class and evening worship service on Sundays, if you could count on one of two hands the number of times you have attended mid-week Bible study in a year, is that true love? The church is described as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-32). What wife who truly loves her husband will habitually, continually, and wilfully neglect opportunities to share her time with him? And may I sincerely ask, what Christian who truly loves his or her Lord will habitually, continually and wilfully neglect those precious few hours each week to spend time close to his or her Lord in worship, study, and fellowship with other saints? Some seem to be of the persuasion that it is necessary only to get in "your basic minimum" amount of time each week for the Lord, and then your duty is fulfilled. (Is there a "minimum"?) Is that true love? — P.O. Box 606, Flomaton, AL 36441.

Attitudes Towards Sin

The Roman government severely persecuted the Christian religion under Diocletian. Christians were commanded by their government to worship Roman gods. Some Christians were induced to compromise their faith under duress. When the persecution was over and Christians were permitted to practice their religion again, many of those who had compromised their faith returned to the church and confessed their fault.

Later, in A.D. 311, a man named Donatus taught that



TIM NICHOLS

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Doctrine Of Christ

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that bideth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

If there were not another verse in the Bible which stresses loyal adherence to the "doctrine of Christ," this text shows how vital it is for us to abide in Christ's doctrine. His doctrine 'fences us in' religiously; and if we go beyond it, we do not have God with us. When we abide in the "teaching" (for this is what the word "doctrine" means) of Christ, we have both God and Christ with us. The American Standard Version reads: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God."

In last week's Editorial we saw that Jesus Christ has "all power" (or "all authority" -- A.S.V.) "... in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). He commanded the apostles: "Go ye *therefore*" which means, for this reason --because I have all authority, I command you to evangelize all nations: --"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:18-19). He then said those baptized should be taught "to observe all things whatsoever *I have commanded you*" (verse 20). The orders he issued are in perfect harmony with his claims!

Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50). The fact that the "doctrine of Christ" originated with God the Father indicates how vitally important it is.

This truth is clearly declared by Jesus more than once. Hear his own claim: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16). Again: "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). Again he affirmed: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:13-14).

This explains why those who heard him "were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority . . . (Matthew 7:28-29). The officers who were sent to arrest him returned without their prisoner, saying: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

This doctrine which Christ received from God the



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Father, he gave to his apostles. The night before he was crucified, Jesus prayed to the Father in behalf of his apostles, saying: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17:8). In the same prayer he said: "I have given them thy word" (verse 14).

But some reader may say, 'You have convinced me that God gave the word to Christ, and Christ in turn gave it to the apostles; but how do we know that the apostles passed it on to us accurately? how do we know that they did not err in preaching what Christ had told them?' This is a good question; and it is answered in the New Testament.

The accuracy of the apostles' preaching is vouchsafed to us by the Holy Spirit --who himself is Deity also, like God the Father, and like God the Son. Of the coming of this (third) person in the Godhead unto the apostles, Jesus said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). This assures us that, like Jesus himself, so the Holy Spirit also, spoke (through inspired men) only what God the Father told him to say. This accords fully with the assurance Jesus previously had given to the apostles: "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:19-20). This is why Jesus could be absolutely sure what those he sent out would preach, and could say: "He that heareth you heareth me" (Luke 10:16). To his apostles he said: "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:24-26).

In keeping with the promises of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on Pentecost Day (Acts 2), and "they began to speak . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance" (verse 4). This is the reason why those converted on Pentecost continued steadfastly in "the apostles' doctrine" (verse 42) -- for it was not fundamentally THEIRS, but was the "doctrine of Christ."

God gave the word to Christ, and Christ gave it to his apostles. But he knew fallible men cannot accurately recall everything he has been taught during a period of three years (plus); so upon his return to the Father, Jesus sent the Spirit to give the apostles accurate recall of all he had taught them, plus he would guide them "into all truth." They were enabled also to confirm the word with miracles (Hebrews 2:1-4). Thus the doctrine of Christ has been revealed --and it needs no new revelation. It has also been confirmed --and it needs no new confirmation. Our obligation is simply to "abide in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9-11).

Neither man nor angel has any authority from Christ to change the gospel. In fact, one who does so will be accursed: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that

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Why Churches Of Christ Reject All Human Creeds

No knowledgeable person can dispute the fact that all human denominations have their own confessions of faith, manuals, disciplines, catechism, or other books of instruction. Churches of Christ have and use only the Holy Bible as their standard of authority in matters of faith and worship. Why do churches of Christ refuse to have human creeds? We shall answer according to the plain teaching of the Holy Bible.



W. A. HOLLEY

(1) The Bible is sufficient for the spiritual needs of man. The Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, being inspired of God, and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction -- why? "That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good word." (II Timothy 3:16-17, ASV.) We believe these verses! So, we will not turn to human creeds as if we had no confidence in the sacred Scriptures.

Verily, the Holy Bible contains "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). The Oracles of God furnish all the divine light that is to be had (Psalms 119:105, 130). If a human creed contains more than the Bible, it contains too much; if it contains less than the Bible, it contains too little; if a human creed is identical with the Bible, it is not needed!! (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Jeremiah 26:1-3; Revelation 22:18-19). "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV). The expression "once for all" means that the deposit of truth has been delivered for all time to come; it is a permanent body of truth, and is never to be superceded, emended, or modified!

(2) Churches of Christ reject human creeds because they produce sectarians. What does "sectarian" mean? "An adherent of a sect; limited in character or scope; parochial." What is here meant? We shall see: The Methodist Discipline makes Methodists; the Baptist Manual produces Baptists; the Book of Mormon makes Latter Day Saints; the Catechism makes Roman Catholics, etc. If sectarian seed is sown, it produces sectarians. It is just as simple as that! God Almighty teaches that every seed brings forth fruit after its own kind (Genesis 1:11-12; Galatians 6:7-8). An unalterable law!

(3) Churches of Christ sow pure, unadulterated seed: "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Gospel seed, unmixed with the doctrines and commandments of men, produces only Christians; that is the way it was during the first century (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). The word sown in apostolic times never produced Baptists, Methodists, or Catholics, etc. When only the word of God is now sown, it will not divide people into sects; but, rather, it will produce unity and harmony among believers. Such preaching leads to fellowship, not sectarianism. Sowing wheat seed never produces tares (Matthew 13:33-43; Cf. I John 1:6-7).

(4) Churches of Christ occupy the only ground of unity. Let it be recognized that the Bible is not a denominational book. It never teaches denominationalism! God is not the author of confusion! But denominationalism is confusion! Just listen the babel of voices, where one preacher says one thing, while another says exactly the opposite! (I Corinthians 14:33).

Jesus Christ is not a sectarian Saviour. Jesus

prayed for all believers, saying, "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). Christ's prayer can never be answered as long as denominationalism holds sway!

The church that Jesus Christ built is not a sectarian body. This church existed centuries before denominationalism ever saw the light of day! Denominationalism had its beginning with the efforts of men like Martin Luther (Colossians 1:18,24; Matthew 16:18-19; Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:10-13). The church of Christ is large enough to include all who will submit to his authority, but small enough to exclude all who rebel against his will. The apostles and early Christians were not sectarians; rather they worked for unity, and opposed those who caused division, marking them (Ephesians 4:3-6; Romans 16:17-18).

(5) All people everywhere should possess great reverence for God and his Holy Word. In fact they

should "tremble" at his word (Isaiah 66:2,5; Ezra 9:4; 10:3; Proverbs 28:14). Members of the churches of Christ are working for that unity of believers for which Jesus the Saviour prayed (John 17:20-23). Rather than supporting religious division, churches of Christ are seeking to unite all believers in the one body, the church (I Corinthians 12:1-27; Romans 12:4-5). Churches of Christ contend for THE FAITH . . . THE ONE FAITH (Ephesians 4:5) . . . as taught in the Bible (Jude 3). Churches of Christ do not contend for modern faiths nor the faith of one's choice. The various faiths of denominational choices contradict each other, thus they cause division.

Churches of Christ urge all honest, sincere souls to give up all traces of denominationalism and return to the Holy Bible for guidance in all matters of salvation, worship, and daily living. We must all walk by the same rule (Philippians 3:16; Romans 15:5-6; I Peter 4:11). These passages condemn denominationalism. Remember that we shall be judged by God's Holy Word, not by denominational dogmas (John 12:48). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Second Corinthians

The second epistle of Paul the apostle to the church of Christ in Corinth was written from Macedonia in A.D., 58 after Paul had received word from Titus that his first epistle to the Corinthians had been well received. "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things" (II Corinthians 2:9).

Having found the Corinthian brethren receptive to further teaching, Paul wrote them again. Among the issues dealt



BARRY CUNNINGHAM

with by Paul in II Corinthians are the following:

1. An explanation for his delay in returning to Corinth (1:12-2:9).
2. To give further instructions as to the treatment of the disciplined fornicator (2:5-11).
3. To exhort the Corinthian brethren to hasten the congregation's efforts in regard to the collection for the poor saints (Chapters 8 and 9).
4. And, to defend his apostleship in view of the charges and accusations leveled against him by false teachers in the Corinthian church (Chapters 10 through 12). (It is indeed amazing that a man such as Paul would be compelled to defend his apostolic work!)

Perhaps no book in the Bible gives the insight into the work and character of Paul as does II Corinthians. It has been called "Paul's Autobiography." We encourage all WORDS OF TRUTH readers to study II Corinthians. — P.O. Box 242, Morris, AL 35116.

The Doctrine Of Christ

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which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again: if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9). This is why churches of Christ "earnestly

contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). We plead for faith in, and obedience to, the gospel (or doctrine) of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

Attitudes Towards Sin

Continued from page 2

those who had thus sinned after baptism could not be restored. This doctrine had first been taught by Novatian of Rome, who later changed his convictions on the matter. This view was never accepted by the majority, but a splinter group held tenaciously to it for a time. (McClintock & Strong's *Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Volume II, pp. 861-863).

A practice began in the Roman Church many years later because soldiers were needed for the Crusades. The pope offered indulgences, guaranteeing the forgiveness of sins, to all who would fight. As time passed, hawkers (salesmen) were sent out to sell indulgences. People were then able (so they were told, and so they believed) to purchase the forgive-

ness of sins, either for themselves or for departed loved ones in purgatory. These hawkers, who received a commission on what they sold, began to promise those who purchased indulgences, forgiveness of sins that had not yet been committed. They were selling nothing less than a license to continue in sin. John Tetzl, a Dominican friar, was the chief agent for selling indulgences in Saxony, Germany. He wrote the following words, which he used as his usual form of absolution:

May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his

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Why We Reject Instrumental Music In Worship

A reader recently wrote, asking, "If Jesus did not condemn the use of instruments in worship, how can we do so?" It is hoped the response given will be helpful to others as well.

Dear Brother:

The answer we reach on your or any other question will depend upon the concept we hold about how God authorizes a thing.

Luther, with many others following, argued that man can do anything the Bible does not condemn. Zwingle and others argued we can do only what God has authorized in his word. Our brethren have generally followed the latter; those who became the "Christian Church" and accepted such items as mechanical instruments, followed Luther's concept. I am convinced Zwingle 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 New Testament worship. (See Ephesians 5:19 and Hebrews 2:11-12)

If I abide in the teaching of Christ, I will 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 "not to go beyond the things that are written" (I Corinthians 4:6) 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 grounds that it is not specifically prohibited, proves too much. Scripture nowhere forbids me to use Pepsi Cola for the communion, nor catchup on the holy bread; yet all would immediately make objection if I did so. Why? Because Scripture plainly tells us what to use; bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29). Since I must not go beyond what is written in the *communion* worship, on what grounds should I go beyond what is written in the *song* worship? Remember, Christ did not expressly 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 authorizes 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 floors, windows and doors, nor to use any material other than gopher woods (Genesis 6:14-16). The kind of tools, number of helpers and



JOHN WADDEY

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 Israelites 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 their Levitical priesthood. All were authorized by a former law not now binding upon us (Colossians 2:14-16; Ephesians 2:14-16).

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. — 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599

Attitudes Towards Sin

Continued from page 3

apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred; then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be: even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see, and as far as the keys of the holy Church extend. I remit to thee all punishment which thou deservest in Purgatory on their account; and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the Church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which thou possessedst at baptism: so that when thou diest the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the Paradise of delights shall be opened; and if thou shalt not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art at the point of death. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" (McClintock & Strong, Volume IV, p. 565).

These two examples from history have been given to show that there have been a variety of attitudes toward sin. Other examples could be given. When the human mind labors without the aid of divine revelation, a wide variety of conclusions will be reached. But what does the Bible objectively teach? What is *God's* attitude toward sin in the life of a Christian? Is it true, as some have asserted, that any sin after baptism cannot be forgiven? Or is it the case, as others have taught, that under certain conditions Christians can (or must) willfully and with forethought, continue in intentional sin until death and expect to be ushered into heaven in the end? The purpose of this article is to present what the Bible teaches concerning sin in the life of a Christian.

There is never a situation in which a child of God is left with no alternative but to sin. In the tenth chapter of I Corinthians an account is given in the first eleven verses of people who chose to disobey God while they followed Moses. Virtually all things were equal in their environment (I Corinthians 10:1-4). Not all of them chose to sin, but many of them did (I Corinthians 10:5). Their example is recorded for us so that we will not choose to sin as they did (I Corinthians 10:6-11). Because we can see that their choice to rebel against God brought judgment upon them, we should be aware that our choice to rebel will bring judgment upon us. We need to be aware that we will fall if we give in to temptation and rebel against God as they did (I Corinthians 10:12)! Christians can know that the temptation to sin *will* come, and that our ability to choose not to sin is ever present: "There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear

it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

When a Christian, in a moment of weakness, chooses to sin, he can be forgiven by a gracious God, when he repents and confesses his sin to God and to whomever he has wronged on earth (I John 1:7-10). But a sin *willfully continued* in will condemn the soul of one who has been a child of God (Hebrews 10:26-39; I John 1:6; James 1:13-14; 5:19-20). To repent (Greek: *metanoeo*) of a sin involves, not only regret for having performed it, but also a firm resolve not to repeat it. In order to become a Christian, one must (among other things) *repent* of past sins (Acts 2:38). When a child of God sins, he must *repent* and pray in order to remain in the grace of God (Acts 8:22).

There have always been those who have tried to make the grace of God a license to continue in willful sin. Some have taught that physical things cannot affect spiritual. Others have suggested that since "sin of one type or another characterizes the life of every Christian" and "the fulness of God's grace will be needed before anyone will be saved" perhaps we should choose to continue in what we deem to be "lesser sin." Whatever the underlying explanations may be for the doctrine, those who teach it are denying deity. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). God's love for us is so great that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). If this could be proven to be untrue, then both the writer and the reader of these words would be utterly without hope! A part of choosing to become a Christian is the choice to "walk in newness of life," to stop allowing sin to *reign* in our mortal bodies, to stop *yielding* our "members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," to yield ourselves to God and to become "the servants of righteousness." Even for one who has become a child of God, "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:1-23). — Route 1, Box 211, Burlington, West Virginia 26710.

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

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"Evangelistic Authority"

(IV)

VICTOR M. ESKEW

Thus far in our studies we have defined "Evangelistic Authority," and we have discussed some reasons why it has developed among the brotherhood. The intent of the articles which follow will be to show that the Scriptures do not teach the concept of "Evangelistic Authority," and to answer some of the objections raised in regard to this teaching.

The Scriptures make it plain that both elders and preachers have a work to do. Paul in writing to Timothy concerning the qualifications of elders wrote: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3:1). Paul encouraged Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Timothy 3:5). Therefore, each position is one into which labour and energy must be exerted. But the question is: "Does the preacher have the *same* responsibilities as do the elders?"

The inspired writers of the New Testament resound in the negative to this inquiry. Paul makes it evident that the evangelist's task is not equal to the elders'. As an evangelist at Ephesus Paul had "kept back nothing that was profitable" (Acts 20:20); he had "taught (them) publicly, and from house to house" (verse 20); he testified "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 21); he had preached the kingdom of God (verse 25); he had declared "all the counsel of God" (verse 27); and he "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (verse 31). Notice, however, that none of these things involved his overseeing the congregation. But to the elders he said: "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" (verse 28). Paul clearly recognized that it was his duty as an evangelist to preach, teach, and warn; but he also knew that it was the duty of the elders to oversee the flock of God.

These facts are affirmed over and over in the sacred text of the Bible. It is the eldership which takes care of the church of God (I Timothy 3:5); rules (Hebrews

13:7); watches for souls (Hebrews 13:17); feeds the flock (I Peter 5:2); and takes the oversight of the local congregation (I Peter 5:2). The preacher's obligation is to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3); to be "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" (I Timothy 4:6); "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Timothy 4:13); "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine" (I Timothy 4:16); rebuke them that sin (I Timothy 5:20); teach others who are faithful (II Timothy 2:2); "study" (II Timothy 2:15); and speak

the things which become sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).

The evidence can be found in exceeding abundance which testifies to the truth that elders are to oversee the local congregation of God's people. The preacher's job is separate and apart from this. It is imposed as a duty upon him to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). This should be enough for any honest seeker to understand that the theory of "Evangelistic Authority" as this term currently is used is not taught in the text of the Bible. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Public Enemy Number 1

WINFREY HENNESSEE

Satan quite often takes the form of various despicable people in order to carry on his work. One of his favorite workshops is with the trouble maker in the church. This enables him to try his hand at undermining any good undertaking which might come along.

Sometimes he appears in the form of a gossip carrier which takes very little changing in order to be like this malicious bearer of falsehoods.

Those who gossip wound without mercy anyone they choose to turn their venom upon. "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). These people soon become 'marked' as such and most Christians will learn to avoid them.


Elders who are vigilant will keep close watch on the trouble maker; and when he learns that he is being watched, he will become dormant, only coming to life now and then. One of the best ways to silence a trouble maker is to find out who his "silent partner" is and threaten to expose him. They thrive on agitation.

The gossip bearer and the trouble maker never

miss an opportunity to strike a blow for Satan, but they can be controlled. But on the other hand, the thing which cannot be controlled is indifference in the church. When widows and orphans are cold and hungry and no one seems to care, indifference is at work. When only five or ten people attend a personal work meeting, we again have indifference. When fewer than half the Sunday morning crowd returns for evening services, call it indifference once again.

If any good could be said of this condition, it might (?) be that anyone with the symptoms of this disease would be completely unprejudiced; but so is a sleeping monkey.

Yes, we know we'll always have obstacles to overcome. Satan will see to that. But when we begin falling back instead of forging ahead, we can't blame it all on the trouble maker, although we know he tried. We can't blame it all on the gossip bearer although much hurt has been caused. Let us place the blame where it rightly belongs: INDIFFERENCE IS PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1! — P.O. Box 185, McMinnville, TN 37110.



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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Unity In Christ

A distinctive plea of churches of Christ is for the unity of all believers (John 17:20-21), in the one body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4) over which Christ himself is head (Ephesians 5:23), in which the Holy Spirit dwells (I Corinthians 3:16), and to which all the saved are added by the Lord (Acts 2:47). It has always been "good and pleasant" for "brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalms 133:1). Among the seven things which God abominated even in the Old Testament, Solomon listed "he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Saints of God are admonished "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). Christians are directed to cultivate hearts of compassion (A.S.V.), "kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:12-15).

Some attitudes of heart are necessary prerequisites for unity. Before the Holy Spirit guided Paul to list the seven-plank 'platform' for unity (Ephesians 4:4-6), he laid out this background: "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3). Out of this atmosphere agreement and harmony can easily grow.

It is a sin to fragment the body of Christ. Hear the apostle Paul: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good works and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). Such a person is to be disciplined by the church, for "A man that is an heretic (A.S.V.: "A factious man"), reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10-11). Every child of God on earth has a divinely-imposed responsibility to be a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9). However, each of us is equally obligated to see that the purity of the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ, is preserved.

In his dying on the cross, our blessed Lord intended to promote unity. "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

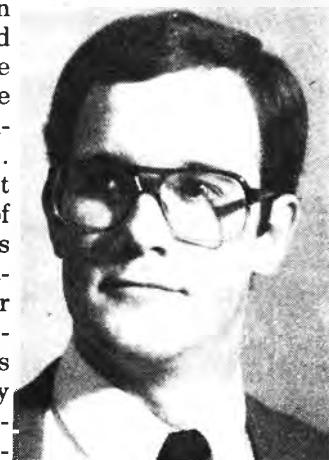
man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:14-16). Through one of the Minor Prophets, God promised: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zephaniah 3:9). That "pure language" is the gospel of Jesus Christ, under which all -- Jews or Gentiles -- may call upon the name of the Lord. On Pentecost Day the apostle Peter preached that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). He also announced that "the promise is unto you (Jews) and to your children (they would be Jews also), and to all them that are afar off (and this takes in us Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (verse 39). It should be clearly evident, therefore, that now, under the gospel of Christ, all may call upon the name of the Lord "with one consent" --and that is the unity for which we plead. It must be based upon our mutual acceptance of the word of God as our final appeal in all matters of religion.

The 'pioneer' restoration leaders coined a phrase which very aptly expresses our plea for unity in religion which we believe pleases God: "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity (or, love)." In this spirit, every Christian should "follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

This will promote the unity in Christ for which Christ died. (Ephesians 2:14-16)

Binding The Socratic Method

There was a time when gospel preachers and other members of the Lord's church were known to be virtual "experts" on the Bible. Some who are not members of churches of Christ still maintain this perception. A construction worker from another part of the country recently reported to this writer that he and many of his neighbors regularly take their Bible questions to an elderly woman who is a member of the church of Christ. He enthusiastically declared, "She not only knows what the Bible says, she knows where to find it!" He did not seem to perceive her to be an arrogant person. Rather, he pointed out that she is a quiet, humble individual who has consistently devoted herself to studying the Bible. A great many present examples could be given of men and women who know the Bible and are willing to present to others what they have come to know.



TIM NICHOLS

Within certain ethical and biblical limits, how one
Continued On Page 4

The Marriage Issue

Marriage and divorce were a problem in the Roman Empire. Therefore, it was a problem in the church. It affects the church today. Problems do not go away by being ignored. Problems ignored become worse, rather than better. Since we are going to be judged by the word of God (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12-15) we need to have a clear understanding of God's will for our lives.



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

The following is in response to a request from an eldership to state what I believe the Bible teaches on this issue.

FALSE DOCTRINE: Some teach that those who are not Christians are not responsible to the law of God. Therefore, whatever marriage relationship a couple may be in at the time of conversion is all right.

ANSWER: If this doctrine were true, it would be better for one not to be a Christian. However, Paul said, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Therefore, God's laws, including his laws of marriage, apply to all mankind.

FALSE DOCTRINE: It is taught by some, that where neither has committed adultery when a separation takes place, and either (or both) remarry another party (or parties), the act of remarriage is sinful, but the marriage itself is not sinful.

ANSWER: In Jesus' answer to the Pharisees he said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, COMMITTETH adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The word COMMITTETH is not a one-time action. Not only is the act of marriage in such case wrong, but remaining in such a sexual relationship continues to be adultery. If one can commit adultery and the marriage be scriptural, this would be doing evil that good might come from it.

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Can One Be Saved In A Denominational Church

No, not according to the Holy Bible! Why? Because denomination-ism, in any shape or form or color, is contrary to the sacred Scriptures! Do you (the reader) know of a single passage in the Old Testament or the New Testament which endorses denominational churches? Where is the book, chapter, and verse, please?



W. A. HOLLEY

The apostle Peter (I Peter 4:11) demands Bible terms to express God's truth. The teaching of the Scripture is: Call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. This noble concept forever eliminates denominational jargon, because no Bible writer or speaker ever used such sectarian terminology. Today, denominational speech is the language of Ashdod (Nehemiah 13:23-24).

We raise an honest and sincere question: To what denominational church did Paul or Peter, James or Jude, Matthew or Mark, Luke or John . . . or any other writer from Genesis to Revelation, belong? If these men belonged to some denominational church, isn't it strange that they never said any thing about it? Denominational preachers, today, are very proud, often boasting of their denominational heritage; but inspired writers of the Bible never did! In apostolic times, there were those who "belonged to Christ" (Mark 9:41)! They became Christ's possession *after* they had been baptized into him (Galatians 3:26-29). Thus, the Galatian brethren (Galatians 1:1-2), were members of the Lord's church approximately 1500 years before protestant denominationalism was ever heard of.

John the Baptist established no church. His mission was to herald the coming of Christ, and to "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Luke 3:4-6). John was dead and in his grave before Jesus Christ ever said, "Upon this rock I will build my church . . ." (Matthew 14:1-12; 16:18-19). John the Baptist prepared people by preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Not one was prepared by him to become a member of denominational churches!

What was John's name? It was not "Baptist" . . .

The Marriage Issue

Continued from page 2

Such action is condemned. Paul said that it was slander to report "as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just" (Romans 3:8). Therefore, committing adultery is not a one-time act. The act of adultery continues as long as the sinful relationship exists.

Sometimes circumstances make it impossible for a married couple to remain together. Paul addressed this situation: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord; let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife" (I Corinthians 7:10-11).

Paul is saying that the ideal is for married people to live together in their married relationship. But should this be impossible, they must refrain from any other sexual relationship, or else be reconciled to live as husband and wife. — P.O. Box 506, LaFayette, Georgia 30728.

meaning a member of a Baptist church. What was his name? Permit the Holy Bible to answer: "His name is John." This is the name the Lord and his father gave him (Luke 1:11-13, 59-64). Why was he called "the Baptist?" Because the term "Baptist" described his *work*. John was sent to baptize in water (John 1:33). He baptized "for the remission of sins," which no ordinary Baptist preacher does today (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3).

Why was John called "the Baptist?" For purposes of identification. There were many Johns in those days. Which John was meant? The John who baptizes! The Bible term is "the" Baptist, not "a" Baptist. There is a vast difference in the two expressions. To illustrate: We note, "Matthew the publican," "Philip the evangelist," "David the king," shows the true meaning of what the expression . . . "John the Baptist" means (Cf. Matthew 10:3; Acts 21:8; Matthew 1:6). "John the

Baptizer" (Mark 6:14, ASV.) shows the true meaning of why he was called "the baptist."

Verily, Jesus did not die for the Baptist church, nor for any other denominational church. Listen to Jesus Christ: ". . . Upon this rock I will build my church [not churches]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" [not them] (Cf. Matthew 16:18-19). Jesus died for that church which he purchased with his precious blood (Acts 20:28); for that church over which he reigns as its head (Ephesians 1:22-23); for that church to which he adds the saved (Acts 2:36-38, 41,47); for that church of which he is the saviour (Ephesians 5:23-27). Does the Bible teach that the church which Jesus built is essential to one's salvation? Yes, it certainly does! Is the church built by Jesus Christ *the saviour*? No! The church is *not* the saviour; but it is the *saved!* (to be continued). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Alabama 35580.

Could You Spare Five Minutes?

Are you a Christian in the same sense and in the same way as were Peter, James and the other disciples in that first church in ancient Jerusalem? If you are not, or if you are not sure, will you take just five minutes to examine the New Testament teaching on how to become a true follower of Jesus.

RECOGNIZE that all men are sinners and therefore, lost, apart from Christ (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Recognize further the fact that just being *religious* is not sufficient. Jesus taught that one must do the will of the heavenly Father to be acceptable (Matthew 7:21).

UNDERSTAND that apart from the Bible you can have no dependable knowledge of how to be saved and how to live acceptably to God. Faith cometh by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

BELIEVE with all your heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16; John 8:24). Your faith must be more than mere assent; it must be an obedient faith that gladly does God's will (Galatians 5:6). Your faith must be strong enough to *confess* before men your acceptance of Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10).

RESOLVE in your heart to turn away from all your sins in genuine *repentance*. Without repentance you will surely perish (Luke 13:3). True repentance is "unto salvation" (II Corinthians 7:10).

SUBMIT yourself to the Lord's command to be *baptized* for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 10:48). The baptism authorized by Christ is a burial or immersion in water (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 10:47).

When you thus take up your cross to follow Jesus, it must be a lifetime commitment (Matthew 16:24). Only those who are faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

This simple plan of salvation is as old as the New Testament, and as reliable as the Holy Spirit of God who inspired its writing. Your acceptance and submission thereto will guarantee the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 22:16); your membership in the Lord's true church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47); and thus your place among the redeemed as a child of God (Galatians 3:26-27).

As a fellow mortal soon to meet the Lord in



JOHN WADDEY

judgment, I urge you to take your stand with Christ today on the infallible Word of God, to be a Christian and only a Christian. Could such a commitment possibly be wrong? — 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

God's Power And The Gospel

KYLE McWHORTER

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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16,17).

All men are acquainted with power of one kind or another. People speak of fire power, horse power, steam power, and such like.

God's power is sometimes seen in nature. This is true with the hurricane, the tornado, and mountain-shaking earthquakes. However, God's power to save lost sinners is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

LESSONS IMPLIED

Several lessons can be observed from this text. First, it implies that man is lost. The apostle Paul gives further emphasis to this truth when he declares that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin (Romans 3:9,10). Paul again states that "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This same truth is taught when the Bible says that Jesus is come to seek and save the lost (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10).

Second, it is implied that there is a God. The Secular Humanists, Communists, and atheists deny the existence of God. God said that those who say that there is no God are fools (Psalms 14:1). The evidence, cries out loud and clear that there is a God, and that he is the Creator of this vast universe, including earth for the habitation of man (Genesis 1:1-31; Psalms 19:1-3).

Third, it is implied that God is greatly interested in man. It is wonderful that God, who is all-powerful, who created the world, takes notice of man! The Psalmist David stood in amazement at this great truth

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God's Power And The Gospel

Continued From Page 3

(Psalms 8:3-9). Paul, in our text, implies as much when he declares that "therein (in the gospel) is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith . . ." (Romans 1:17). Paul does not mean that the gospel reveals the fact that God is righteous; but, rather that the gospel of Christ is the means by which God makes man righteous. The word "righteousness" is a synonym for justification or salvation (Philippians 3:8-12; Romans 10:1-3; Romans 5:1).

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The word "gospel" simply means good tidings or good news (Luke 2:10). It is good news about what God, through the death of Christ, has done to make salvation from sin available to all men.

The gospel of Christ has elements that must be taken into consideration by all men. *First*, there are the facts of the gospel. The three cardinal facts are: The fact that Christ died for the sins of man; that he was buried; and that he arose on the third day (I Corinthians 15:1-4). In the *second* place, there are commands that must be obeyed. These commands involve faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6); repentance because of past sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19); and upon the confession of one's faith in Christ, baptism in water for the remission of sins (Romans 10:9,10; Acts 2:38, 22:16). *Third*, there are the promises of the gospel. They include the forgiveness of sins, which occurs when one obeys the gospel, and eternal life in the world to come (I John 2:25). *Fourth*, the gospel also has its warnings. All men are warned not to pervert, wrest, and neither add to nor take from the word of God (Galatians 1:6-9; I Peter 3:15,16; Revelations 22:18,19). In the fifth place, the gospel contains threats. These have to do with those who do not obey it, or fail to live as the word

directs. The wicked shall be punished in "the furnace of fire," "the lake of fire" or with "eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power" (Matthew 13:41,42; Revelation 20:14; II Thessalonians 1:6-9). These are some of the statements that depict the dire consequences if one fails to obey the word of God.

THE INSPIRED BOOK

The gospel of Christ, for a time, was in the inspired man (II Corinthians 4:7); now it is in the inspired Book. The Bible is the greatest treasure known to man. It is the inspired, infallible word of the living God.

The truth of the gospel is brought to bear upon the heart of man through teaching. It appeals to man's intelligence. God understands the impact one human soul can have upon another with the powerful gospel message. God therefore planned from the beginning that the gospel should be made known to man through preaching or teaching (John 6:44,45; Titus 2:11,12; I Corinthians 1:21). Yes, the gospel is a precious treasure which appeals to the heart of man through teaching. One should give diligent attention to it as it is taught.

UPON WHAT DOES IT OPERATE?

Someone may raise the question as to what God's power to save operates upon. Physical power operates upon matter. One may observe this as the bulldozer moves great mounds of dirt in the building of a road. Moral or spiritual power operates upon the mind. Isaiah said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Thus, argument, reason and persuasion are used, as

well as fear and love, by the gospel of our Lord. They are used to get one to apply the power of the gospel to oneself.

The gospel appeals to the intellect of man to get him to believe that Christ is the Son of God (John 20:30,31). It appeals to the will by pointing out the coming judgment to induce man to repent (Acts 17:30,31). The gospel reaches the conscience of man by revealing to him the fact that he is guilty of sin (Acts 2:37), and by making known the conditions that must be met to have such guilt removed (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21). The New Testament appeals to the emotions by telling of God's love for fallen man as it is seen in the cross of Calvary (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; I John 4:19). This awakens in man a loving response. Finally, heaven is held out to man as a reward for his obedience and life-long service to the Lord (John 14:1-4; Revelation 2:10).

POWER MUST BE APPLIED

The boiler of a locomotive may have enough steam to move ten trains, but until it is applied to the pistons, the train will not move one inch. The gospel, according to Paul, is God's power to save the believer (Romans 1:16). John said that those who believed on Christ were given the "power" (or right) to become sons of God (John 1:11,12). Thus, the believer is not saved by his faith alone. Neither is one saved at the point of faith apart from works of obedience (Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26; Romans 16:26). The power of God to save --which is in the gospel-- is applied when the believer obeys the commands of the Lord, and not before (Matthew 7:24-27; Hebrews 5:8,9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). — Rt. 2 Box 150, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

Binding The Socratic Method

Continued From Page 2

communicates Bible truths must be regarded as a matter of judgment. In fact, it may be best that we have a variety of people expressing a single message in a variety of ways. In this article we will attempt to focus our attention on a specific method that seems to have gained wide acceptance among us.

In recent years, a growing number in our society are being influenced by a philosophy of communication in which nothing is affirmed or denied absolutely. The communicator may or may not believe certain truths to be absolute, but he will not express them as such. It is said that Socrates taught in this way as he walked with his disciples. Instead of affirming truth he asked probing questions and presented possibilities. He said, "I am reputed the wisest of men because I know that I know nothing."

Benjamin Franklin (the statesman) attributed much of his success to the use of this method. In his autobiography, Franklin wrote: "I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbade myself the use of every word of expression in the language that imported a fix'd opinion, such as "certainly," "undoubtedly," etc., and I adopted, instead of them "I conceive," "I apprehend," or "I imagine" a thing to be so or so; or "it so appears to me at present." . . . I soon found the advantage of this change in my manner; the conversations I engag'd in went on more pleasantly . . ."

In recent years, Dale Carnegie has recommended this approach. Millions of people have read his books. No doubt, many who read this article have been influenced and aided by them.

The purpose of this article is not to condemn the use of the Socratic method in every instance. Diplomats and statesmen can work with greater latitude when they phrase their subjective judgments in appropriate language. Those involved in counseling often achieve results with those they are trying to help when they

present the possibility that certain applications of psychological theories may be helpful to them. In a limited sense, perhaps teachers of biblical truth are justified in presenting eternal truths as tentative truths while they are in the process of presenting additional evidence or while helping others reason through additional scriptures. Ultimately, however, one must not leave the impression that Bible truths are opinions, nor that matters of faith are matters of judgment (Revelation 22:18,19). Certainly we need to realize that we do not know everything. But lest we allow the pendulum to swing too far, let us remember that we can and ought to know many things. It is not an arrogant thing to claim to know what God has revealed. To say that we do not know to be true what God has revealed, is to be without faith (Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:6).

Some have adopted the Socratic method for teaching the Bible, to the exclusion of other teaching methods. Of course we all are aware that some will not affirm anything to be absolutely true because of a firm conviction that absolute truth does not exist! Others fail to make clear statements because they feel that such statements do not effectively communicate.

In some circles, brethren are passing judgment upon brethren for failing to use the Socratic method. Today, a gospel preacher can stand up and expound upon a given verse of scripture and attempt to explain the responsibilities it imparts to the Christian. Some would declare the attempt to be inappropriate, not because it failed to give the sense of what the Bible teaches, but because the speaker openly claimed to know what the Bible teaches. Recently a man was heard to say that a certain gospel preacher was guilty of the "sin of having a bad attitude." When asked to explain the "bad attitude" in terms of some objective, biblically-defined sin, he replied, "It's sin to claim that you *know* what the Bible teaches." This is admittedly an extreme case. Few would express it

in such clear terms. But the basic concept seems to be quite widespread.

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:21-25). — Route 1, Box 211, Burlington, West Virginia 26710.

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

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The Elder Brother

(No. 1)

It will be well to read the entire chapter of Luke 15. The story of the Prodigal Son is worthy of close scrutiny; but for our purposes we shall concentrate upon some lessons regarding the Elder Brother.

The Prodigal Son became lost when he went away from his father's house; but the Elder Brother became just as lost (if not more so) even though he stayed at home. Sinners in the world are lost, of this there can be no doubt; but one can be lost even though one is a church-member. We should examine ourselves to see just where we stand in the eyes of God.



W. A. HOLLEY

(1) The Elder Brother was guilty of the sin of cowardice, for he was afraid to go and investigate for himself. He inquired of a servant rather than being bold and courageous enough to ask for himself. Pilate was guilty of this sin. He washed his hands trying to signify that he had no responsibility with regard to Jesus' crucifixion (Matthew 27:24). Joshua was to enter a land filled with enemies of the Lord God and of his people: but he was exhorted to "Be strong and of good courage . . ." (Joshua 1:6-9). The Corinthians were urged to be strong, steadfast, unmoveable (I Corinthians 16:13-14; 15:58). Are you afraid to try to become a servant of God?

(2) The Elder Brother was consumed by his anger. The record says, "He was angry, and he would not go in" (Vs. 28). Anger is a terrible taskmaster! It is temporary insanity! Many foolish acts are committed in anger! How often have you said or done something which you deeply regret? But, alas, it is too late!! A wonderful recipe designed to control anger is given in Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" . . . "Let all

bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

(3) Another sin of the Elder Brother was stubbornness. He refused his father's entreaties out-of-hand, thus showing no respect or reverence for him at all. What is "stubbornness?" It is defined as "Unreasonably or perversely unyielding, mulish . . . performed or carried on in an unyielding, obstinate,

or persistent manner . . . leading to strife."

Samuel, the last Judge, condemned King Saul, who refused to follow the Lord's command, saying, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (I Samuel 15:22-23). (To be continued). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Evangelistic Authority

(No. 5)

VICTOR M. ESKEW

This series of articles has been devoted to the topic, Evangelistic Authority. Last week's article considered the roles of both the preacher and the elders. The Bible plainly tells us that it is the eldership of the local congregation which has the authority to oversee the flock. The preacher's duties are to preach the gospel. In the preaching position, no authority to oversee the flock can be found. Nor does the Bible state that the preacher is outside the domain of the local eldership.


In this article, we will consider the main argument which those advancing "Evangelistic Authority" make in their attempt to prove their espousals. Their "proof texts" are found in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5. Acts 14:23 states: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Titus 1:5 reads: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." The reasoning from these two passages is as follows: "Here we find preachers of the gospel 'ordaining' the elders to their position. If the preacher 'ordains' an elder, it must

follow that he has more authority than an elder."

This line of reasoning is based upon a misunderstanding or perversion of the word "ordain." Those holding to evangelistic authority feel that the meaning of "ordain" is to *select and appoint* these men to their office. The Bible, however, does not teach that "ordain" includes both the *selection* and *appointment*. In Acts 6:3, when the problem had arisen in the church at Jerusalem concerning the neglected Grecian widows, the apostles led the church to solve the problem. Their words to the multitude were: "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." Notice that the *selection* of the men was separate and apart from the *appointing* of the men. The multitude did the *selecting*; the apostles did the *appointing*. The same word translated "appoint" in Acts 6:3 is translated "ordain" in Titus 1:5. Therefore, in the style of the apostles, "ordain" means merely induct into office, and is *distinguished from the selection, which precedes it*.

When this is applied to Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5

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Evangelistic Authority

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we find that the evangelists did nothing more than induct these men into office. They may have included such things as fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands, accompanied by appropriate admonitions and exhortations. The *selection*, however, was another action, and was done by the entire congregation of God's people.

Therefore, when we read of the evangelist's ordaining an elder to his office, it involves no authority whatsoever of the evangelist over the elder. It involves only the announcement or appointment of the elder to his office. The *selection* of the elder(s) was done by all. This is the slight part the evangelist had, as revealed in God's word. To those who will let God's word be the guide, rather than human judgment, this should be sufficient.

These two passages in no way lend support to the doctrine of "Evangelistic Authority." They have merely been twisted by dishonest men, or misunderstood by honest men, with the result being to give the preacher power he should not have.

Next week we will conclude this series of lessons by answering a few minor arguments raised by proponents of this theory. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

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Evangelist Pervie Nichols Dies

BY FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Brother Pervie Nichols, who preached the gospel for forty-five years, died July 11, 1984, at the age of seventy-one, after a long bout with cancer. Born near Jasper, Alabama, October 18, 1912, to Mr. and Mrs. William Calvin Nichols, he was the ninth of twelve children, two of whom just younger than he died in infancy. His oldest brother, Gus, was the first in his family to leave denominationalism and become simply a New Testament Christian, and also first to preach the gospel of Christ. Gus encouraged his brothers also to "preach the word," and Pervie, along with three others (Charley, Carey, and Archie) did.



Pervie Nichols

About the time Pervie finished school, the great depression hit. He, being next to the youngest of the surviving children, felt keenly the responsibility to support his parents. He worked on the farm, at a stove-mill, a saw-mill, and then in the Civilian Conservation Corps ("C.C.C.") under the newly elected President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Pervie knew what hard work was, and was not afraid of it. He could give any task assigned him his very best efforts, and spread cheer while doing it.

Upon Pervie's return from the C.C.C. camp, brother T. G. "Cap" Loftis, of Fayette, Alabama, gave him a job in his cafe, telling him that his job would terminate the very day Freed-Hardeman College opened that fall. Whether Pervie washed dishes, cooked, served customers, or swept the floor or sidewalk out front, he joked with the other employees, the customers, and the owner, making friends, and putting all in his presence at ease.

As the date for registration at Freed-Hardeman approached, he explained to brother Loftis that it had taken all he made to support his parents and himself, and he had not saved up any funds to pay for his education, requesting another year of employment there. But "Cap" Loftis wanted so much for him to get at least two years in a Christian College that he offered to help raise funds to send Pervie to F-HC. Pervie's spirit of independence rebelled at this idea, and he insisted that he just could not possibly go to college that year. Brother Loftis told me years later that Pervie was one of the best workers he ever employed, yet—true to his word, he "laid off" Pervie the day freshmen registered at Freed-Hardeman College.

Unable to find other employment at Fayette, Pervie hitch-hiked to Jasper (about fifty miles) and told his plight to his oldest brother, who took him in and helped him find employment at A. & P., and later at Hill Grocery. Pervie was so likeable, and such a hard worker, that he made his own mark, earning the respect of the business community, and making a host of friends.

During his earlier years he had formed the cigarette habit; but his brother and sister-in-law told him not to smoke in their house, nor before any of their children, lest they take up his dangerous habit. He told them he would quit, and if he ever smoked

another cigarette, Matilda could whip him! She said shortly before his death that was one whipping she never got to administer!

His brother, also a firm believer in Christian education, wanted Pervie to attend Freed-Hardeman College, making him the same offer he made to his own children: "I will help pay all I can, and will 'go on your note' for the balance—but you will have to pay the debt after you get out of college." This was despite the fact that one of his own children was going that fall to FHC!!! Since Pervie was TREATED like he was one of the children, it is only natural that all in Gus Nichols' family should feel as if Pervie were a BROTHER instead of only an "uncle."

Mary Evelyn Evans, of Jasper, became Pervie's wife on June 2, 1942, and was truly an asset to him in his work for the Lord. She was supportive of him in every way possible. In 1970 the doctors found she had cancer, but she kept going for eight years before succumbing to it February 15, 1978. In her honor Pervie established the Evelyn Nichols Memorial Library at the Midway Church of Christ, Rt. 3, Jasper, Alabama. He and Evelyn have two daughters: Janice Lynn (Mrs. David) Thomas, of Jackson, Mississippi, who presented them with three grandchildren; and Miss Mary Ann Nichols, of Nashville, Tennessee.

Pervie preached in the following places: Oakdale in Mobile, and at Selma, and Sylacauga, Alabama; Central in Macon, Georgia; Greenville, Mississippi; Highland Avenue in Albany, Georgia; Jordan Street in Pensacola, Florida; Belvedere in Jackson, Mississippi, and at Clinton, Mississippi. In 1975 he came back to Jasper, Alabama, where he preached at the Midway church. While there he helped start the Poplar Springs church about fifteen miles away, and continued to preach for that new congregation until his death. Toward the end, after he was too weak to stand during the sermon, he preached from a chair—such was his love of preaching!

In his preaching Pervie made very effective use of visual aids, using chalk-boards, charts, flannel-boards, and such aids with telling effect.

Almost every place they lived, he conducted regular radio programs, and was a guest speaker on numerous other broadcasts.

He held several informal debates and converted some of his opponents, and also some denominational officials.

Pervie Nichols was a PIONEER in television preaching, having begun a TV program early in 1952 at Macon, Georgia. This is thought to be the first regular program conducted by our brethren in the state of Georgia; and it may have been the very first time in history that any gospel preacher utilized television to preach the word. (I should like to hear from any reader who knows of an earlier gospel sermon on TV.) He conducted regular TV programs in Pensacola, and Albany; and in Jackson, Mississippi, his program ran for seventeen years. He had a weekly Cablevision program in Jasper at the time of his death. So popular was he with the owners of the Jasper station that they planned and video-taped an hour-long "This-Is-Your-Life" type program about Pervie in April of this year. In addition to producing the program, they also showed it TWICE over their

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Can One Be saved In A Denominational Church

Why is denominationalism sinful before God? Jesus built but one church (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 5:23-25; Colossians 1:18); but denominational churches now number more than 1,000 . . . at least 999 more than the Lord Jesus Christ built! Men, not the Lord Jesus, built these churches -- viz., Smythe, Wesley, Luther, Calvin, *et al.* It is a sin for men to build churches in competition with the Lord's church (Psalms 127:1; Matthew 15:13-14).



W. A. HOLLEY

The Holy Bible teaches it is a sin to cause religious divisions, or to be a party to them (Romans 16:17-18; Proverbs 6:16-19). Denominationalism represents total confusion, and therefore religious division is not of God (I Corinthians 14:33). Jesus prayed for all believers to be one; thus denominationalism is not of Christ (John 17:20-23).

The apostles never authorized religious division; such causes infidelity (I Corinthians 1:10; John

17:20-23). If the Bible taught all the contradictory doctrines incorporated in denominationalism, who could believe it??

Think of all the different denominationalism names, creeds, manuals, disciplines, etc. God did not give all of them -- nor *any* of them -- for God is a God of truth! (II Timothy 3:15-17; II John 9-11; Jude 3; II Peter 1:3). Almighty God wants his servant to show the difference between truth and error (Isaiah 5:20; Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23). With God 'scrambled eggs' will not do! (Cf. II Timothy 2:15).

Each denomination has its own terms of membership. Some claim to be saved "by faith only," some claim the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, others insist on being saved at a mourners' bench. Others insist on continuous revelation, arguing that God communicates directly with them, thus making void the word of God (Mark 7:6-13).

What are the terms of New Testament church membership? The answer is simple: The sinner must hear and learn of the Father (John 6:44-45); become a believer (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:21-24); repent of all sin (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38); confess the name of Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37); and be baptized into Jesus Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). This is the Bible way!

The "branches" mentioned in John 15:1-6 are not denominations, but individual Christians. Christ is the vine, the branches are those who have heard and obeyed the truth of God (Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 1:22-23). Dear reader, do not permit the confusion of doctrines of denominationalism to blind you to the truth of God. You can become a member of that church that Jesus himself established. Do it today! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Evangelistic Pervie Nichols Dies

Continued from page 2

facilities --free!

"The Way Of Salvation," and "The Bible Way" were two papers which he began, both of which he edited and published himself. He also wrote for other religious journals, including *Words Of Truth*, *The Mississippi Christian*, *Power For Today*, *The Gospel Advocate*, *The Gospel Defender*, and *The Firm Foundation*. Titles of tracts he wrote and published include "Four Questions Concerning Baptism," "How to Find the New Testament Church," "The One Baptism," "Bible Miracles Versus Frauds," "Not Forsaking The Assembly," and possibly others. He once announced his intentions to publish a book of television charts. Pervie published the Highers-Bingham Debate, one of the finest discussions of benevolence and church cooperation. Fewer than twenty-five (25) copies have been found, and they are available for \$7.00 per copy. (Send payment, with your name and address, to Mrs. Pervie Nichols, 301 Walston Bridge Road, Jasper, Alabama 35501).

Pervie preached in many mission meetings, either at his own expense, or supported by some congregation for such evangelistic efforts. Labors of this kind took him into Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Canada, and possibly other areas. He helped establish at least ten (10) congregations, and was vitally interested in teaching and encouraging (in

every possible way) others to preach the gospel.

On February 27, 1982, Pervie married Ira Nell Ellis, who had been a close personal friend to him and Evelyn when he preached at Macon, Georgia. Nell was a great blessing to him and his work, and beside his two daughters and three grandchildren, she and her four children survive him. Other survivors include one sister, Mrs. W. T. (Zella) Windham, and one brother, Titus Nichols, both of Jasper, Alabama.

Friends may write to Nell at the address given above, or may telephone her at (205) 221-9423. Nell's own personal concern for the spread of the gospel is indicated by her plans to give Pervie's large library to Alabama Christian School of Religion. She also has agreed for a Memorial Scholarship Fund to be started in his honor at the Memphis School of Preaching to help train deserving men to preach the gospel of Christ. Readers are invited to send contributions in his memory to the:

Pervie Nichols Memorial Scholarship
Memphis School Of Preaching
4400 Knight Arnold Road
Memphis, Tennessee 38118.

We believe Pervie Nichols is among the sainted dead, and that he now rests from his labors, and his works do follow him (Revelation 14:13).

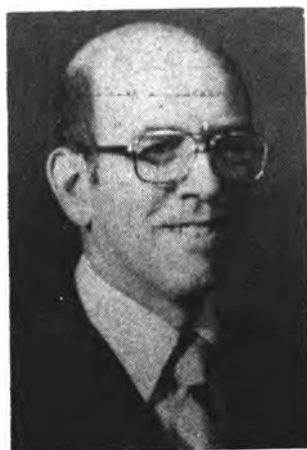
Why Attend All Services?

That every congregation has attendance problems can be seen by comparing evening service attendance with Sunday morning. At some congregations Sunday evening attendance will be less than half that of the morning. Then by Wednesday evening the number is sometimes halved again. Before we breathe a sigh of relief, saying that our congregation does much better than that, we need to consider the Lord's will regarding attendance. The Lord expects us to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:23-25). He expects us to be present at all services that we are physically able to attend! We need to compare our attendance with the Lord's standard; not compare our attendance with others who are falling short of the Lord's will! Those who are "comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (II Corinthians 10:12).

That it is the Lord's will for us to attend all services should be sufficient reason for us to always be present when the church meets. After all, the Lord knows what is best for his people! He does not give commands without good reason. Although we may not know all the reasons God wants us to faithfully assemble with his people, we shall stress some of them:

1. Man has a basic need to worship his Maker. The first thing recorded about man after his expulsion from Eden and the increase of his family, concerned worship to God (Genesis 4:3ff). As soon as Noah left

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JOE E. GALLOWAY

Caleb, The Mountain Claimer

The history of human progress is the record of courageous men and women who were willing to stand alone in the hour of trial and testing. Such a man was Caleb the co-worker of Joshua.

When Israel had taken Canaan and the land was being distributed, Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizite said to Joshua: "Lo I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me. Now therefore give me this (mountain KJV), whereof Jehovah spake in that day . . . it may be that Jehovah



JOHN WADDEY

will be with me, and I shall drive them (the Anakim, i.e., giants) out, as Jehovah spake" (Joshua 14:10-12).

About the Man

Caleb was a Hebrew of the tribe of Judah. His father was Jephunneh the Kenizite (Joshua 14:6). Caleb was a prince of his tribe. Moses selected him to be one of the twelve spies to search out Canaan (Numbers 13:1-2,6). Only Caleb and Joshua were convinced that God would give Israel victory.

Of the men of war when they left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb survived the forty years of wilderness wandering. To enter the promised land was his reward for faithfulness (Numbers 14:28-30). All through the long and difficult years, Caleb never forgot what he had seen in Canaan.

Although he was 85 years old, Caleb was privileged to lead his brethren in the conquest of the land. He

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Why Attend All Services?

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the ark he built an altar unto Jehovah and worshiped (Genesis 8:20). Wherever Abraham traveled, he built altars to worship (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:18; 22:9). A large part of the law of Moses dealt with worship. In every instance of those in the Bible who served God faithfully, worship was involved. Even the heavenly inhabitants (both those of every earthly nation and those angelic in nature) are described as engaging to worship to God (e.g., Revelation 7:9-12). We have a basic need to assemble with the church to jointly worship God.

2. We should attend all services to learn more of God's word. The Bible study sessions on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, the two sermons on Sunday, and even the children's Bible drill session can help us all know more of God's word week after week. Sometimes we hear some say, "I can stay at home and get more out of my own study." Very seldom, though, does one who absents himself from a service spend this time in private study at home! We all should have regular, private periods of Bible study; but we still need to have regular periods of joint study, too. We will learn some things from others that we would never learn by ourselves.

3. We need to attend all services of our congregation in order to feel ourselves a part of the church. Those who attend regularly have the "we" feeling; those who attend only spasmodically usually have the "they" attitude. For example, do you speak of what "we" are doing, or of what "they" are doing in the congregation? Some members always speak of the congregation as "they" because they do not really feel a part of the group. Not attending regularly causes this; and irregular attendance often goes hand-in-hand with complaining, criticizing, and general disinterest in the work and affairs of the local church.

4. We need to attend all services to receive the fellowship of the saints. Christians need one another. We are to "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). We are to "bear ye one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). This includes warning the unruly, comforting those discouraged, and supporting the weak (II Thessalonians 5:14). Therefore we need to be with our fellow-Christians much. Although association with them apart from the assembly is good, when congregations are large we must see them regularly in the assembly to really have fellowship with all members. Besides, there is a strengthening effect that comes from all worshipping together that cannot be had by personal association alone. These assemblies help unite us in heart and action. An example of a benefit we receive from the assembly that we do not get in personal association is the "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Colossians 3:16) that the assembly provides. The early church met daily, besides eating together from house to house (Acts 2:46).

5. Each needs to attend every service to be a good example to others. This will show our friends and neighbors that each of us is convinced there is something worthwhile in our faith. It will help us bring our children up, putting the Lord and his church first in their lives. It will encourage those weaker in Christ to see the need of attending more regularly. Try to imagine the effect on all three of these groups if 100 percent of all local members faithfully attended all services of the church!

6. Attending all services is essential to having a proper attitude toward the Lord and his work. We are to love God first, above all else (Matthew 22:37-38). So, we are to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). We belong to Christ, having been purchased with his blood (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). We are to present ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1).

We are to constantly ask, "What more can I do?" rather than, "How little can I get by with?" (Matthew 5:47). All these principles necessitate our attending every service we are physically able to attend.

Sometime we are asked, "How can I determine if I should stay at home?" We suggest in response that we should have decided when we obeyed the gospel to be present in the assembly every time such is possible. If we did not so decide then, why not make that decision now? Then we won't have to decide,

before each service, whether or not to attend—such will already be decided! If sickness or some other compelling emergency arises we might ask ourselves, "Would this same situation keep me from going to work? or, to school? would it keep me from taking part in my favorite entertainment?" If not, is the Lord more important to us than our work, school, or entertainment?

"Think on these things" (Philippians 4:8)! — 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, Tennessee 38401.

Caleb, The Mountain Claimer

Continued from page 3

was yet strong and capable, faithful and fearless. When the time to claim a portion of the land came, he challenged the stronghold of the worst of the enemy and took it for his own.

His Character

Moses tells us that "he had another (i.e. a different) spirit" than the majority of his peers (Numbers 14:23). When Israel was at Kadesh, Caleb had great faith that God would give his people victory as promised. Others trembled with fear and unbelief. It was not the giants that kept them from invading Canaan at the first; it was their lack of faith in God. Caleb was courageous and eager to gain the victory. Others did not want to run the risk. They wanted victory, but without a struggle. While others wavered, Caleb was faithful unto death, always dependable.

Caleb "wholly followed the Lord" (Joshua 14:9). He refused to run with the majority. He took a stand for what he believed in, even though it might be intensely unpopular. We need to be reminded that public opinion is sometimes public enemy number one! This great man remembered what God had previously done and staked his future on it. The crowd threatened to stone him, but he refused to compromise (Numbers 14:10). With all his heart, soul, mind and strength he followed the Lord. The godliness of his life made for his manliness in conduct. Caleb is a grand example for young men of today. His life was fully spent for Jehovah's cause.

Caleb dared to undertake a difficult challenge. He not only fought to secure the land for the others, he claimed the most dangerous and difficult region as his personal battle. He would drive out the feared Anakim, the fierce, giants of Hebron, that had so terrorized the others forty-five years earlier. He could have reasoned that he was too old; or, that he had already done his share of fighting. By rights he could have demanded an easier inheritance or one already secured (compare Numbers 13:21-22 and Joshua 14:12-14). It is a mark of greatness to attempt the difficult. People cheat themselves by always choosing the easy roads. Student's seek out the easy teachers; adults want easy jobs; Christians want an easy road to heaven. May God give us character like Caleb to dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe — and win! Remember that it is the straitened and narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

Caleb's Rich Reward

At Kadesh his contemporaries wanted to stone Caleb. They perished in the wilderness, but he entered the land of promise. The children of his critics honored him as an illustrious hero of the nation.

Caleb had the blessing of a good conscience. He knew he had done the right thing. He was true to himself. That alone is worth more than silver and gold.

God honored this brave man, calling him "my servant Caleb" (Numbers 14:24). His name was thus engraved in God's Hall of Fame.

Those forty long years in the wilderness, Caleb was

waiting to receive a home in the promised land, while the others could only expect a lonely grave in a strange land.

Caleb experienced the joy of helping his brothers possess the good land they had long dreamed of. There is a satisfaction in having part in success and victory, in realizing dreams and goals long sought for.

The old patriarch claimed his mountain. He drove out the sons of Anak, took Hebron their royal city, and lived the rest of his days in rest and peace. "The land had rest from war" (Joshua 14:15).

Conclusion

The words of Philip Brooks appropriately sum up this lesson:

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be strong men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for power equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you will wonder at yourself, at the richness of life that has come to you by the grace of God."

With Caleb, claim your mountain. With God by your side you will surely do it. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Fifth Annual
Gus Nichols
Words Of Truth
Lectureship
Sept. 30 Thru
Oct. 4, 1984
Sixth Avenue
Church Of Christ

(Next Week We Will Announce The Speakers).



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

Friday, August 3, 1984

NUMBER 31

Who Is My Enemy?

A lawyer once asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). It would be appropriate today to ask, "And who is my enemy?" I say this because many brethren evidence confusion about who it is they are to make war upon. The tragedy of this is self-evident. It was a confederate soldier who shot General Stonewall Jackson and fatally pierced the heart of the Confederacy. There have been terrible mistakes in combat where pilots straffed their own comrades. In Vietnam, frustrated, angry soldiers killed their own officers. The liberal news media and politicians and many young people blamed the American government for Communist invasion of South Vietnam. By their misguided efforts, millions of Asians were condemned to a life of Communist oppression.



JOHN WADDEY

In our brotherhood, vast amounts of energy, print and sermon time are devoted to attacking fellow-Christians. Not all of those targeted for rebuke are guilty of grave moral offenses or of clear-cut doctrinal error. More often, their offense is a new or different methodology, a judgment-call different from the traditional, or a failure to be as vehemently opposed to some man or issue as the inquisitor himself is. We see papers dedicated to an endless parade of victims to be stoned for non-conformity; lectureships devoted to thrashing the brotherhood, preachers who are totally committed to crusading against some brotherhood project, practice, methodology or personality. There are preachers who repeatedly flail the ears of their congregation with harsh accusations, dire warnings, hostile attacks and ugly innuendos about fellow-Christians in other places.

The effects of such negative, hyper-critical preaching and writing is devastating to the faith and zeal of the average brother.

Some young converts and weak brethren will turn away from the church in disgust when subjected to such abusive teaching. They reason that if the church is filled with such evil things and brethren, they want

no part of it. Others who became Christians in search of peace and loving fellowship in a world of strife, hatred and conflict, will leave with heavy hearts to continue their search elsewhere. Their quest for peace is not a faulty one. Jesus did offer such (Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:7-9).

Some brethren who are inundated with this "whipping-post" preaching become suspicious and doubtful of every other brother and congregation's soundness. Falsely believing that they are the only "faithful brethren" left, they become proud, exclusive separatists like the Pharisees. Jude condemned disciples of his day "who make separations" as "sensual, not having the Spirit" (verse 19). I occasionally hear from a poor, deluded brother who fancies himself the only faithful preacher left in the world. The Lord's rebuke to Elijah is appropriate for such narrow thinkers. When the prophet thought "I, even I only, am left" the Lord reminded him there were yet "seven thousand knees which have not bowed to Baal . . ." (I Kings 19:14, 18). God yet has seven thousand faithful ones.

Another reaction to a constant diet of carping, critical preaching is for a congregation to totally "turn off" their ears to the negative speaker. Everyone familiar with God's book knows that there is more to Christ's religion than griping. They deal with their misery by ignoring the source of the irritation. Even when the negative preacher has some genuine, needed warning, his people pay no attention to it. That is why we sometimes see a congregation swing from an ultra conservative stance to a very liberal or worldly posture. They had been accosted so often with the dire warning that they grew insensitive and a real threat overcame them.

There are times when a weary congregation will grow so disgusted with the din and clamor of the professional critic that they demand his resignation. After two or three such forced resignations, it is common for the brotherhood critic to give up preaching. --With a final blast, he alleges that "no one loves the truth anymore" or "there are no sound churches left." In reality, he has only himself to blame for his predicament.

Long years of observation have shown that each generation produces its brotherhood "muckrackers," "crepe hangers," "prophets of doom" and "axwielders." Such men rarely build great churches or accomplish any notable works for God. Seldom do they pioneer the gospel in new and difficult fields.

Rarely do they win many to Christ. Not often do they stay in the Lord's work for a lifetime, for they eventually burn all their bridges and turn on every friend.

It is also observed that after the brotherhood "saviors" have blown through as a spent whirlwind, those brethren they bitterly assailed are usually found patiently doing God's work; saving souls, building congregations, preparing men for eternity.

Let it be said that there is a time to *mark* a factious man (Titus 3:10); to *rebuke* a flagrant sinner (I Timothy 5:20); and to *withdraw* from a persistent sinner (I Corinthians 5:1-5). There is also a time to exhort, to edify and console (I Corinthians 14:3). It is a mark of wisdom to know when to do the needed thing.


In raising children, we have seen the results of children constantly subjected to criticism, cynicism and negativism. It is an evil kind of verbal child abuse that will adversely affect the child for a lifetime. So will that kind of preaching affect a group of God's people. Preachers, "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves . . ." lest ye be reprobate (II Corinthians 13:5).

Christians must not be blind to those who would recruit them to their personal cause or issue. Some still preach Christ of envy and strife, seeking to raise up affliction for fellow preachers, schools or good works (Philippians 1:15-17). Sadly, many folks sincerely lend aid and comfort to some brother with an ax to grind, only to discover later that it was some less noble, personal issue which was the true root of contention.

Paul's admonition can serve us all well: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely . . . of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things . . . and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:8-9). "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:15). The devil and his angels are our great enemies; with few exceptions, it is not any brother in Christ. Let us "love the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17) and let us resist the devil (James 4:7). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

**NICHOLS - WORDS OF TRUTH
LECTURESHIP**

Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1984 - Jasper, Al.



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(USPS 691-760)

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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Fifth Annual Lectureship Begins September 30

The GUS NICHOLS-WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP will be held at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, September 30-October 4, 1984. Named in honor of this journal and its founder, who for several years conducted a week-long course for preachers each fall on the Gulf coast, this lectureship was revived after his death and moved to Sixth Avenue. This fall will be the fifth session under its present name.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Some More Bible Questions" will be the theme for this year. As in former years at the request of Sixth Avenue's eldership, a member of the Gus Nichols family will be the opening speaker September 30. Nick Hamilton will discuss, "Is The Young Man Safe?" His real name is Gus Nichols Hamilton, and he is the only grandson named for his grandfather. Nick preaches at Pleasant Valley church in Little Rock, where he also conducts a weekly television program.

Monday night's speaker will be Bobby Duncan, of the Adamsville, Alabama, church. He was minister at Sixth Avenue from 1976-1983, and was Editor of this weekly journal, as well as director of the first four lectureships in this series. His subject will be: "Who Is on the Lord's Side?"

David Sain, of the Wood Avenue church in Florence, will speak Tuesday night on: "What Mean Ye By This Service?" Wednesday night John Harris, of Huntsville, will discuss: "Who Told Thee?" The closing night's question will be: "Whither Goest Thou?" and the speaker will be Hugo McCord.

Each morning Jerri Barber, of Dalton, Georgia, will deal with various aspects of the question, "Lord, What Will Thou Have Me To Do?" Also each morning Franklin Camp will examine the inquiry, "Who Is the Lord, That I Should Obey Him?"

At 1:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday the following will deliver keynote addresses. James Mays, Jackson, Alabama, will speak Monday on "If It Be So, Why Am I Thus?" Tuesday "What Is Thy Name?" will be the subject for Joe Williams, Northport, Alabama. Wednesday's question is "What Lack I Yet?" by James Wyers, Winfield, Alabama. And Jere Via, of Douglasville, Georgia, will speak Thursday on "Was It Not In Thine Own Power?"

Daily afternoon sessions will be conducted by J. Noel Meredith, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, on "Questions From Galatians." Winfred Clark, of West Hobbs Street church, Athens, Alabama, will speak daily on "From Heaven? Or Of Men?"

Out of town people who wish to attend are invited to be houseguests of Christians in this area. Reservations will be made on a first-come first-served basis. Write to Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501. Public accommodations are available at area motels for those who prefer.

"I Can't Make It Without It"

There are words that are used so often in one particular way it seems strange to hear them used in another context. This happened recently when I was talking to a fellow-Christian and he said, "I just can't make it without it."

You hear those words used by those addicted to drugs, including alcohol. The decadence of our permissive society is probably best exemplified by the widespread use and acceptance of narcotics. It is not just the admitted alcoholic who "just can't make it without it;" it is that person who daily must have the business martini, or evening cocktail, or the person who stops on the way home to get a six-pack. It is not just the heroin addict that craves drugs. It is often the individual who is into "social drugs."

There is also that individual who is filled with rage who seemingly can't get through a day without an outward display of his wrath. Think of the sins associated with such intemperance: evil speech, hate, malice, strife, wife-beatings and child abuse. Far too many are enslaved by sin.

Christianity is designed to free us from the bondage of sin. It is designed to make it possible for us to "get through the day without it." We have been freed from sin to become servants of righteousness (Romans 6:22).

Oh, by the way, the Christian I was talking to was not discussing any of the above sins. It was strange, but so refreshing, to hear him use these words in reference to -- prayer! Brethren, to what are you addicted? — 1111 36th St., North Palm Beach, FL 33408.



DAN JENKINS

Evangelistic Authority

(No. 6)

VICTOR M. ESKEW

This article will conclude our study concerning evangelistic authority. Our previous writings have been concerned with man's desire for power, the definition of evangelistic authority, causes for the crusade, and refutations of the teaching from the Holy Scriptures. This article will seek to set aside some of the quibbles which come forth by the promoters of this false teaching.

One cavil which is raised puts the preacher's knowledge against the knowledge of the elders and reasons toward evangelistic authority. This argument is often in question form: "But doesn't the preacher have more Biblical knowledge than the elders?" These inquirers feel that because the preacher usually has greater Biblical knowledge than do the elders, he should also have as much or more authority over the flock. The objection is very easily met. First and foremost, the Bible does not teach that authority is to be determined by one's command of the Scriptures. God has plainly stated that the bishops are the overseers of the flock (Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:5; I Peter 5:2). Nowhere does the Bible teach that preachers have this responsibility. Therefore, we

either do it as the Bible teaches, or we reject what God has decreed and follow the dictates of men.

Another reason we should reject the above reasoning is found in common sense. Not all preachers are more knowledgeable than the elders. According to the promoters of evangelistic authority, this man would be in subjection to the presbytery. But if and when the preacher became more knowledgeable than the elders (who will determine this, we know not), then the preacher ceases to be in subjection and rises to the seat of authority. Such reasoning is nonsense, and cannot be upheld by the apostle's doctrine.

Another argument which must be met is based upon the preacher-eldership relations. The idea is that because the preacher and elders are very closely knit in regard to the work of the church, and because the elders many times seek the advice of the preacher, then, he must at least have some authority as the elders have. This argument is based upon purely human reasoning and not upon the Word of God. It is true that the preacher and elders work hand

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A Nude "Miss America!"

ROGER JACKSON

There is hardly a person in our nation, if not around the world, who does not know by now that last year's miss America had to resign because she posed nude for a popular magazine. The only amazing thing about it is that anyone had to take any appreciable time to determine if she *should* resign! She supposedly represents "wholesomeness" in America. That shows just how far our nation has come from its senses. It is not surprising, or should not be, that one who would not blush to wear a skimpy bathing suit before multiplied millions would not hesitate to take even that off before the eye of a camera. People who do not respect what the Bible says about modest dress (I Timothy 2:9,10), need not gasp in unbelief when women walk through the same door nude.

I find it ironic, and yet quite characteristic of the world, that the reaction to the incident that saw the light of printed day was all on the same side. Those who agreed with her resignation, and who could give good Bible reasons as well as logical argumentation, were not heard from at all. The popular side got the publicity. One need not dispense with his sanity to justify such atrocities: just dispense with the Bible!

According to one newspaper of national repute, a sectarian preacher said she should not be blamed because he had not yet decided that posing in the nude is a sin! I suppose God should wait for his decision! That just tells us how far sectarianism has come in its brief history. If one doubts that nudity in public is a sin he should read Revelation 3:18. God says public nakedness is a sin. Jesus said it promotes lust in the heart (Matthew 5:28). In Isaiah 5:20 the Inspired Record says there were men in the prophet's day who called evil good, and good evil. If our case under consideration is not exactly parallel to that, nothing ever was. It is hard to think how men who can call themselves teachers (James 3:1) and love to be addressed as if they were experts in Bible doctrine (Matthew 23:7), but who evidently do not know enough about the Bible to tell whether Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife, or brother and sister! This is characteristic of those men of whom a friend of mine spoke some months back. He was a sectarian preacher who had taught in a seminary for some four years and then given it up. He said he went through that school without learning the first thing about the Bible and had taught four years without opening it once. There are people in the sectarian world who are starving for the Bible. They want it, but will never get it where they are.

It might not be a fair estimate, but I wonder if the situation would have been a lot different had the woman been a member of one of the congregations of the churches of Christ? There surely are many good men and congregations where she could not have been in fellowship from the first day that she paraded around in the swim-suit publicly, but multitudes of places where NOTHING at all would have been done about it (II Thessalonians 3:6). There is a doctrinal looseness among us today that tolerates nearly everything that comes along that is false or immoral. Brother Gus Nichols used to say, "We need men who have a backbone as big as a saw-log!" Instead of disciplining wayward brethren and sisters old excuses are used to avoid it. "We don't want to cause any confusion." Why would doing what *God says* cause confusion when it is done right, with love and concern (II Thessalonians 3:14,15)? The devil causes confusion when he gets untaught brethren, or rebellious brethren, to oppose right. We cannot make ourselves believe that there is no problem in the congregation just because peace seems to reign on the surface. If "Miss America" had been a member of the congregation where you serve as an elder, what would you have done (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17)?

One of the most sacred trusts that a human being can ever have is the soul of a child (Ephesians 6:1-4). What kind of parent would have the nerve to justify a

child in such gross immorality as this young lady's mother did? Her friends rallied to her support and cheered her lewdness. The more outrageous the immoral behavior, the louder the cheers of the world. That was the way it was at the crucifixion of the Lord (Luke 23). "The rage of the heathen," is what David called it (Psalm 2:1). That is one of the reasons why I never could stand to see such programs as "The Jeffersons," because the uglier and more outrageously profane the actors became, the more "Oo's and Ah's" they got; and that prompted the producers to add even more profanity. The world has gone stark-raving mad over dirt and filth. It makes you want to scream about it. We live in a time when

little voiciferous groups of perverts can make enough noise to get their viewpoints into a national political party platform even when God calls their perversion an abomination (i.e., a thing that makes him sick: Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26,27).

It is hard to live in a world that has lost its ability to blush. I know that somewhere there must be God's seven thousand (I Kings 19:18). That is what keeps me going; and it ought to keep you going, too. Don't give up. God never overlooks one righteous soul (Genesis 6:1-6). If the matter shocks you, you ought to be glad. Its when it *doesn't*, that one should be concerned. — 940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 35203.

Proper Leadership For God's People

Proper leadership is essential in all worthy endeavors: for example, government, schools, church, and family. There are no "born" leaders. To become a leader one must be trained in the art of leading others toward a common goal. One is not an acceptable leader just because one has the longest tenure, or is a volunteer, or the wealthiest, or the most personable, or the most liberal, or the best educated.



W. A. HOLLEY

There are certain qualifications that must obtain, before men can be scripturally appointed to the high office of the eldership. We suggest that I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; I Peter 5:1-4, be read.

Since "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," we can learn some wonderful lessons from the Old Testament (Romans 15:4). Jethro, Moses' father-in-law taught Moses to delegate authority (Exodus 18:13-26). Today's church leaders must learn to do the same. What suggestion did Jethro make for Moses' consideration? To accomplish his work Moses was to select:

(1) *Able* men. The word "able" means that a man must possess enough power, ability and skill to get the assigned job or task done. "Apt to teach," comes from a Greek word (*didaktikos*) which means: "skilled in teaching." (W. E. Vine: *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). "If a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God" (I Timothy 3:5)? It is imperative for elders of God's flock be able to feed the sheep (Acts 20:28). Otherwise the lambs will never grow to be sheep, for they will die of starvation (Hebrews 5:11-14). The Holy Scriptures teach, ". . . 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).

(2) Those who are in positions of leadership must be men who fear God. Verily, where there is no fear or respect or reverence for the authority of God, failure, worldliness, and spiritual destruction are sure products (Cf. Romans 2:10-25). There is a reverential fear which exercises control over one's motives, in all moral and spiritual activities, because the sincere servant of God does not wish to displease him. One who does not fear God is not much concerned about his walk, talk, and work (Philippians 2:12; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

(3) Those who lead God's people must be men of

truth. To elders, truth must be all-important. Where guidance, instruction, and correction are concerned, nothing matters but truth (II Timothy 3:15-17). Jesus wants all to know the truth, because only truth can make men free (John 8:30-32). Truth is so valuable it must never be sold (Proverbs 23:23).

There are ever so many different "plants" in the world; but, if one should become responsible for "plants" which the Lord has not planted (Matthew 15:13), how great his loss! Elders must not be responsible for planting and cultivating spiritual gourds!

(4) Those who serve as leaders of God's people must not be covetous men. One who is "marked by inordinate desire for wealth or possessions, or for another's possessions," is a covetous man. The sin of covetousness is condemned throughout the Holy Bible (Exodus 20:17; I Timothy 3:3; Romans 1:29; Ephesians 5:3; II Peter 2:16). It is certain that if the elders are covetous men, the church will soon recognize this failing, and it will cease to sacrifice for the greatest work of earth.

(5) Scriptural leaders of the Lord's church must be willing and able to delegate authority. Moses was a wise man; he was ready to listen to Jethro: and he "Chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens . . ." (Exodus 18:25-26). The foregoing statement is quoted to show how Moses was willing to delegate authority to others, rather than trying to do every thing himself!

No one elder, nor all the elders combined, can do all that needs to be done in the Lord's church. If they could, it would be wrong and sinful. Why? Because all the talents of all members of the church need to be put to the fullest use. Each member of the church is held responsible for the use of his/her talents. But the elders, try as they might, cannot scripturally do what others are required to do (Matthew 25:14-30). But elders, when you have given authority to others to accomplish a certain work, don't "peek" over the shoulders of your workers. Give them time; and see that they get the job done.

(6) Proper leadership of the Lord's people means that the elders must make themselves available. Elders are "overseers" (Acts 20:28). But how can they "oversee the flock" if they are not on the job? The eldership is not a mere executive office. Where needed, personal supervision is a must! Elders should permit the lambs and sheep to approach them, not stand back in the shadows, but should be ready and willing to help a brother/sister finish the task assigned.

No elder should choose to be absent from any assembly --much less for six or eight weeks. If one did, when he finally came to services, he should not step to the front, and take charge of everything, as if he had not missed a single service. Because of such

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Evangelistic Authority

Continued from page 2

in hand. Paul was close to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:17ff). The apostle was also close to the elders of Philippi for he mentions them in the salutation of the Philippian epistle (Philippians 1:1). Within these close relationships, elderships may seek the advice of the preacher. But this in no way tends toward evangelistic authority. The elders and deacons are also closely bound. Should we reason that deacons

have authority over the flock because their advice is sought by the eldership? Should we say that the treasurer has authority, if the elders ask him concerning financial matters? Could we teach legalistic authority if an evangelist (or, the elders) sought the counsel of a lawyer? The answer to these questions is obvious: NO! An eldership may seek the advice of many persons, including the preacher,

on many subjects. The final decision will rest upon those men who have been charged with the oversight.

The Bible is clear when authority is mentioned. The elders rule (Hebrews 13:7), and the preachers preach (II Timothy 4:2). Those who advocate a different doctrine are doing so in opposition to plain Bible teaching. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Proper Leadership For God's People

Continued From Page 3

conduct, the congregation's confidence in his ability to lead them would be destroyed. Elders, like a certain airline, have to earn their *wings* every day!

What does God want in worthy church leadership?

We shall first put the answer in the negative: God does not want a figure-head leader, nor a dictatorial leader, nor a "wishy-washy" leader, nor a "name-only" leader, nor a "drafted" leader. But positively

God does want leaders . . . elders . . . who are sold on getting the work of the Lord done, and who will try to get it done in the right way. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Sanctification Or Holiness

What is *sanctification*? "To set apart to a sacred purpose or to a religious use: consecrate" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 8th edition*). Thayer says, "Set apart for God." Bagster says, "Separate from common condition and use." The Lord ordered Moses to "sanctify" and "set apart" the firstborn (Exodus 13:2,12). The seventh day was "sanctified" (Genesis 2:3). Jesus was "sanctified" even though no sin was ever attached to him (John 10:36).



W. A. HOLLEY

What is *holiness*? It signifies one's separation to God and one's conduct befitting the one so separated. Actually, "holiness" translated in the King James Version (Romans 6:19,22; I Thessalonians 4:7; I Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14) is always translated "sanctification" in the American Standard Version. Thus, holiness or sanctification is that state into which true believers are called through God's word, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it. Hence, it is a mistake to argue that "holiness" is one thing, and that "sanctification" is another.

At this point it will help clarify our discussion, if we can come to understand what "sanctification or holiness" is not. The false doctrine of the "second definite work of grace" states that the sinner is saved at an altar of prayer (the first blessing); but he must return to the altar for God to pardon his "inbred sin" or "Adamic sin" or "original sin" (the second blessing). This contention is false, since no person is born a sinner! There is no such thing as "hereditary total depravity" taught in God's holy Word!! Question: What happens when one is regenerated or saved at the mourners' bench, but dies before he (supposedly) is "sanctified" by the Holy Spirit?? Would he be half in heaven and half in hell?? Answer, please!!

Sanctification can not be the removal of "Adamic sin" by Holy Spirit baptism. While one may suffer the *consequences* of Adam's sin, he cannot suffer the *guilt* of Adam's sin; for he has not committed the same sin Adam committed. The guilt of sin cannot be inherited (Ezekiel 18:20; I John 3:4). Again, Adam was not made totally depraved; but he sinned, nevertheless (Genesis 3:1ff). If Adam were depraved,

where did his depravity come from? He "was the son of God" (Luke 3:38)! If Holy Spirit baptism removes the "carnal nature," how can we account for Peter's sin? (Acts 2:1-4 with Galatians 2:11ff). Paul's flesh had to be controlled by Paul, even though he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 9:27). Sinless perfection is nowhere taught in the Bible for mortal men; rather, the Christian life is a "fight" for all (I Timothy 6:12). *Repentance* corrects any mistakes a Christian might make (II Peter 3:9; I John 1:6-10).

All children of God are sanctified and holy so long as they remain faithful to Christ. This conclusion is shown to be true in I Peter 2:2,5,9-10. The Israelites were holy, but not sinlessly perfect (Deuteronomy 14:1-2; I Corinthians 10:1-13). Sinners are sanctified by the blood of Christ, when they are baptized into him (Hebrews 10:14; Ephesians 5:26), not by Holy Ghost baptism. Hence, when one has his sins washed away through obedience to God's will (Revelation 7:14; Acts 22:16), there are no sins left to be removed by Holy Ghost baptism. Let it be noted that one is made white at conversion (Revelation 7:14; Acts 2:38; 3:19); hence, one does not need Holy Spirit baptism ---no Holy Spirit baptism is promised to believers today! All miraculous works of the New Testament have served their purpose and have ceased (Mark 16:19-20; Hebrews 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:8-13).

We should learn that all who believe in Christ, repent of their sins, confess the name of Jesus before men, and are baptized into Christ, are sanctified then ---not before; not after. Note, "the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8); but later Paul addressed them as "saints" (I Corinthians 1:1-2; cf. 6:11). Thus the Corinthian brethren were "sanctified;" but they had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A passage often misused by those who contend for a "second definite work of grace" is: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly . . ." But notice the word is W-H-O-L-L-Y, not "holy." What does the word "wholly" mean? It means completely, entirely. Our entire being, in all of its three-fold nature---body, soul, and spirit--- should be fit to be preserved, in truth and righteousness (II Corinthians 7:1; see James 1:4).

Sanctification is a progressive work. To remain sanctified, one must keep working at it. The Corinthians were sanctified (I Corinthians 1:1-2; 6:11), but they were not perfect! (II Corinthians 7:1). The Hebrew writer addressed his readers as "holy brethren" (Hebrews 3:1); but they were far from perfection (Hebrews 6:1, 11-12; 12:14). Those who are "born again" are holy (I Peter 1:22-23; 2:2,9); but they must continue to grow (II Peter 3:18). Holiness consists of abstaining from evil (I Thessalonians

4:3-8). But one can cease to be sanctified (Hebrews 10:24-29).

Sanctification or holiness is a way of life for the child of God. "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14, ASV). We are sanctified through the truth, when we believe and obey it (John 17:17; I Peter 1:22-23). The sanctified will receive an eternal inheritance (Acts 20:32).

Dear reader: If Adamic nature must be cleansed (which I do not grant), it would have to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, for the blood of Christ "cleanseth from all sin" (I John 1:7). The Holy Spirit is not blood ---He never shed any blood; and we are not cleansed from any sin by baptism of the Holy Spirit! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Preacher, Try To Please The Lord

(Author Unknown)

When I preach, there are some who say
They could listen to me preach all day.
Others think I preach too long;
And some think I go about it wrong.
Some say my sermon is much too deep;
To others, it's shallow, and they go to sleep.
Some report that I hold them spell-bound,
While others squirm, and look around.
Some speak of me as an 'orator,'
But others feel I'm a perfect 'bore!'
Some believe I have no light;
And others think I preach just right.
Some affirm that I'm too bold;
Others wink, and say I'm cold.
Some used to say I was much too young;
Now others declare my spring has sprung!
Some folks tell I have met "success;"
Others think my work is a "mess."
Some have said my pay is too low
When they discovered the pace I go;
Still others say it is above the peak:
"Why, he only works three hours a week!"
From all of this, 'tis plain to see
That as a preacher, I'm up a tree.
Condemned if I do, condemned if I don't!
Criticized if I will, criticized if I won't!
I can't please men of such discord:
So, I'll just keep trying to please my Lord!



Words Of Ti

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

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Let The Words Of Jesus Sink In

"And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not the saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying" (Luke 9:43-45).



W. A. HOLLEY

"Let these words sink into your ears" is the American Standard Version. Jesus knows how difficult it is for some to hear his words (Matthew 13:13-16). Some have eyes to see, but they see not; some have ears to hear, but they hear not; some have hearts to understand, but they understand not. We should hear God's word with profound reverence and respect, knowing that his divine message is communicated to us in this manner, only. Jesus wants us to know the truth, but many refuse to learn.

Eternal destinies of life and death are couched within the sacred deposit of divine truth. Verily, the word of God is a "savour of death unto death . . ." or of "life unto life" (II Corinthians 2:14-17; John 12:48). The truth of God either saves or condemns, depending upon one's attitude toward it.

We shall notice a few examples where we should permit the word of God to *sink in*:

(1) If we want to *live in peace and harmony* with one another, we should let his word *sink in*. How things would change for the better, if we would but put the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) into operation.

Correct all stumbling-blocks which may stand in the way of acceptable worship (Matthew 5:23-24). An almighty and holy God cannot tolerate worshippers who refuse to settle their differences before they attempt to come into his presence. "Reconciliation takes precedence over all other duties, even of offerings made to God. A very important teach-

ing in these days, when men, by corrupt practices, by extortionate combinations, and by grinding the face of the poor, accumulate millions of dollars and then attempt to placate God by bestowing a little of their pocket change" on some worthy cause. The prayers of unreconciled brethren are all in vain.

Matthew 18:15-17 is a perfect recipe for settling difference between unreconciled brethren. Jesus teaches us how to act when offense is received. The fault is to be pointed out to the offender, for the purpose of gaining him . . . not from a desire of humiliating him. The offended is to seek the offender, and the offender is likewise to seek the offended (Matthew 5:23-24); neither is to wait for the other. The problem may not be solved as yet; in which instance, two or three witnesses are to be called in that they may aid in the solution of the problem. But if these efforts fail, the next step is to tell it to the church; and if the difficulty still remains unresolved, "And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentiles and the publicans" (A.S.V.). Other Scriptures which need to be read are I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Corinthians 2:5-11; 10-13, II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15.

(2) Let what Jesus said about *the church* sink in. The church and the kingdom are the same institution. When one is in the church he is in the kingdom. One cannot be in the church and out of the kingdom. Jesus is the builder of his church (Matthew 16:18-19). His church or kingdom is in existence now (Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). There is no millennial kingdom taught in the Bible. The church or kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after Christ's glorious resurrection, and it will continue till he comes again (I Corinthians 15:20-28). The second coming of Christ will *be the end*, not the beginning -- as pre-millennialism alleges. Our suggestion: Let these words of truth sink in!!

(3) Let the words of Jesus regarding *worship* sink in. According to John 4:23-24, Jesus taught that worship, if acceptable to God Almighty, must be offered "in spirit and in truth." We must, therefore, offer worship which corresponds with the nature and attributes of God. Worship, therefore, is not a stage production, where we have the finest actors, the finest singers, the most beautiful pageantry, where

the most colorful exhibition or spectacle is presented for our aesthetic pleasure. Worship, from God's point of view, is an attitude of the heart, involving the Lord's day, the assembly, and five acts demanded of God: Studying his word, praying according to his will, observing the Lord's supper, singing, and giving as required in the New Testament (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42; 20:7; Ephesians 5:19). We do not worship to please ourselves; we worship to please God Almighty!

(4) Let Jesus' words concerning *marriage* sink in. Those who wish to honor marriage and the sanctity of the home should read Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32; 19:3-9. Divorce for any or no cause is rampant today. Much suffering and anguish follows in its wake.

How alarming! The divorce rate has risen 700 per cent in this century, and havoc follows in our society. According to some statistics there is now one divorce for every 1.8 marriages. More than a million children a year are involved in divorce cases, and 13 million children under 18 have one or both parents missing. No wonder teenage crime continues to rise. Yes, we should let the words of Jesus sink in!


(5) We should let Jesus' words concerning his *plan of salvation* "sink in." We should never be ashamed of the truth of God (Mark 8:38; Romans 1:16). Never allow ridicule or mockery to frighten you away from the truth. One may sneer or scoff at the Lord's plan of salvation, but his commands: faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and baptism in his name for remission of sins, still stand unmoveable (John 3:3,5, 16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21). All the human creeds wrapped into one cannot save a single soul (Galatians 1:6-10; Mark 7:6-13).

Yes, let the words of Jesus sink in! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

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— Acts 26:25

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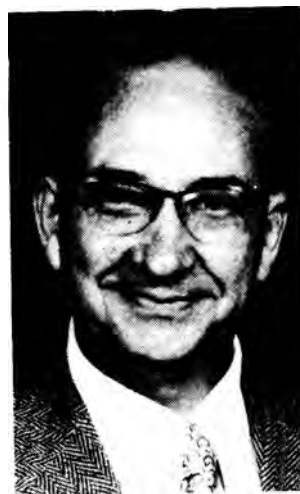


The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Why Attend A Lectureship

There are many benefits to be derived from attending the Fifth Annual GUS NICHOLS - WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship September 30-October 4. Note five 'selfish' reasons with me:



FLAVIL NICHOLS

1. You will be in one assembly after another all day, and at nights, where Christians will be singing God's praises, as well as teaching and admonishing one another in spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Voicing your own hearts' sentiments tends to intensify those noble emotions and impulses, and heightens your reverence and increases your love for God.

2. Many times each day you can join with other Christians in lifting up your hearts desires and prayers to God. To truly "follow" as another LEADS in prayer enables one to say "Amen" to his giving thanks, or praise, or to the petitions he verbalized (I Corinthians 14:15). Sometimes another can express better than we ourselves can say some of the things that are in our hearts.

3. It is a blessing to share the fruit of several weeks

of study by each speaker who has prepared his soul and mind to present the topic assigned to him. Many of the speakers have been preaching a long time, and they probably will draw from their experiences, observations, and learning over many years. Doubtless in their preparation, all of them will have consulted what writings by Bible scholars are available to them. Thus you will learn from their individual knowledge, plus that which they have gleaned from others.

4. At a Bible lectureship one has opportunity to hear preachers from a wide area, who usually are not available for us to hear in rapid succession. This year men from Oklahoma to Georgia will be with us. Some of them will be young men compared to some of the others, and they have varied preaching and teaching skills.

5. This lectureship will afford fellowship with Christians from various parts of the region --some known, and others unknown, by us. All of them will share our love of the truth and our joys in these spiritually- refreshing services.

These are five 'selfish' reasons for you to clear your calendar of any conflicts so you can attend every possible session, Sunday night through Thursday night, September 30-October 4, the Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth Fifth Annual Lectureship at Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama. Area Christians are willing to open up their homes to those who request housing of this sort. Write to the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

"Guard, Guide And Direct"

There are many expressions that are commonly used in our prayers. One expression that you have likely heard hundreds of times is the one that petitions the Father to "guide, guard, and direct us." It is a part of our prayers because we feel our inability to deal with the unknown future. Just what is the meaning of this expression?



DAN JENKINS

The serious Bible student knows that *guidance* is not from a special revelation. It is not from an inner urging that prompts us at some moment of indecision. Paul affirms that the scriptures are that which supply us completely in every good work (II Timothy 3:16, 17). While we understand this, we often still are confused about what is meant when we ask him to guide us.

Perhaps the answer lies in a most unexpected place. Proverbs 6:20-22 talks of the instructions of earthly parents. "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." It shall *lead* thee; it shall *keep* thee, it shall *talk* with thee!

Over a decade has passed since we placed my mother and father in their graves; but their teaching abides with me; their counsel given long ago still influences every decision I make. Nearly two thousand years have passed since Jesus died, and his will became effective. It, too, guides me and influences every decision I make. "Lead me, guide me, direct me." I'll continue to pray it; and with the understanding from Proverbs 6, it will have renewed meaning to me. — 1111 36th Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33408.

I Corinthians 10:13

VICTOR M. ESKEW

The tempter is truly "as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Satan stalks the earth "going to and fro" and "walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7), searching for that one weak soul whom he can permeate and destroy. It was Paul's awareness of this enemy which caused him to write the words found in I Corinthians 10:13. These are words of encouragement; they are words of strategy; they are words of victory. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." When the adversary hurls one of his fiery darts at us, when he drops his tempting lure before us, we should call to remembrance the thoughts of this passage of Scripture.

First, we have the assure that somewhere through the corridors of time others have been tempted in this same manner. Time, places, and faces change, but temptation remains the same. As we search the pages of Old Testament history we are certain that this is true. And comfort lies in the fact that those of old have overcome the same temptations which are plaguing our lives. If they came through we also can wage the battle and depart in victory. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside ever weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Second, Paul's pen pledges that we are not alone in our struggles. God stands with us in the fight. If we turn back to the book of Job, we learn of this very thing. Satan was present. In Job's trials, but the Mighty One

was there as well. In the first chapter of the book we are given hope because we realize that God's power is greater than that of the Curser's. Satan can never go beyond that which God will allow. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord" (Job 1:12). Again we see this in Job 2:6. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." In our trials God will be present. As He was faithful to Job, He will be faithful to us. He will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond that which we can bear.

Third, we not only know that we can bear the burden which Satan brings our way, but we also have a way of escape laid beside the temptation. No temptation, regardless of its nature, ever comes our way which will not also have a door leading to the release from Satan's snare. This fact know will help us to look for it when Satan's presence lingers near our back door. If we were speaking of word associations, we would say, "Temptation." In replay we should respond, "A way of escape." God has promised the escape to be there, we must look for it and take advantage of its provision.

As Satan seeks to lure you into his net of misery and perdition, be mindful of the apostle's words in I Corinthians 10:13. Recall that others have overcome in time past. Remember that you are not fighting alone! God is present with you. And finally look for the escape God has provided. With these three things applied, you will overcome temptation. Then you can "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2, 3). — P. O. Box 251, Fulton, Ms 38843.

"A Few Pearls Here And A Few Drapes There"

The above title was taken from Vanessa Williams' last words about her nude photos. Miss Williams who was crowned Miss America this year is going to have nude photos in the August issue of *Penthouse*. The *Salinas California* said, "When she learned of the plans, she said, she went 'from shock to depression. Right now, I feel violated and angry' (July 23, 1984). Just between you and me, I think she is angry because she got caught. I heard from the TV, and from men who had friends who saw the pictures that some of the poses were homosexual in nature.

Miss Williams said the pictures were shot in 1982, "shortly after she took a summer job as a make-up artist and receptionist with TEC Model Registry, and that she had never 'made any agreement' with the photographer, Tom Chiapel, or Penthouse to use the pictures." I believe I have given the full quotes as to not take her out of context.

The Bible definitely says your sin will find you out. Moses in speaking to the children of Israel, beseeches them, saying: "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). We cannot judge why Miss Williams did pose in the nude. The only thing is she did, and evidently tried to cover it up. Vanessa goes on to say: "I wasn't really



GEORGE REED

thrilled about them (nude photos). I didn't want anyone to see them." Like I said we don't know why she did it; but it is a shame what people will do for money and pride.

When I was reading the article about Vanessa, I thought about two things: morals, and godly women. Lemuel said: "A worthy woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10); and, "Grace is delightful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised" (v. 30). What a contrast from the worldly woman. James said, "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

What are the things of the world? Let the Bible answer this question: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15,16). The apostle Paul tells us not to be fashioned according to this world (Romans 12:2). Modesty is largely a thing of the past. Some of our brethren have swallowed situation ethics, hook, line, and sinker. It is not going to take much more for some of us to become full-fledged candidates for the nudist farm. It grieves me when I see Christian (?) men and women dressed in short shorts, tight pants, and a few strips of clothing around their body.

If this is modest, what is immodest?

The Christian man and woman want to do what the Lord said to do in ALL areas of the Christian life-- and one of them is to dress modestly: "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest

apparel, with samefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (I Timothy 2:9,10). The word "shamefast" means to feel respectfully timid. You just can't get a woman that is shamefast to dress in immodest apparel.

I wonder what in the world women think of when they come out into the world dressed in almost nothing. I really don't believe women are so naive as to think no one will look. Women know better. Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27,28). I know some men who will lust over anything and everything. They have eyes full of adultery (II Peter 2:14). That is not the woman's problem. But the woman who causes a man to turn his head, and think ungodly thoughts, is not innocent.

Brothers and sisters, before you go outside make sure you are dressed modestly. Ask yourself these questions before you go out in public:

1. Would I wear a dress this short? How short are my shorts when I sit down?
2. Are the pants that I am wearing too tight?
3. Will the world be able to see a difference between the way I dress, and the way it dresses? One must keep this in mind especially in recreation.

4. If the clothing I am now wearing is modest, what would it take for me to become immodest?

I hope we all will take these questions seriously. Brethren, God does want us to dress in modest apparel. He wants us to teach our children, and to set the proper example. Let's do it. — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

Jesus Is Coming

The words of our title will affect different people different ways. If you are a faithful Christian, they will bring joy and gladness to your heart. Your pulse will quicken as you contemplate the thrill of seeing your Savior face to face; to hear him say "well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." If, on the other hand, you are among those millions who though knowing the Lord's will have not done it, such words will likely strike terror in your



JOHN WADDEY

heart. The man who knew his Lord's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes, said Jesus (Luke 12:47). A third class of people will experience no emotion because they are ignorant of Jesus, his promises and the consequences thereof. Their tragedy is double because they cannot enter into life if they "know not God and . . . obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (II Thessalonians 1:8); and yet they do not realize their jeopardy.

I. The Divine Promise. Jesus said " . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). If we believe that Jesus is God's Son, who cannot lie, we must accept the fact of his return.

II. How shall he come? It will be in majesty. "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire. . . ." (II Thessalonians 1:7). We look for the "glorious appearing of . . . our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13 KJV). (We look for the "glorious appearing of . . . our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13 KJV). His coming will be *visible*. "Behold he cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him. . . ." (Revelation 1:7). It will be *audible*. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. . . ." (I Thessalonians 4:16). He will come when least expected and *unannounced*. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away. . . ." (II Peter 3:10). "Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

III. What events will accompany his coming? At his coming *the dead will be raised*. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thessalonians 4:16). "For the hour cometh in which *all that are in the tombs* 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 judgment" (John 5:28-29). When the dead have been raised, "then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. . . ." (I Thessalonians 4:17). If we are yet alive when he comes, "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, for this . . . mortal must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:51-53).

The material *universe will be destroyed* at his return. At that day of the Lord, "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. . . dissolved. . . ." (II Peter 3:10-11). This being the case there will be neither time nor place for a thousand year reign of Christ on earth as many teach.

At that time the *final judgment will occur*. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. . . and these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:31-32, 46). All "the dead, the great and the small" shall stand before the throne and be judged by the things written in the books, according to their works (Revelation 20:12). Then will he say to the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And the wicked will hear their awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:34,41). *Satan will be finally and forever subjugated* when Jesus comes. When the Lord comes as a mighty conquering king he will cause "the devil that deceived them (to be) cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

The Lord Jesus *will deliver up the authority of his*

Jesus Is Coming

Continued From Page 3

kingdom to the heavenly Father when he has raised the dead (I Corinthians 15:24). Christ is reigning over his kingdom now, and all Christians are members of it (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom of Christ is his church (Matthew 16:18-19). Christ's kingdom has been on earth since it was established in the lifetime of the apostles (Mark 9:1). Christians in the first century were in the kingdom and we can be also (Revelation 1:9). Since the Lord rules his kingdom now and since he will surrender his reign upon his return; there is obviously no time, place or need for a future thousand year reign on earth.

Jesus is coming. There will be no signs of warning other than those already recorded?? in God's word.

When that eventful hour comes, all earthly pursuits will cease and each one will stand before the Creator and Judge to receive his eternal reward (Hebrews 9:27). It will *not be* a trial in which we *argue our case*; it will be to hear the court's decision. "Now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). We will then receive the things done in this body, according to what (we) have done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). There will be no second chance for those who died in sin (Luke 16:26). Purgatory is a concept completely foreign to Scripture. The consequences of that judgment will be eternal and irrevocable. It will be "eternal life" for the righteous (Matthew 25:46). The saved will live forever in heavenly bliss. As

for the lost, "the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day and night . . ." (Revelation 14:11). The lost will not be annihilated as some fondly hope. To escape into a Nervana of non-existence is a vain wish.

Jesus is coming! The most important question in the world is "Are you ready?" Our plea to you, our reader, is "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Judge Not

VICTOR M. ESKEW

The two words which form the title of this article are found in Matthew 7:1. These two words have been perverted and twisted to teach, that when one calls the actions of another error and remarks that continuance in such ways will condemn the soul, the individual is judging, which is "condemned" in the Bible. Matthew 7:1 (or at least the first two words) is usually quoted at this time. This use of the passage, however, is wholly unfounded. Those who (mis) use this verse in the above manner should continue reading the words of the Master. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and crite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

In the words of Christ, as recorded in this passage, we are given the right to cast out the mote in our brother's eye (v. 5), provided we have first cast the beam out of our own eye. In order to do this we must first determine, or make a judgment, that the mote is in our brother's eye. Also, in speaking of false teachers and how to judge whether a man is one, Jesus said: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). Plain words could not be spoken concerning judging than those issued forth by Jesus in John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." If Jesus did not tell us to judge, what did He mean here? An example of this judgment is recorded in Revelation 2:2. The Lord commended the church at Ephesus for their judgment against the false apostles. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

The teaching of Jesus in Matthew 7:1-5 concerns our passing judgment on another when we ourselves are entangled in virtually the same sins. The tendency of man is to overlook his faults and magnify the faults of others. Harsh judgments and loud ridicule engulf the sentence passed against the transgressor. The Jews were of such a nature. They loudly and openly condemned the practices of the Gentiles. Their judgments were harsh and wicked. But all the while, the Jews were entrenched in the same wicked ways. Paul called their hand on this in Romans 2:21-23. "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man

should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" How many times are we guilty of the same actions? We condemn the sinful habit one has of drunkenness, yet continue in our sinful habit of lustful thinking (Matthew 5:20; Philippians 4:8). We sentence the liar to eternal torments, but we cheat on our income taxes (Revelation 21:8). We judge the elders guilty for not taking the proper actions in church discipline, when we have not fulfilled our God-given duty to try

to restore the erring (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19,20). In so doing, Paul states we condemn ourselves. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Romans 2:1).

Before we pass judgment on another, let us examine ourselves. Let us cast out the beam in our eye. Then and only then, can we see clearly to cast out the mote in our brother's eye. Otherwise, we will cause the name of God to be blasphemed (Romans 2:24). — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

"Fear Not"

his name. We cannot fear for we are Christians!

The third reason given for not fearing, is the greatest of all, encompasses all the reasons we are not to fear. Fear not, because you are mine! The sheep belongs to the good Shepherd, the child belongs to the loving Father, and we belong to Jehovah! Brethren, let us not fear! — 1111 36th St., West Palm Beach, FL 33408.



DAN JENKINS

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1). These are the words of our God to his people Israel. In times of uncertainty how fitting these words seem when we consider the nature of Jehovah. Look at the reasons given as to why God's children need not fear.

First God says, "I have redeemed thee." The immediate application is that the nation of Israel had been delivered from Egypt and were thus God's ransomed people. However, when we consider the fact that God has also redeemed the Christian, this reason for not fearing is so appropriate. Could any Israelite ever think that the God who had worked so mightily to deliver him from Egyptian bondage and led him through the trials of the wilderness, would now forsake him in the promised land? Could any Christian ever think that the God who worked so mightily in delivering him from sin, even giving his only begotten son, would now forsake him?

The second reason given for not fearing, is that God has called his people by their name. As God has given to Jacob and his descendants a new name (Israel), so our God has given to us a new name -- Christian (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26). He cannot look at us without being reminded of our Redeemer, for we wear

Blazer Appreciation Dinner

Howard Blazer has preached the gospel of Christ for forty-seven years, during which time he also has been a supporter of every good cause. He has been an encourager of untold numbers of faithful workers in the Lord's vineyard. By 1960 he had preached in at least ten states, and assisted in establishing fifteen congregations -- and that was a quarter of a century ago!!! In addition to his oral preaching, he also utilized the written word to teach the truth, serving as editor of several journals. Numerous lectureships have been blessed by his lessons. He is almost seventy-five years old.

Brethren from at least five congregations in Limestone County, Alabama, plan a dinner in his honor. It will be in Athens, Alabama at 6:00 p.m., Friday night, August 31, at the High School Cafeteria, on U.S. Highway 31. Loving brethren in that area will defray the costs, and the meal will be free to friends who wish to honor brother Howard Blazer. Considerate people will wish to inform those paying for the dinner that you plan to attend. Please address: West Hobbs Street Church of Christ, Athens, Alabama 35611. — The Editor.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

speak forth

Acts 26:25

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What About Baptism?

Admittedly, baptism is a controversial subject. But almost everything taught in the Holy Bible is controversial: the creation story, the flood, the Red Sea crossing, the virgin birth, the resurrection, and the second coming of Jesus, *et al.* Billy Graham says that he doesn't preach on baptism because it is too controversial. According to such foolish reasoning one could never discuss any Bible subject.



W. A. HOLLEY

We pose a simple question: Is it possible for you to be open minded and honest, as we approach this study? It is hoped that you will lay aside all preconceived notions and opinions and permit God's word to speak for itself. The people of Thessalonica set a wonderful example. They listened to the preacher, but "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Would you be willing to follow their example? One needs to learn that doctrines and commandments of men are extremely dangerous (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13).

We shall pose four questions regarding baptism: (1) What is the One baptism of Ephesians 4:5? From the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection there had been two baptisms in force for a period of time . . . Holy Spirit baptism, plus water baptism. How do we know? Well, on Pentecost, the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit; but the 3,000 were baptized in water (Acts 1:2,26; 2:1-4, 36-38). At the conversion of Cornelius there were two instances of baptism: Cornelius and his household were baptized with the Holy Spirit, but were also baptized in water (Acts 10:44 with verses 47-48; 11:14-15). Cornelius and his household were baptized in *circa* A.D. 41. Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5 in *circa* A.D. 64. Since Paul wrote in A.D. 64 that "there is ONE BAPTISM," it must be that Holy Spirit Baptism had ceased!! Paul taught that all miraculous works were to cease when God's complete revelation had been revealed

and confirmed (Hebrews 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:8-13; Mark 16:15-20).

Now, dear reader, according to Matthew 28:18-20, water baptism is to last until the end of the world. Water baptism is performed by men and is for all nations. Water baptism is performed or administered in the name of Jesus by men. Only Jesus Christ could administer Holy Spirit baptism (John 1:33-34). Holy Spirit baptism was not to save anyone; but water baptism does save (I Peter 3:20-21).

(2) What is the act of baptism? Many say that it makes no difference. Is it sprinkling? pouring? immersion? We shall permit the sacred scriptures to answer. In Acts 8:34-39, we have a beautiful picture of Bible baptism. What did these men do? They came to a certain water; they went down into the water; Philip baptized the Eunuch; and they came up out of the water. Dear Reader, read it and see!

Water baptism requires "much water" (John 3:23). How much is "much water?" Enough to be buried in water (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). The fact that baptism is a burial rules out once and for all time, sprinkling or pouring.

(3) Who should be baptized? Not babies, for they cannot *believe*; and they have no sins to be remitted. Only those who can believe, repent of sins, and confess Jesus' name before men, should be baptized. Why? Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16. Infants, babies are not born in sin, as the Calvinists teach (Cf. Ezekiel 28:15; I John 3:4) No person becomes a sinner until he transgresses the law of God. No one can inherit sin from his parents.

For argument's sake, if one could inherit sin from his parents, why, when his parents have become Christians, could he not inherit righteousness from them?? Let some one answer!

(4) Why should you be baptized? You should be baptized because God has commanded it (Acts 10:47-48). Those who "reject the council of God" cannot be saved (Luke 7:29-30). You should be baptized because the new birth demands it. To be "born again," equals to be "born of water and of the Spirit," and brings remission of sins (John 3:3,5; Acts 2:38). "Things equal to the same are equal to each other."

You should be baptized in order to be saved. Jesus

said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). An unbeliever cannot scripturally be baptized!


You should be baptized "for the remission of sins." Peter, the great apostle said, "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). "Remission of sins" comes AFTER, not before, baptism!! What does the phrase "for the remission of sins" mean? It does not mean "because of remission of sins," unless Jesus shed his precious blood "because of remission of sins," which would be ridiculous! In both Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38, the expression, "for the remission of sins," is identical, both in the Greek and in the English.

You should be baptized that your sins might be washed away. Saul of Tarsus was not saved on the Damascus Road, because, three days later, although he was praying, his sins had not been forgiven. How do we know? Because the Lord sent Ananias to tell him what to do. Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

You should be baptized to be saved. I Peter 3:21 reads as follows, "The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Thus, baptism is the dividing line between a lost condition and a saved condition. It is true that *men* say that baptism is a non-essential command, but *God* teaches that baptism SAVES.

You should be baptized to enter into Christ. We believe "UNTO," repent "UNTO," confess the name of Jesus "UNTO," but we are baptized "INTO" Christ (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 11:18; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). In baptism we are transferred from the world INTO Christ, where all spiritual blessings are (Ephesians 1:3; II Timothy 2:10). "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17); but when does one enter Christ?

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

Flavil H. Nichols

"My Blood Of The New Testament"

After he ate the last Passover Supper, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:26-28). Mark (14:24) also says that he referred to the cup as "my blood of the new testament." However, Luke quotes Jesus as saying, "This is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20). Please note with me the relationship between the blood of Jesus and the new covenant, or the new testament.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

The Holy Spirit tells us that "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined upon you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:19-22). Thus it is clear that the old testament was dedicated with the blood of animals; but the new testament is sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Everything in the old testament was consecrated by blood --every ordinance or command, every promise of reward, every warning or threat of punishment. Conversely, it must follow that every thing NOT included in the covenant God made with them had NO BLOOD on it. Therefore, when Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-10), such "strange fire" had NO BLOOD on it; thus it was "unholy" (verse 10). It had not been dedicated with blood, for it was outside the covenant God had made and sealed with blood. As a result of this violation of the blood-sealed covenant, "there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them" (verse 2). That covenant specified that, to burn incense, the priest was to "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar . . ." (Numbers 16:46). This is the fire which "came . . . out from before the Lord" (Leviticus 9:24) at the dedication of the tabernacle. Being specified in the covenant, it had "blood" on it; the "strange fire" which Nadab and Abihu used, did not.

The lesson from this should be clear to all of us: Every thing in the new testament has been dedicated with the blood of Jesus Christ. Whatever is not in the new testament, does not have a drop of Christ's blood upon it.

Repentance and baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) is in the new covenant, sealed with the blood of Christ. But to be baptized because one already has been saved (?), does not have any of Jesus' blood on it.

Singing in worship is in the new covenant, for we read: ". . . SINGING, and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). If it were not mentioned another time (which is not true), this one time is enough to include it in the blood-sealed covenant. Therefore *singing* has the blood of Christ on it. But the new testament does not authorize instrumental music in worship. Therefore such music does not have any of the blood of Christ on it! It does not have a single drop of Christ's blood on it! It simply is not included in the testament which Christ dedicated with his own blood.

We should never forget that the first testament was not dedicated "without blood" (Hebrews 9:18). But it was animal blood that was used to consecrate that old testament, while it is Christ's blood which sealed the new covenant. We began this study with his own statement: "This is my blood of the new testament . . ." (Matthew 26:28). Of him we also read: "He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). This new and better covenant was sealed with better blood --the "precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:18-19) rather than the blood of bulls and goats.

One who respects the blood of Jesus Christ, must respect the covenant or testament sealed with that blood. He must not run back to the old covenant for religious practices. To do so is to deny or reject the "blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified" (Hebrews 10:29). It is to count that precious blood as if it were "unholy," and is to do "despite unto the Spirit of grace."

Is the blood of Jesus, and the covenant sealed with it, "precious" to you?

Broken Pieces

EARLENE ROSE

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:6).

She could not have been more than three
When I watched her striving diligently
To put together a broken vase
That she had knocked from its sitting place.

As she held the pieces in her hand
And tried so hard to understand
Just where they fit and what to do
To make that vase again like new,

I thought; My child, how hard for you!
So I took the pieces and some glue,
And very soon the lovely vase
Was returned to its sitting place.

Today God watched me in my strife
Trying to repair a broken life.
The pieces fit, it seemed, nowhere;
And I struggled more in deep despair.

T'was then He seemed to say, "My child,
Be patient just a little while;
The pieces fit when you understand
They must be placed by the Master's hand."

— 1701 20th Avenue, Northport, AL 35476.

What About Baptism?

Continued from page 1

One does not enter Christ by faith only, nor by prayer, nor by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit; but one is baptized into Christ, baptized into his death; and he is raised to walk in newness of life (Cf. Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

If Only We Believe

WINFREY HENNESSEE

We, as Christians say that we believe God's word; yet some do things every day which indicate otherwise. Do you believe the scripture, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). If we all do, then how could the Sunday evening attendance drop so much? In many cases only one half the morning number returns for evening services. If we really believe, will not every pew be filled?

Some evidently do not believe the things said in the New Testament about divorce and remarriage. If we did, then some so-called Gospel preachers would not declare that the church's outlook on this subject is old and outdated. How disgraceful! Does it not matter any more what God's word says?

If we really believe that God made us, that he gave us all that we have, and that he can take it all away in a second's time, then would we have any qualms about liberal giving? Of course we would not. Churches would have enough money to spread the Gospel into all nations.

If we really believe that some day there will be a judgment, of course we should make ready. How good it will be to hear the words, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many" (Matthew 25:21). What a great day this will be . . . if truly we believe! — P.O. Box 185 McMinville, TN 37110.

Mephibosheth, A Man Of Misfortune

We live in world of misfortune. It is an important lesson of life that we learn to deal with it in our own lives and to be considerate of those who are afflicted. This lesson is about a victim of great misfortune and the kindness extended to him by David the man after God's own heart.

About the Man

Mephibosheth was the son of the noble Jonathan, prince of the house of Saul (II Samuel 4:4).

He was originally called Meribbaal which meant "he that strives with Baal" (I Chronicles 8:34).

The days of his youth were dark indeed. His father and most of his relatives were killed in the Philistine wars (I Samuel 31:1-4). "When the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel; and his nurse took him up, and fled . . . it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame . . ." (II Samuel 4:4). For several years then he lived in seclusion in the house of Machir of Lodebar (II Samuel 9:4-5). He later married and fathered a son named Mica (II Samuel 9:12).

When David secured the throne of Israel he elevated Mephibosheth to a place of honor (II Samuel 9:1-13). To understand David's actions, we must remember his friendship with Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan. The historian of First Samuel tells us that "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David . . ." (18:1). Jonathan exacted an oath from David that when fortunes changed that his family would be spared when David became king (I Samuel 20:14-16). Together they swore, "Jehovah shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever" (I Samuel 20:42). David never forgot that pledge of friendship.

When Mephibosheth was summoned into the new king's presence we can imagine the fear and trepidation he must have felt. Some 15-20 years had now elapsed. It is doubtful that he would have known or remembered the friendship of David and his father. It was a common practice in those days for a conquering king to destroy all remaining male heirs lest they be a rallying point for rebels. Thus we read that Jehu smote all of Ahab's heirs (II Kings 10:11). Mephibosheth's fears melted however when he heard David's joyful words, "Fear not, for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake (II Samuel 9:7). His family inheritance was restored and the king granted him an endowment for life along with a place of honor at the royal court (II Samuel 9:7-10).

Trouble in Israel

Dark clouds settled upon the nation when David's son Absalom led a rebellion against his father's rule. As the uprising spread like wildfire, David and his servants fled Jerusalem for mountain hideouts. (II Samuel 15:13-14). Mephibosheth was betrayed by his servant, Zeba who slanderously accused his master of hoping to regain the throne. Believing the lie, David rashly apportioned all of the young cripple's estate to the deceitful Zeba (II Samuel 16:1-4).

Following Absalom's untimely death, David returned to his throne with power. Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul came down to meet the king and welcome him home. He had publicly mourned David's misfortune and was still dressed in the signs of mourning. He explained why he had not been able to join the king in exile and expose Zeba's slanderous charges. No favors were asked. He would gladly accept David's judgment in the matter (II Samuel 19:24-30).



JOHN WADDEY

At a later date, David again had occasion to spare Mephibosheth's life, when the men of Gibeon sought revenge against Saul's heirs for the evil he had done in slaughtering many of their people (II Samuel 19:4-7).

Some Observations About Mephibosheth's Life

Truly our subject was a man of many misfortunes. He was orphaned at age 5, losing his entire family in the violence of war. At the same time he lost his right to the throne of the nation. A freakish accident left him crippled for life. Through the slanderous lies of his own servant he lost his station, his property, and well-nigh his own life. Even when the truth was known he only regained one half of his inheritance (II Samuel 19:29).

Mephibosheth had a noble attitude amid all of his vicissitudes. He was deeply grateful to David for his consideration. He harbored no bitterness about his loss. He had no thought of trying to subvert David's authority. Willingly he submitted to his new lord. All of these wholesome traits were a reflection of Jonathan's spirit in his son's character.

By the grace of king David, this poor man received provisions, honor and safety. His reward was not because of his own merit, but because of his father's goodness which David sought to repay.

Lessons to Remember

We are impressed with the beauty and loyalty of true friendship such as was shared by David and Jonathan.

From David we learn to honor our commitments, no

matter how much time may have passed by.

Also we must learn to show compassion for the unfortunate that are about us. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah, and his good deed will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17).

Christians, like David, must be generous towards all men, especially them of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

We need to exhibit the gratitude that Mephibosheth showed toward his benefactor.

This man was withered in body but not in soul. Some folks have healthy bodies but crippled souls.

We are reminded of the evil a slanderer can do if he is listened to. "A whisperer separateth chief friends (Proverbs 16:28). But "a false witness shall not be unpunished. . . ." (Proverbs 19:5).

May our children be fortunate to have noble parents like Jonathan. "A righteous man that walketh in his integrity, Blessed are his children after him" (Proverbs 20:7).

David showed Mephibosheth "the kindness of Jehovah" (I Samuel 20:14). Christ has shown it to us by saving our souls (Titus 3:4-5).

Mephibosheth's blessing had nothing to do with his intellect, his goodness, his wealth or infirmity. He was blest because of whose son he was. So with us.

One of his blessings was to eat continually at the king's table. Such is our privilege as well (Luke 22:29-30).

May we not neglect these lessons from this little-known man's life. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

The Impotency Of Unbelief

In Galatians 4:9 the apostle Paul describes the former unregenerate state of the Galatian Christians as "weak and beggarly." The meaning suggested is this -- their pagan lives had been void of power, and were thus impoverished. Unbelief, whether of ancient or modern vintage, simply has no strength; it is without that rich depository of treasure for which the human spirit throbs. Reflect upon the following:

(1) **ORIGIN** - Man is inquisitive by nature. He is the only creature on earth that is interested in where he came from. He is ever searching for his roots. Unbelief, however, simply cannot provide any answer. It knows nothing of the origin of matter or the organized universe. It frustratingly attempts, without success, to explain the mystery of life. Its theories of origins are hopelessly contradictory, and in conflict with known scientific data. Unbelief knows absolutely nothing of origins!

(2) **PURPOSE** - Exactly what is man's purpose upon this planet? Unbelief argues that there is no purpose to human existence. Man's function is simply to reproduce his species, and so, hopefully, for some unknown reason, to advance along the alleged evolutionary scale. But why? What is the ultimate goal? "There is none," humanists dismally reply. The Biblical record, however, reveals that man does have a higher goal; it is the happiness that is to be found in serving the great Creator (Isaiah 43:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

(3) **HUMAN CONDUCT** - What is the motivating factor for moral conduct in those who know not God? There is no rational motive! If there is no God, why should men not live lives that are devoted strictly to



WAYNE JACKSON

their own selfish interests? In his parable of the unjust judge, the Lord noted the connection between those who have no fear of God, and so, who have no regard for man (Luke 18:2,4). Moreover, after describing the wickedness of the ancient world, Paul focuses upon the real problem when he writes: "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18). If there is no God, and so no ultimate reckoning to the Judge for human conduct, then there is no final value to choosing a good life over a bad one!

(4) **MENTAL TRANQUILITY** — What mental satisfaction does the man have who considers his existence to be nothing more than a meaningless moment in an endless panorama of passing history? The infidel philosopher David Hume expressed the feeling of many an unbeliever when he depressingly wrote: "Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition do I return? . . . I am confounded with these quotations, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty." Perhaps the unbeliever John Stuart Mill said it most pointedly when he selected these words as the epitaph for his tombstone: "MOST UNHAPPY."

(5) **FUTURE HOPE** — What is the hope of those who are without knowledge of the Creator? There is no hope in a cold hole in the ground! One is reminded of the conversation that Alexander Campbell once had with the skeptic Robert Owen. As the two men walked past a family cemetery on Campbell's farm one day, Owen remarked: "There is one advantage I have over the Christian; I am not afraid to die." Campbell responded: "Have you any hope in death?" After a solemn pause, Owen replied, "No." "Then," rejoined Mr. Campbell [pointing to an ox nearby], "you are on a level with that brute . . . he has neither fear nor hope in death!"

Unbelief is indeed a futile and frustrating philosophy. It robs man of much and gives nothing in return. Let us do our best to turn men and women to the Author of their being. — 3906 E. Main, Stockton, CA 95205.

"Will A Man Rob God?"

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation" (Malachi 3:8-9).

Malachi was the author of the last book of the Old Testament. His name means "My Messenger." When Malachi's prophecy was delivered to the Jewish people, they were not under a king, but under a



W. A. HOLLEY

governor appointed by the Persian Emperor. Zerubabel's temple was still standing, as was the altar; and sacrifices were being offered (Malachi 1:7-10). An outburst of religious fervor had attended the Jews' return from Babylonian captivity, but had now almost withered away. The priests and people were corrupt. The priests and the people dishonored God by presenting blemished offerings. They also dealt treacherously against their brethren. They also intermarried with the heathen, putting away their own wives; and were engaged in doing deeds of violence.

Another sin of the Jews of Malachi's day was: "robbing God." We here suggest ways by which Christians may become guilty of "robbing God." We shall note---

(1) *One can rob God of money* that rightfully belongs to him (I Corinthians 16:1-2). It is God who gives the ability to earn wealth, for he hath said, "And thou hath said in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee the power to get wealth . . ." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Cf. Proverbs 10:22; Hosea 2:8). In fact, the Bible teaches that all good and perfect gifts are from God Almighty (James 1:17). Hence, one should not become so selfish and self-centered as to think that he owes God nothing (Matthew 5:45). In a very real sense, one saves only what he gives the Lord God (Matthew 6:19-21).

(2) *One can rob God of the reverence* due him. The Great Shema of the Jewish faith in Old Testament times was: "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). We respectfully suggest that the entire segment of Scripture cited be read with great care and thoughtfulness. It is a sin to take the Lord's name in vain (Exodus 20:7; Matthew 5:33). All by-words, such as "Golly," "Good grief," "Gad," "Egad," "Gosh," "Gee Whiz," and all similar expressions are profane, and should be eliminated from our vocabulary. ". . . Holy and reverend is his name" (Psalms 111:9). We should "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). The greatest irreverence and contempt is shown when sinful men, in their arrogance and superciliousness, choose to ignore and rebel against the holy commands of God (Cf. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:21).

(3) *One can rob God of worship* that is due him. It is imperative for men to worship God "after the due order" (I Chronicles 15:13). "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name . . . worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (I Chronicles 16:29). Jesus taught that the Father is seeking true worshipers, and that they must worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Thus, worship according to doctrines of men fails completely (Matthew 15:9). Items of acceptable worship are clearly listed in the Holy Bible (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19). Those who change the items of worship or the day (first day of the week) of worship do greatly sin before God!

(4) *One can rob God of service* due him. We can use our hands, our eyes, our brains, our feet, our tongues, our talents in service to God (Romans 12:1-2). When men refuse to serve God in such a manner as to make the world a better place in which to live, they are indeed robbers of God! Wicked men and women have corrupted the earth with lawlessness of every kind: drunkenness, drug addiction, adultery, homosexuality, murders, kidnapping, and the like (Cf. I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 1:26-27). Sons and daughters of men desperately need the leaven of righteousness which will make the problems of the earth tolerable (I Corinthians 5:7-8).

(5) *One can rob God of precious time.* "Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time" (Margin: Buying up the opportunity) "because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16, ASV.). You may have yet a few days, or a few weeks, or a few years: life is fleeting, and, at best, will soon be gone (Psalms 90:10,12; Hebrews 9:27). Are you a laborer in the Lord's vineyard? Are you sitting on your hands, doing nothing? (Matthew 20:1-16). Time was never meant to be killed. Time was meant to be used with intelligence and common sense. It is as alive as you are, moving on its ordered way, something to be cherished, not strangled to death.

Hence, let us be painstaking in Bible study, often in prayer, diligent in attendance, ever doing our best to add the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-11).

(6) Some are guilty of *robbing God of their own children.* For shame! Many parents are experts at growing flowers, crops, or gardens, or at making money; but they are failures at training their children. The Bible talks of "training up" and "bringing up" children (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). Eli had some sons who "knew not the Lord." The Lord spoke: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:13). Adonijah, a son of David, was allowed to have his way, never being questioned about his conduct (I Kings 1:6). Parents who *send* their children to the Lord's assembly, rather than *taking* them and remaining with them, are certain to fail. Poor examples are so powerful!!

(7) *One can rob God of his own soul.* Have you ever said, "I'm going to become a Christian some day, but not now." Do you think you have plenty of time left? One's life is as a flower, or the grass, which soon withers away (Job 14:1-2). Death is an appointment which all must keep (Hebrews 9:27). "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Will a man rob God?? — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Dress Of Christians

DAN JENKINS

The silence of many pulpits stands in great contrast to the amount of space given in the Bible to the attire worn by godly people. When mother Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, one of her first realizations was that she was naked, even when attired in fig leaves. In view of the fact that we live in a nation where many are wearing fewer "fig leaves" without recognizing they are naked, it is imperative that we be reminded about the Bible teachings on this subject.

The matter will not be determined by human wisdom and thus cannot be settled by the statement, "I just don't see anything wrong with it." Neither will it be settled by an appeal to what most people are doing. The Bible alone can give us direction.

The Bible says that lasciviousness is a sin. This means that those things which are lewd, which produce lewd thoughts, are wrong. This fundamental principle must govern our dress. *Dress that primarily appeals to others' sexual desire is wrong.* Visit the beaches and look at the dress there, see its impact on those of the opposite sex. It is lascivious for men to lust after women in skimpy attire, but it is also lascivious for women to dress to appeal to this desire.

Israel had lost its ability to blush (Jeremiah 6:15), and the dress of many Christian women shows this same attitude today. They simply are not governed by shamefastness and sobriety (I Timothy 2:12). We must think soberly about this matter! — 1111 36th Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33408.

Thrid Annual Denton Lectures

The THIRD ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES will be at the Pearl St. Church, Denton, Texas, November 11-15. The theme is *Studies in the Revelation*. Four types of material will be presented: expository sermons on many passages in the Revelation, lectures dealing with false doctrines relating to the Revelation, lectures on some of the difficult passages in the Revelation, and a daily Discussion Forum on controversial subjects. The 2-hour Discussion Forum each day Monday through Thursday, will deal with: "Eternal Punishment -- Extinction or Conscious Torment?"; "The Great Judgment -- Did Christ Come and the Judgment Occur in A.D. 70?"; "Scriptural Baptism -- Must One Understand That Baptism is for Remission of Sins for it to be Valid?"; and "Who Are 'In the Lord'? -- Are There Sincere, Knowledgeable, Devout Christians in the Denominations?" Questions will be allowed from the audience.

In alphabetical order the speakers are: Maxie Boren, Tom Bright, Byron Denman, Ollie Duffield, Frank Dunn, Garland Elkins, Edward Fudge, Tom Gaumer, Alan Highers, Ken Hope,

Bill Jackson, Wayne Jackson, Roy H. Lanier, Jr., Mark Lewis, Dub McClish, Hugo McCord, James Meadows, J. Noel Merideth, Jerry Moffitt, Jack Orbison, Johnny Ramsey, Robert Taylor, Jr., Bert Thompson, W. Terry Varner, John Waddey, Thomas B. Warren, Marvin Weir, W. B. West, Jr., Wendell Winkler and Gary Workman.

Housing in the homes of area Christians will be made available on a "first come - first served" basis. Water and electrical hook-ups will be furnished for travel trailers and motor homes. A staffed nursery will be provided for all sessions. Exhibit space will be available subject to invitation and/or approval of the Pearl St. elders. The Pearl St. Church aims for this lecture series to provide sound, solid and practical Biblical teaching. Much of the material presented will also be planned to combat false teachings, both within and without the church. A book (500 plus pages) and audio and video cassettes of these lectures will be available. Inquiries may be addressed to Dub McClish, Director, THIRD ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES, 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201 or phoned to 817/387-3531.



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

The "National Israel" Mania

(No. 1)

The religious world abounds and overflows with misconceptions relative to the highly visionary and deeply fanciful role that modern-day Israel supposedly is playing and will play dominantly in the drama of world-shaking events. A case in point is a lengthy article from Nashville, Tennessee, that appeared in THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, Memphis, Tennessee, March 8, 1978. Though written six years (plus) ago it still reflects precisely and accurately attitudes and actions very prevalent today. That is why it is not outdated in the least. In fact circumstances during the past six years only confirm its up-to-dateness. The said article was penned by Philip W. Smith and bore the eye catching title of "Chosen People' Retain Backing." For a few weeks consecutively in WORDS OF TRUTH I want to discuss the material of this article in the light of Bible teaching. I plan to give the full extent of his material little by little and comment as progress is made. Each article therefore will consist of two major sections -- Sentiments From Smith, and Truths From Taylor. These will be numbered and then noted as the installments appear from week to week.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

This feeling for the Jews, "God's chosen people," makes Protestants who believe in literal interpretation of the Bible nearly as strong supporters of Israel as are American Jews.

While recent polls have shown a shift in general U.S. public opinion toward the Arab position in the Middle East, there is no indication of a change in attitude among most Protestants.

TRUTHS FROM TAYLOR--I

During the six years plus since this article appeared the two world leaders mentioned are no longer in power. Sadat was assassinated in his own land during the early eighties and Jimmy Carter is now an ex-president. Basically, that is the only change in this quoted material.

Like millions of others who pray for world peace and a ceasing of armed conflicts I looked with hope at the Egyptian-Israel peace talks during the latter part of the 1970's. Being a long-time observer of events of that part of the world and a visitor to the Mid-East during the decade of the seventies, I really never thought that our generation would witness a modern son of Ishmael (Sadat) visit with a modern son of Isaac (Begin) and talk in serious terms of a peaceful settlement between the two nations -- long at each other's throats politically, militarily and racially. Though I sincerely and prayerfully wish, as do millions of my fellow Americans, that the Middle East problem could be and would be solved for the good of all concerned, and especially the people of that strategic area, I do not share another sentiment as expressed by Smith and possessed by millions of my fellow Americans, i.e., an unproven and unproveable assertion that modern-day Israel at the eastern extremity of the mighty Mediterranean Sea constitutes God's chosen and special people.

It is a gross and inexcusable handling of Old Testament prophecies to suggest that they have something to say about the Jew and Palestine for the last fifty-two years of the twentieth century. They do not!! The United Nations, not the God of high and holy heaven, created political Israel, May 14, 1948. The prophecies of the Old Testament concerned Israel while Judaism was in effect. They pointed to a land promise, a people promise and a Messianic promise (Genesis 12:1-3; 26:3-5; 28:13-15). These constituted the three great P's of Abrahamic promises -- a

PLACE, a PEOPLE, and a PERSON. The place or land was Canaan, the country that flowed with milk and honey, and was given to Israel thirty-five centuries ago (Joshua 21:43-45). Their initial reception of such was conditional; their retention of such was likewise conditional. They obtained the land and lived therein for a long, long time. They failed to meet the continued conditions and ultimately lost the land, but not before God fulfilled ALL his promises to Israel regarding this contested and controversial land.

Did the Almighty keep his promise to make of Abraham's seed or descendants a great nation? Indeed he did! He made promise to the effect that they would become a great nation comparable to the stars of the heaven and the sands that compose the seashore. Countless millions of his descendants came and went from the period of the patriarch to the time of Christ. They numbered perhaps some two to three millions when they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses, their great deliverer and lawgiver.

The Messianic aspects of the promise were fulfilled in Christ, as Paul teaches in such places as Galatians 3. Jesus nailed Judaism to Calvary (Colossians 2:14-17). He broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, which was the law of Moses (Ephesians 2:14-16). He removed the first testament in order that he might bring in the new testament, as we learn from Hebrews 10:9. We are no longer under the old or the letter, but are under the new or the spirit (II Corinthians 3). The final time Jesus left the temple area on Mt. Moriah prior to the ordeal of Calvary, he referred to it as "your house" and he declared it "desolate" (Matthew 23:38). The presence of Deity had deserted it for ever. Only hollow Judaism filled it from that moment onward. Abolished Judaism sought to maintain it until its utter destruction as an earthly ediface by Titus and the fierce Romans in A.D. 70. From Pentecost in Acts 2 to the present, God's chosen people have NOT been the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- who have only FLESHLY ties with the illustrious three, and no FAITHFUL ties at all!

God's holy "nation" now for nearly twenty eventful centuries has been the church that belongs to his Son (I Peter 2:5,9). We know it as the church

SENTIMENTS FROM SMITH--I

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's recent peace initiatives may have eroded other Americans' support for Israel, but fundamentalist-Protestants' support for the Jewish state remains unshaken, according to church leaders here.

Based largely on a deeply-held belief in the prophecies of the Old Testament, millions of American Christians-- including President Carter -- see the survival of Israel more than a political question.



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— Acts 26:25

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The "National Israel" Mania

(No. 1)

Continued From Page 1

of Christ or the kingdom of God (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16; John 3:3,5). God no longer respects persons. An inspired Jew by the name of Simon Peter so stated in Acts 10:34,35. Paul, another inspired Jew, tells us who the true Jew is in Romans 2:25-29. He speaks of the real Israel of God in Galatians 6:16 and this means the same as the church. Infidelic Jews who denied his Deity and fought his true people at Smyrna and Philadelphia were called the synagogue of Satan by Jesus in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9. In actions, they definitely denied what they claimed to be -- real Jews or true descendants of the great Abrahamic legacy.

God's "temple" of our time is NOT a third anticipated one soon to be erected on Mt. Moriah which is currently occupied by the Dome of the Rock, the second most holy spot to all Moslems; but is the church of his Son (I Corinthians 3:16,17; Ephesians 2:20ff).

The survival of Israel today is strictly a political question; it is not religious at all, governmental leaders in Washington and much of the religious world to the contrary notwithstanding. I challenge ANY reader to take the Old Testament prophecies, ANY of them or ALL of them, and prove this seriously thought-out contention to be in error!! God's chosen people today are NOT physical UNBELIEVING JEWS, but are CHRISTIANS, who BELIEVE, OBEY, and REVERE his only begotten Son -- the Christ. The majority of American Protestants, high-ranking governmental leaders, and their advisors in Washington, and far, Far, FAR too many people throughout the world today are viewing these matters through premillennial goggles. That, in and of itself, is sufficient to *blind* anybody to the crystal-clear truths of Biblical prophecy!! — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

LECTURESHIP

GUS NICHOLS - WORDS OF TRUTH
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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Blood Of Christ And Baptism

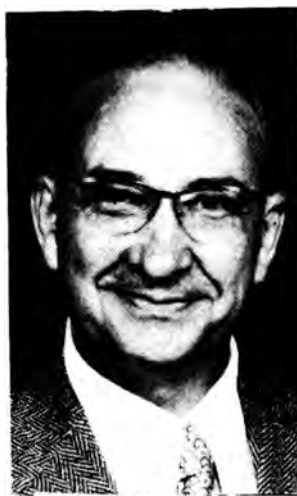
The writer of Hebrews states emphatically that "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sins (Hebrews 9:22). When he instituted the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ himself declared that the cup in the communion "is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). After stating that "all have sinned," Paul declared that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23-24). Then, referring to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit declared that God hath set Jesus forth to be a propitiation "through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:25). It is clear from this text that "FAITH IN HIS BLOOD" is essential to the forgiveness or "remission of sins that are past."

But the question arises: How, or when, or at what point, does one contact the blood of Christ, in order to benefit from the forbearance of God, to obtain from him the "remission of sins" for which Christ shed his blood -- which *remission* is conditional upon our "faith in his blood"? It is not sufficient to cite passages which point out that the blood saves. My brethren and I certainly believe this, and preach this. We use such texts as Matthew 26:28 and others quoted above. We also use John's statement that Christ "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" The apostle John also was told that those arrayed in white robes "are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 1:5, 7:14). This I believe with all my heart.

But these, and other similar passages, simply assert the FACT that the blood saves us. They do not tell us when, or at what point, the blood cleanses us. Many who talk long and loud about the saving blood, never tell sinners how to contact that blood. They are totally unable to read from the Bible where, or when, they think an alien sinner is cleansed by Christ's blood. I propose to show any honest inquirer, in Bible language, precisely what act of obedience initiates the alien sinner's contact with the blood of Jesus Christ. Those who teach human schemes of redemption cannot give book, chapter, and verse, which tells aliens where, or at what point, they claim the blood of Christ is contacted to wash away their sins.

BLOOD SHED IN HIS DEATH

Jesus was already dead when his blood was shed. The apostle John, guided by the Holy Spirit, makes this very clear. He wrote of the day Jesus died: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31). Bear in mind, please, that the crucifixion took place at the PASSOVER feast. And, it was clearly required of the



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

passover lamb that: "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof" (Exodus 12:46; compare Numbers 9:12). But Jesus Christ is our "passover" lamb, for Paul wrote: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7). In addition to his being typified by the annual unbroken passover lamb, it was also prophesied of him, that "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken" (Psalms 34:20). To carry out Pilate's order would violate the Old Testament prophecy!

With this background setting in mind, return with me to John's record of the crucifixion: "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him." --What is going to happen? Will they break Jesus' legs, as ordered by Pilate? If so, the prophecy will be violated! Continue reading with me: "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:31-34).

Jesus was "dead already" (verse 33), before his "blood" was shed in verse 34!!! Yes, his *blood* was shed *in his death*. Hence, in order to reach the BLOOD, one must come to the DEATH of Jesus. Those who teach that one is saved before, and without, baptism, cannot find a verse in the Bible which tells where they think the sinner contacts the blood of Jesus. Not one verse says the sinner merely BELIEVES into the death of Jesus. No passage says one can *pray* into his death. Neither does the Bible say anywhere that REPENTANCE puts one into his death. --Keep in mind that it is the BLOOD of Jesus Christ that cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7). And also remember that his BLOOD was shed IN HIS DEATH. How, or when, does one contact his blood? Or, what act of man puts one into Christ's death, where his blood was shed?

BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH

The apostle Paul supplies the answer by inspiration: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH?" (Romans 6:3). Hence, at the point of one's being baptized, he reaches the DEATH of Jesus: and at that same point he contacts the saving BLOOD which was shed in his death. The Holy Spirit put this same truth again in the next statement also: "Therefore we are buried with him by BAPTISM INTO DEATH: . . ." (Romans 6:4).

In logical argument style we have the following syllogism:

1. Major Premise: The blood of Jesus was shed in his death.
2. Minor Premise: One is baptized into his death.
3. Conclusion: Therefore one reaches or contacts the blood of Jesus when he is baptized into his death where the blood was shed.

Is this a valid argument? It is, because, (first), the major premise is declared to be true in John 19:33-34. John says plainly that Jesus was "dead already" in verse 33, before his blood was shed in verse 34. (Second): the minor premise is true, also, for it is clearly stated in Romans 6:3, and is repeated in verse 4: baptism puts one "into his death." Therefore (three): the conclusion is irresistible! The alien sinner's initial contact with the saving blood of Christ is made when the penitent believer is bap-

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The Blood Of Christ And Baptism

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tized into the death of Christ.

BLOOD "WASHES" AWAY OUR SINS

The inspired apostle John tells us that Jesus Christ loved us, and "washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). Salvation, or cleansing from sin, is here denoted by the word "washed." But, when did Jesus WASH our sins away? What act is referred to as our being "washed?" Whenever we were "washed," or whatever is called as "washing," it is at that point that the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed us from our sins, or saved us. Read with me about Saul of Tarsus, who now has come to believe that Jesus is Lord, and has repented of his wicked intentions to persecute Christians --and who also has already acknowledged Jesus Christ as "Lord" three days before on the Damascus road, expressing a desire to obey him. Ananias was sent to tell Saul, a penitent believer, what he must do. We read: "Now why tarriest thou? Arise, and BE BAPTIZED, and WASH AWAY THY SINS, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). In being baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3), he would contact the saving blood, which would "wash" away his sins (Revelation 1:5).

"SANCTIFIED" BY BLOOD

Hebrews 10:29 reveals that we are "sanctified" by the "blood of the covenant." But the Holy Spirit also tells us that Jesus Christ died for the church, that "he might sanctify and cleanse it with the WASHING OF WATER by the word" (Ephesians 5:25). The only "washing of water" authorized "by the word" is water baptism (Acts 2:38; 10:48). (If not, to what could it possibly refer?) But, by this "washing of water" which is commanded in the word, Jesus "sanctifies and cleanses" us from our sins. Jesus does not save one *without* -- but "by" --this "washing of water" -- by water baptism. By being baptized into his death, where his blood is contacted, one is sanctified by the blood (Hebrews 10:29).

"FORM OF DOCTRINE" INVOLVES BAPTISM

Those who once were "servants of sin" were "made free from sin" and became servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18). Of course, this would be impossible without the blood of Christ, for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). But, at what point were they thus "made free from sin"? The apostle declares: "Ye have obeyed from the heart that FORM OF DOCTRINE which was delivered you" (Romans 6:16). In order to ascertain what that "form of" doctrine is, we need first to learn what the "doctrine" is. The same apostle wrote the Corinthians that the "gospel" consists of three principal facts: (1) Christ died for our sins; (2) He was buried; and (3) he was raised from the dead the third day (I Corinthians 15:1-3).

However, it is impossible for one to obey this "doctrine," for it consists of FACTS; and one cannot obey facts. But Paul did not say they obeyed the "doctrine;" rather, he said they had obeyed "that FORM OF DOCTRINE." Just what is the "pattern," or "form of" this doctrine? From the same chapter (Romans 6) we learn that one dies to the love and intentional practice of sin (verse 2). He does this in repentance, which is a change of mind for the better, with abhorrence of one's past sins, heartily to amend. While he is thus "dead to sin" (Romans 6:2), he is "buried with him by baptism" (verse 3). In his baptism, he is also "raised" to "walk in newness of life" (verses 4 & 5), "in the likeness of his resurrection." Note this comparison in outline form:

THE DOCTRINE

1. Christ died for our sins.
2. Christ was buried.
3. Christ was raised.

"THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE"

1. Sinner dies to the love of sins.
2. Sinner is buried in baptism.
3. Rises to walk a new life.

Now read Romans 6:17-18 again: ". . . Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which

was delivered you. Being THEN MADE FREE FROM SIN, ye became servants of righteousness." So the Holy Spirit reveals that it is at the point of obedience to the form of doctrine, or, at the point of being buried and raised in baptism, that one is "THEN MADE FREE from sin." In repentance one dies to the love and practice of sins; then he is buried in baptism; and is raised to walk a new life --and at that point ("being THEN made free from sin") one is saved by the blood of Jesus Christ! We must conclude that, by his blood (Revelation 1:5) Christ makes one free from sin AFTER he has OBEYED the command to be baptized --not before.

We have seen that "faith in his blood" is essential to the remission of sins that are past (Romans

3:25). Christ's blood was shed in his death (John 19:33-34); but one is "baptized INTO his death" (Romans 6:3). While it is the blood that "washes" away our sins (Revelation 1:5), this "washing" takes place in baptism (Acts 22:16). We are "sanctified" by the blood of the covenant (Hebrews 10:29) when we are baptized, which is called "the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25). The "doctrine" is the death of Christ (for our sins), his burial, and his resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-3); while the "form of doctrine" involves our death to sin (in repentance), and our burial and resurrection in baptism (Romans 6:2, 16-18). It is "then" that we are made free from sin by the saving blood of Jesus Christ.

Rattlesnake Religion

"Georgia man dies from rattlesnake bite received in religious service," is the headline of an article carried in the *Birmingham Post-Herald*, July 19, 1984. How sad! how tragic!! Richard Barrett, a 50-year-old house painter and a minister of a church not recognized in the Bible lost his life because of gross ignorance! Here we have an example of zeal without knowledge (Romans 10:1-4). If Mr. Barrett had known the truth regarding miracles, he would not have been so foolish!



W. A. HOLLEY

"Members of the Wade Chapel Church here believe, quite literally, in the biblical passage--- 'take up serpents,'" the News account states. The Scriptural reference is Mark 16:17-18. It can be easily seen that these verses did not apply to Mr. Barrett, because he is now dead. The Mark reference did not fail. Such a promise as mentioned in Mark 16:17-18 belonged to the miraculous age of the church ---to the Apostolic age---to that age before the New Testament was committed to written form. The aforementioned passage never, never, never applied to Mr. Barrett nor to any of his sympathizers, no matter how honest or sincere they may be.

Those promises contained in Mark 16:17-18 were for the divine purpose of guaranteeing that the apostles would live until they had fulfilled their holy mission of revealing and confirming God's eternal truth for all time to come. Thus, when their mission was accomplished, miracles ceased, being no longer needed (I Corinthians 13:8-13).

There is not any further divine truth to be revealed and confirmed; thus, it now is a sin to add to, or take from, or to substitute for "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3; II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19). Those who claim to receive revelations from God Almighty are found to be liars (Revelation 2:2) in the highest degree (Galatians 1:6-10).

The News account which we are reviewing states that Mr. Barrett "died Sunday night after he refused treatment for a rattlesnake bite on his left arm. It is further stated: "He was bitten during a snakehandling service at the church Sunday afternoon." We can read of the church having services which included the five items or acts of worship (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19); but where does one read of any "snakehandling service?" Mr. Barrett refused treatment, we are told; but Jesus taught that, "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are

sick" (Luke 5:31, ASV.). If one wishes to follow Jesus' advice, when he becomes ill, he will seek a physician! This is but common sense! It is not wrong to visit a doctor and take medicine that life with all its pains may be extended, any more than it would be wrong to go to a grocery store to purchase food for the purpose of preventing starvation. Who can see the difference?? In principle, there is none!

In a debate, my opponent said, "Brother Holley, I will not go to a doctor and spend my money to keep me out of heaven, as hard as I have been trying to get there." My reply was: "If you are in such a rush to get to heaven, just stop going to the grocery store and your departure can be hurried to its conclusion." Isn't it a shame to see how ridiculous some folks' reasoning can be??

The article says, "Church members (Wade Chapel Church) consider the handling of poisonous serpents a test of their faith. If they are bitten, they believe it is God's decision whether they live or die." Thus, the man died because God wanted him to die; not because of the man's foolishness and folly!! What right-thinking person can accept such logic??

What a religion: God is responsible but man is not! God must take the blame but man is not accountable for his rash acts!! Some religion!!

If, as the article we are reviewing says, "the handling of poisonous serpents is a test of their faith," we ask, "What faith?" Since faith that saves comes by hearing God's word, (Romans 10:17) where does God command "snakehandling"? The truth is: Mr. Barrett and his followers do not operate according to Bible faith. They have their own misguided and fallacious and delusive notion of a faith(?) which has no foundation in Sacred Scripture.

In the Holy Bible there are mentioned at least two kinds of faith: (1) The faith that comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17), and (2) a miraculous faith, which was given by the laying on of the Apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-22; I Corinthians 12:8-10; 13:1-3; Romans 12:3). The miraculous faith passed away, along with all other miraculous gifts, when God's complete word had been revealed and confirmed (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:8-13). Paul, in I Corinthians 13:13 says, ". . . Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three . . ." Not these twelve, if we add the nine miraculous gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 12:8-10. The thought is: After the nine miraculous gifts had been removed, there remained only three, and these three were and are non-miraculous --- faith, hope, love.

The example of Paul (Acts 28:3-6), who when bitten by a viper, shook it off and felt no harm, does not help Mr. Barrett and his followers at all. (1) Paul was bitten by this serpent accidentally, not on purpose. Mr. Barrett deliberately handled snakes, contrary to

Continued on page 4

“Ye Who Are Spiritual”

In his letter to the Galatian saints Paul dealt with false teachers who claimed a superior faith and practice to his. Having proved that Christians are no longer under Moses' law, he proceeded to set forth the attributes and duties of a spiritual man.

Today we hear a great deal said about “being spiritual.” Many claim to be spiritual and at the same time deny that other brethren are. If there is a dispute about the quality of fruit a certain tree yields, we call for a fruit inspector. There are fruits to be found in the life of every spiritual soul. Paul states “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control . . .” (Galatians 5:22-23). No matter how strong the claim, without these fruits one cannot be truly spiritual.

In addition to these personal attributes, the apostle sets forth nine additional marks of a spiritual disciple in Galatians 6:1-10.

I. A spiritual man will seek to restore a fallen brother (6:1). He can not sit idly by while men for whom Christ died, perish. In his concern for the lost he is like God who is “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). He can neer simply “write off” the back-slidden brother. Like Paul, there weighs upon him “daily, anxiety for all the churches” (II Corinthians 11:28). He will deal with the erring in a gentle spirit (6:1), speaking the truth unto them in the language of love (Ephesians 4:15), While helping the weak, he will look to himself lest he also be tempted (6:1). He dares not be over confident, lest he himself fall (I Corinthians 10:12). The expression “restore” is a medical term meaning to set a broken bone. He works to bring the fallen brother back to his proper place in the Lord's body.

II. A spiritual saint will gladly help others to bear their burdens (6:2). Such is the golden rule of Jesus (Matthew 7:12). Nothing makes us more Christ-like. There are numerous ways in which this duty is met. He goes to the troubled and discouraged with caring concern. He listens sympathetically to their case. Words of comfort, cheer and encouragement are spoken. Their cause is taken before God in his prayers (James 5:16). He does whatever he can to meet their special need. He is truly a “brother.”

III. One who is spiritual will not have an inflated view of his own importance. He does not deceive himself as to his own strength or worth (6:3). Rather than think of himself more highly than is justified, he tries to see himself as does God, which is a sobering experience (Romans 12:3). “Blessed (happy) are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3). False pride finds no resting place in a spiritual man's heart.

IV. The spiritual brother is honest in evaluating his own service and contribution to God. He proves his own work (6:4). He never rests on yesterday's achievements; instead he tries himself to be sure he is walking in the paths of God (II Corinthians 13:5). He measures himself by his Lord, rather than by other human beings (II Corinthians 10:12). It really does not matter that he gives more, or does more, than someone else. They are not his standard: Jesus is (John 12:48). Concentrating on his own efforts and shortcomings, he hasn't much time to criticize his fellow-Christians (Matthew 7:1-5).

V. A man who is spiritual accepts the responsibility for his own spiritual duties. He bears his own burden (6:5). He has learned the lesson that every person must shoulder his share of life's load. He does not blame others for his problems, nor does he expect



JOHN WADDEY

them to carry his pack for him. Numerous burdens are common to all. There is the burden of living in a world cursed with problems and conflicts. All have duties to self, family, nation and God. There is the burden of sin and imperfection in one's life and those we deal with. Each one must deal with sickness, sorrow and dying.

VI. A spiritual Christian will gladly support those who are his teachers. “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” (6:6). The Lord ordained that those who “proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:14). It is a spiritually immature, or a carnal, brother that resents his teacher, or that resents providing him adequate support.

VII. A brother who is spiritual understands the principle of sowing and reaping in both his *living* and his *giving* (6:7-8). Cain reaped what he sowed. So did Noah. Each of us will have our harvest. The thoughts sowed in your heart will produce a crop. The words you sow will be gathered in. Your treatment of others will be returned to you. God will reward your service to him in kind. Mature disciples sow unto the Spirit that they might “reap eternal life”

(Galatians 6:8).

VIII. A spiritual man never wearies in his Christian service, knowing and believing that he will receive his reward, if faithful to his task (6:9). It is human to grow weary in well-doing. Hard work is out of style in twentieth-century America. He knows that partially done, unfinished, work is not acceptable to God (Revelation 3:2).

IX. The Christian who is spiritual does good to all men, whether saved or not (6:10). Like God, he gives his gifts to the just and unjust (Matthew 5:45). If his enemy is hungry he gives him food; if thirsty, drink (Romans 12:20-21). He is no respecter of persons (James 2:9). He is especially concerned to minister to a brother or sister in Christ, but having done that, he reaches out to all (6:10). This is the religion of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Pity the brother who forbids the church to practice pure and undefiled religion to widows and orphans who are not yet Christians (James 1:27)! It is the kindness of Christ's people that opens their ears to the saving gospel.

May we daily pray for divine help that we “may grow up in all things unto him, who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Rattlesnake Religion

Continued From Page 3

common sense, that these creatures may have a chance to bite him. (2) This incident happened during the miraculous age of the church; it does not stand as an example for those of us who live after miraculous prophecies, tongues, and knowledge ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Jesus, when Satan carried him to the pinnacle of the temple, suggesting that he cast himself down, (quoting Deuteronomy 6:16), answered: “Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.” Jesus would not dare such a thing; but Mr. Barrett would encourage such a thing!!

The handling of rattlesnakes is a very costly experience for many people. In the last six years at least two people have lost their lives in the area of Carters-

ville, Georgia. My files are filled with numerous accounts of those who died from rattlesnake religion. The brazen serpent which Moses had erected on a pole, that the Israelites who were bitten by fiery serpents might look upon it and be healed, later became an idol (Numbers 21:8-9; II Kings 18:4). Rattlesnake religion is very dangerous because it violates the Scriptures, and it also violates common sense. If one wants to show his faith in Jesus Christ, let him believe, repent of his sins, confess the name of Jesus, and be baptized into Christ for remission of sins (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38; 8:37; Romans 6:3-4. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Modern-Day “Miracles”

There are many claiming today to be performing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. In view of the fact that the Bible warns against “power and signs and lying wonders,” (II Thessalonians 2:9), we should think soberly about the difference between Bible miracles and the claims of men today.

The teaching of those who performed miracles in Bible times was always consistent with all other Bible teaching. God warns against signs and wonders performed by those whose doctrine violates the Bible (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). Is it not strange that there is no unity among the many who claim miraculous power today? Think of the differences between Mormons, Catholics, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, the Assemblies of God, and the many independent television personalities. They all claim to have God's power; yet there is no unity. How could the God of truth use his power to confirm so many contradictory teachings?

Consider other differences between Bible miracles and those claimed by men today. The following chart will help you.



DAN JENKINS

Bible Miracles

Faith not always required
Never a failure
All diseases cured
Instantaneous
Never a relapse
Not for money

Modern “Miracles”

Faith always required
Many failures
Selected Cures
Days often required
Many relapses
Many collections

Read your Bible and see the differences. Miracles were to end! Study I Corinthians 13 to see when. Don't be misled by modern claims --- there is a difference! — 1111 36th St., West Palm Beach, FL 33408.

LECTURESHIP

GUS NICHOLS — WORDS OF TRUTH

Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1984 - Jasper, AL



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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The "National Israel" Mania

(No. 2)

In this series for WORDS OF TRUTH I am reviewing an article from Nashville, Tennessee, which appeared in THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, March 8, 1978. It was written by Philip W. Smith and is premillennial in slant from beginning to end. That is why it is still up-to-date in its materialistic offerings of a literary nature, though penned more than six years ago. Similar, if not even stronger, sentiments are still prevalent relative to physical Israel in Palestine among premillennial proponents of the 1980's. They are not likely to change in the foreseeable future.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

The entire article by Smith is being quoted by segment and pertinent comments are made by way of refutation.

SENTIMENTS FROM SMITH--II

Politically unsophisticated people who have "grown up studying the Old Testament" do not separate the "people of God" from today's Israelis, said Dr. W. C. Fields, spokesman for the 13 million member Southern Baptist Convention, which has its headquarters here.

Fields said he does not "see any major shift" in attitudes toward Israel among the Southern Baptists since Sadat's peace initiative began last Thanksgiving.

While more politically aware members of fundamental Protestant churches "look more to the newspaper than to the Old Testament for what is happening today," Fields said, their belief in the Bible still affects their feelings about the Middle East.

TRUTHS FROM TAYLOR--II

People today who associate God's people with modern Israelis, as do Smith and Fields, do not know

much about the Old Testament and do not believe very much about the New Testament either. That is not even open for question or quibble. The Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament had their eye firmly fixed and their faith unshakeably riveted to the coming of the Messianic kingdom, the church that God's Son would one day establish in regal splendor, of a spiritual nature. Great passages like II Samuel 7:12-17; Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4; Daniel 2:44,45; Joel 2:28-32; Amos 9:11 and Zechariah 6:12,13 prophesied of such with crystal clarity and in eloquent earnestness. With a determined degree of dogmatism, I contend that they were NOT prophesying of a physical kingdom with military might and earthly splendor, composed of people whose ONLY link with faithful Abraham is of fleshly lineage or a blood line, and not a faith tie or spiritual connection at all. Surely, the Lord Jesus Christ knew the intense import of Old Testament predictive prophecy relative to the spiritual nature of the coming Messianic kingdom. In no uncertain terms he informed Pilate that his kingdom was neither worldly nor earthly in nature.

John 18:36 states, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Repeated again and again is a denial of its earthly nature. Intently implied is its heavenly, spiritual nature. If not of earth and not of hell, then it must be of heavenly origin. The Hebrew prophets so taught. They surely were not talking about a group of people in the latter quarter of the twentieth century who could not care less about Christ and Christianity than they currently do. Modern Israelis, except an occasional individual who is converted to Christ (which is always noteworthy when such occurs) have NOT been born again, not born of water and of the Spirit, Bible style (John 3:3,5,7). They do not acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Master (John 13:13,14). They utterly fail to recognize that one CANNOT have the Father unless he has the Son also (I John 2:23; II John 9-11). In NO sense of the term do they look to the New Testament as their sole standard of what to do to be saved, how to live the Christian life, and how to worship God. Nobody is a child of God today unless he has obeyed the gospel of Christ and is living the Christian life.

That gets but few of the modern Israelis -- Fields and all his religious group to the contrary notwithstanding!! Fields needs a course in who really are the people of God today. He is as mistaken relative to this matter as some misguided brethren are among us who affirm there "are sincere, devout, and knowledgeable Christians scattered among all the denominations." Again, Fields is surveying the Scriptures through premillennial goggles and that is enough to blind any person to the crystal clear truths of the Bible.


Fields mentions that a number of religious people look more to the newspapers than to the Bible relative to what is happening in the Middle East. I appraise such a naive approach as this to be absolutely amazing; it is positively incredible coming from a well-known religious leader who should be more in the know than this statement seemingly warrants that he is. Baptists in general, and Fields in particular, would not make such egregious mistakes if they were not squarely atop the premillennial bandwagon.

In the first place the entire Bible was NOT written with fundamental focus on the Middle East for the 1970's, the 1980's, and the 1990's -- as the masses of premillennialists and dispensationalists currently envision. Current newspapers do have a literary focus here, and rightly so; the Bible does not and this is right on target also.

In the second place, the two factors that confuse people are the religious articles in papers, tracts and books, and all the preaching and teaching which are premillennial in design and in declaration. These, not the Bible, have confused the issue; they have muddied the otherwise crystal clear waters of these momentous matters.

Fields says their belief about the Bible still affects their feelings about the Middle East. Such would NOT be if they learned that God NO longer has a HOLY LAND at the eastern end of the Mighty Mediterranean; such would not be if they would learn that those obedient to the gospel are now God's people, and not some physical group that rejects the Deity of Christ, the heavenly origin of the Lord's church (as set forth in the New Testament) and the divine derivation of the second great segment of Holy Writ, i.e., the New Testament, yet professing a blood-line tie with faithful Abraham.

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Words Of Truth
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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Collinsville, Oklahoma, Report

FRANK D. YOUNG

In a form letter to me, the brethren in Collinsville, Oklahoma, ask that this information be published.

These brethren state that they no longer need additional funds. They have received a total of \$716,587.84, adding: "We are current on all legal expenses."

These brethren believe this amount is "adequate to take us through the appeal system, if it should go that far." They also state: "Our records have been maintained to the degree that return of any unused portion of the funds we have received can be easily accomplished."

It is truly gratifying to know that an interested and concerned brotherhood has come so greatly to the support of these brethren. Possibly nothing in recent years has awakened us so much to the decay of our nation, and to how fragile our religious freedom is. May God be blessed!

May God grant the Collinsville elders the loyalty



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

and strength to fight this case to the end. May he bless every freedom-loving person who has given to this effort, as well as his blessings be on every brotherhood-loving disciple who responded to this need in any way. — 500 Third Ave., Jasper, Alabama 35501.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers will be interested in knowing that the Phil Donohue Show invited the Elders from Collinsville to appear on his program; but due to the fact that their case is still in the courts, they declined. Bro. Garland Elkins, of Memphis, was invited by them to appear in behalf of New Testament truth. The program was filmed Monday, August 20, 1984, to be aired at some future date.

Bro. Elkins was able to present Bible truth on the program, and we trust due advance publicity will be given to the time when this episode will be shown. He offered a tract, "The Lord's Church Is Different," and gave the address where it may be obtained. Others on the stage with Elkins included the woman withdrawn from (Marion Guinn), her attorney; and also a woman for whom her own "pastor" had refused to say the marriage vows after learning that she had been "fornicating" with her intended mate (with whom she already was living); and she also had posed for "Playboy" magazine.) — Flavil Nichols.)

IBC Workshop '84

The 13th Annual Evangelism Workshop will begin Thursday, September 27, and continue through Saturday, September 29th, on the campus of International Bible College in Florence, Alabama. The theme is "Unto Love and Good Works" (Hebrews 10:24).

Asked why this particular theme was chosen, IBC President Charles Coil said, "... we need to emphasize what God wants done rather than what we have failed to do. Because love is the greatest thing in the world, we believe works growing out of love are the greatest works in the world. God says, "Provoke one another unto love and good works." We can think of no finer service to a great brotherhood than to try to motivate each of us to greater love and more good works."

Keynote speakers will apply this theme to living as individuals, church relationships, and our outreach to the world with the Gospel. On Thursday night, Eddie Cloer of Harding University will speak on "Encouraging Love." Friday night John Gipson, of the 6th and IZARD congregation, Little Rock, Arkansas, will speak about "Encouraging Good Works At Home." Saturday evening Juan Monroy of Madrid, Spain, closes the workshop. His subject: "Encouraging Good Works Throughout the World."

Four special interest programs will be part of the Workshop '84 schedule. Again this year the big Wednesday night singing officially begins the workshop. Featuring many capable leaders, the singing will start at 8:00 p.m., September 26, in the 4,000 seat Alexander Activities Building.

For youth, a Youth Spectacular, featuring dynamic speeches by Jeff Walling, of El Toro, California, is scheduled Saturday morning beginning at 9 a.m.

For the ladies, two women will speak Friday, September 28th beginning at 9 a.m. Judy Miller, Houston, Texas, will speak on wives assisting their husbands in teaching the Gospel, and also on "Raising Christian Children." She is the wife of Jule Miller and has authored two books, "Cups Running Over," and "Seasons of the Heart." Peggy Goldtrap of Madison, Tennessee, will speak on "How To Be More Loving." Sister Goldtrap is noted for her seminars on self-image. She is the wife of George Goldtrap who directs the Amazing Grace television

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Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth

Lectureship Sept. 30-Oct. 4

by the Editor

During our Fifth Annual GUS NICHOLS --WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship, John Harris will speak on Wednesday night, October 3. His topic will be: "Who Told Thee . . .?" The series begins annually on the last Sunday night in September, and continues through Thursday night.

Here is some biographical information about him and some of the other speakers.

JOHN HARRIS: "HAVE GOSPEL -- WILL TRAVEL"

John Harris has been preaching the gospel for 36 years. He and his wife Virginia have one daughter, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Brother Harris has been preaching for the Farris Drive Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama, for the past ten years. He preached in Milan, Tennessee, for fourteen years, and in Corinth, Mississippi, for six-and-a-half years. He has preached in seventeen states and one hundred and sixty-one cities. He has written five sermon books, two hard-backs and three soft-backs. He says he wrote the first hard-back book among the black brothers, and has also written one tract.

Brother Harris taught at the West Key School of



JOHN HARRIS

Bible Knowledge. He has preached at several of our Bible colleges including: Southwestern Christian College, Freed-Hardeman College, Montgomery Bible College and others. He has also preached to prisoners.

He was called by the late Gus Nichols to hold a three-week gospel meeting in Walker County, where several were baptized, and where he debated a Mr. Horton. He also debated a Mr. Coleman in Corinth, Mississippi, and a Mr. McQueen in Carbondale, Illinois.

Brother Harris says he has learned much from the books put out by Gus Nichols and other books of gospel sermons.

Harris say he has Christ's gospel and will travel-call him if you need him!

NOTICE FROM THE SIXTH AVENUE ELDERSHIP

Due to Bro. Russ Crosswhite's resignation as one of our preachers, we are looking for a young married man to work under the Sixth Avenue Eldership, and with Bro. Flavil Nichols, with this congregation in its programs. Anyone interested should mail a resume to:

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

"Deathbed Conversions Are Acceptable"

The above caption is the headline of an article printed in the Daily Mountain Eagle, Jasper, Alabama, August 3, 1984. The author is James Crichton. Yes, "Deathbed Conversion is acceptable" to Mr. Crichton; but not to Almighty God. We dare make this statement because the Holy Bible says nothing regarding "Deathbed Conversion." All Bible examples of conversion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit reveal that those converted heard the word; the preacher was always present; and those saved are those who heard and obeyed the truth of God (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Hebrews 5:8-9). To the foregoing divine rule there is no exception (Philippians 3:16; I Peter 4:11).

If Dr. Crichton's contention is true, where is the Scriptural proof? It is sadly lacking, alas! He says that many newspapers and magazines have carried accounts of "Deathbed Conversion;" but newspapers and magazines carry many false reports, viz., evolutionary incidents, so-called! But surely the aforementioned author would not claim such to be true. If a sinner can be saved "in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye," why did Jesus teach men to "watch and be ready" (Matthew 24:42; 25:10)?

Dr. Crichton raises an interesting question: "Can a man get right with God in the final hour of his life?" The reader needs to understand that Mr. Crichton is a Calvinist. Well, he believes and teaches "unconditional election and reprobation." What is that? It is the doctrine that God from all eternity chose a certain number to be saved and a certain number to be lost, and that these numbers are so definite that they cannot be added to nor diminished from ---that the elect cannot do anything to be lost, and that the non-elect cannot do anything to be saved!! What a God! And what a religion! What are the five main points of Calvinism? They are: Unconditional election and reprobation, hereditary total depravity, a limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the final perseverance of the saints. If Dr. Crichton does not believe these points (Calvinism), let him deny them!

As an example of "Deathbed Conversion," Mr. Crichton turns to Luke 23:39-43 as his proof. But this passage does not support Mr. Crichton's position. Does Mr. Crichton know nothing about the proper division of God's word (II Timothy 2:15)? Jesus was still alive, when he was talking to the thief, and could bestow his blessings with or without conditions, as he saw fit. Jesus' last will and testament had not gone into effect (Hebrews 9:16-17). And besides: Was the thief an "elect?" or, a "non-elect" person? It is certain that Mr. Crichton will not answer because, if he did, it would spoil his little playhouse. If one will but read Mark 2:1-12, one will see an example of Jesus' forgiving a man's sins during his personal ministry.

It should be borne in mind that the thief lived and died before the Great Commission was given (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). The thief was not subject to the commands of the Great Commission because he lived and died before it became operable. The thief died not believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, the thief knew nothing of Jesus' death and resurrection! Can one now be saved who does not believe that Jesus died, was buried, and raised from the cold, cold grave (Romans 10:9-10)? Thus, it can be easily seen that the thief is no example of conversion for lost humanity today!! No man can put himself in the same fleshly situation then occupied by the thief. Today, we must submit to these conditions now contained in the Great Commission. Hence, Mr. Crichton's proof-text does not fit the



W. A. HOLLEY

Christian dispensation under which all men now live (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38).

"A man can be made immediately right with God simply by turning to Christ as Saviour," says Mr. Crichton. The foregoing quotation may sound good; but does it represent Bible truth? If so, why did Jesus teach that sinners must believe (John 3:16), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), Confess Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33), and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16)?

Another false statement made by Dr. Crichton is: "... A man can be made fit for heaven apart from any good works or religious rites." Dr. Crichton cites Ephesians 2:8-9, as his proof-text; but this reference teaches that sinners are saved "by grace through faith." Sinners are not saved by "grace alone." Nor are they saved by "faith alone." What of the expression, "And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Brother Holley, Do you believe this passage? Yes, without any equivocation or reservation. What WORKS are excluded? Those WORKS excluded are, moral works and works of the law of Moses, but not those WORKS which God has commanded sinners to perform in order to be saved (John 6:28-29; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 1:5; 16:26; James 2:14-26). Is salvation a "gift of God?" Yes; but what kind of gift? It is a *conditional* gift (Matthew 6:11). Again, by the Holy Scriptures, Dr. Crichton is shown to be in error.

"In child-like faith he turned to Christ and trusted him as Saviour. He simply prayed, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,'" so wrote Dr. Crichton. Notice the verbs, "trusted"

and "turned" and "prayed." Does it sound like the thief did *nothing*, according to Dr. Crichton's contention? It is said, "There are none so blind as those who will not see." Mr. Crichton is so wedded to his theory that he cannot see the foolishness of his argument!

And then, to show his utter contempt for Luke 23:39-43 and Ephesians 2:8-9, he makes the following amazingly ridiculous statement: "But the Spirit of God worked a miracle of grace in his heart . . ." If God "worked a miracle of grace in his heart" to convert him, since God is no respecter of persons, why does he not work miracles of grace in the hearts of all people, the non-elect as well as the elect?? In this fashion, we would have universal salvation!! (Acts 10:34-35). What proves too much, proves nothing!!

The truth is: God has never "worked a miracle of grace" in any person's heart to convert him. It is true that the Spirit revealed and confirmed the word of God (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21). But it is the Spirit's word that possesses power to change the hearts of men (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:18, 21; I Peter 1:22-25). All people remain in sin where the gospel has not been preached (Romans 10:13-17). No miraculous conversions are mentioned in the New Testament. If Dr. Crichton will but give us Book, Chapter, and Verse, we shall be happy to consider them. Will he? — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Lest I Hinder This Meeting

In far too many places today gospel meetings have fallen on hard times. Some congregations have dismissed them permanently; others have them just occasionally. Far too many members attend but one service -- the Sunday morning one. They never return for any of the other services of the gospel meeting.

For about a third of a century now I have done much gospel meeting work along with local work and a daily writing ministry. This work has taken me from coast to coast and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast. In the opening service of a gospel meeting I usually request every member of the congregation NOT to make the first service his last to attend. But inevitably many will do that very thing. Such actions do not HELP gospel meetings; they always HINDER such. Many who read this article will have a gospel meeting at your home congregation in the near future. As this is written in mid-July of 1984 we are the midst of gospel meetings throughout our area. Our gospel meeting at Ripley, Tennessee, is going on. Three lessons have been given to date and there has been an increase at each service over the preceding one. Last year in a gospel meeting at Ripley, Tennessee, with Goebel Music preaching we averaged about forty more for each service than we ordinarily do for Sunday morning worship. We worked hard to achieve such. The elders and I begin to condition the congregation for a gospel meeting a good two or three months before the first service. We believe such pays off and has for us here. Here are some things I have asked our people to do relative to the gospel meeting now in effect. The thrust concerns *helping or hindering*.

The apostle Paul, a sincere and selfless servant of



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Christ, knew that the gospel in general can be hindered. He so stated in I Corinthians 9:12 wherein we read, "If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." There is a principle set forth herein that can apply to gospel meeting work. Each member of the participating congregation in the gospel meeting will be a HELPER or a HINDERER relative to the same. Obviously, each of us without exception should aim toward the former and shy totally away from the latter.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will ATTEND EVERY service. Attendance is not only the life's blood of our regular services on Sunday and Wednesday, but also of a gospel meeting. Faithful attendance will build up, strengthen, and enhance gospel meetings. Deliberate absenteeism is a sure way to kill gospel meetings. Brethren in general do not support gospel meetings the way they did when I was a child. They are not supported as well as they were in the early fifties when I began to conduct gospel meetings. Brother Guy N. Woods has preached in more gospel meetings than any other man among us. He says that 50 per cent of our members in general do not support gospel meetings. This is a sad commentary on half of our members. Coming just on Sunday morning, and deliberately ignoring the rest of the meeting is NOT supportive of gospel meetings.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will be ON TIME for EVERY service. People are usually late who plan to be late. They do not leave home early enough to be on time. The Godhead is ever on schedule. So is nature, his creation. His new creation, Christians, should be so disposed to be prompt--not tardy. Those always prompt have the same number of hours and minutes in each day as those always tardy. The prompt ones are just as busy as the tardy ones, as a general rule.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will be ENTHUSIASTIC in the singing, the praying, the attention I give the lessons, the friendly greetings I

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Lest I Hinder This Meeting

Continued From Page 3

extend others, and the spiritual growth I intend to make during this special evangelistic endeavor.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will **PRAY** daily for its success. I will pray for him who preaches, and for him who directs the singing. I will pray that every saint who attends will be built up in the faith most holy. I will pray that every unsaved person who attends will obey the gospel thus leaving Satan's ranks and becoming just a New Testament Christian. I will pray that God may be glorified, Christ honored, the Holy Spirit revered, and the truth held high at every service.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will **INVITE OTHERS** to come. I will do as Isaiah counseled in

Isaiah 1:18 about coming and reasoning together. I will be a modern Andrew and seek to bring a Simon to the Saviour, or a modern Philip and bring a noble Nathanael to the saving Christ (John 1:40-51). I will invite others to accompany me even as predictive prophecy indicated would be the case in coming Christianity (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2). And when they come, they will not have to seek my presence in vain; I shall be there to extend to them a warm welcome, a cherry "Hello!"

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will put **FORWARD MY BEST FOOT**. I shall be a warm, friendly, vibrant Christian at every service. People will see in me one who is happy to be a Christian. A

song I have often sung with children carries the lovely lyric "Isn't it grand to be a Christian?" And it **REALLY** is! Gloom and God do not belong in the same heart. Doom and Deity have no compatibility. Joy and Jesus have a natural and noble affinity.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I **FULLY INTEND** for it to **DRAW ME CLOSER TO GOD**, make me into a better person at home, on the job, at play, and in the community, and make heaven more real and nearer than ever before.

LEST I HINDER THIS MEETING I will just plan to **MAJOR** in **HELPING** this meeting with all the power and might of my being. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The "National Israel" Mania

Continued From Page 1

(No. 2)

Galatians 3:29 tells us who are now Abraham's seed. His seed are *not* infidelic Jews, regardless of where they live. Paul, a Jew himself, wrote:

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 (Galatians 3:26-29).

Faith -- not flesh -- ties people to Abraham today! Physical Israel, with its adamant rejection of the Heavenly Redeemer, cannot qualify as real, true Abrahamic children today. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

The Pervie Nichols Memorial Scholarship Fund For Preachers

We wish to perpetuate the memory of Pervie Nichols a beloved gospel preacher who was born near Jasper, Alabama, October 18, 1912, and died at Jasper, July 11, 1984. In his preaching he told what God's word said on the subject, usually citing the Bible reference. He was interested in training and encouraging others in book-chapter-and-verse preaching.

This **PERVIE NICHOLS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND** is being established at the Memphis School of Preaching to honor his memory and to prepare other men to "preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2). Additional contributions, large and small, are desired and solicited for this scholarship fund. It is the intention of those creating this scholarship that the principal (including any and all additional contributions thereto) shall be invested; and only the high rate of interest accrued shall be made available for deposit into the "Student Fund" for distribution to needy and deserving students in the Memphis School of Preaching, all of whom are preparing to preach the gospel.

Each student who is a recipient of support from the **PERVIE NICHOLS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND** shall be informed of the one in whose honor the Fund is established, and shall sign an agreement to continue as a faithful member of the church of Christ, and faithfully to preach the gospel as it is in the Bible, without addition, subtraction, or crook, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15), as did brother Pervie Nichols. Each recipient will be encouraged personally to give to the Fund. Since the principal will never be touched and since additional gifts will be added to the principal, the **PERVIE NICHOLS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND** will be a perpetual honor and memorial to this great gospel preacher.

The administration of the Memphis School of

Preaching, 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38118, is charged with administering the **PERVIE NICHOLS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR PREACHERS**. Each applicant will be considered and evaluated on his own merits and needs, with no minimum nor maximum limit set for the amount of any grant, except as the said administration may deem wise and as the funds become available for disbursement.

A RESPONSE

As director of the Memphis School of Preaching and on behalf of the elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ, (who have the oversight of the School), and on behalf of the faculty, student body, future students, and alumni, I wish to express gratitude to Sister Pervie Nichols, and to all of brother Pervie's family for establishing the **PERVIE NICHOLS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR PREACHERS**, in honor of a great and good man -- a faithful, untiring evangelist. My family and I, as well as countless others, were blessed tremendously by his exemplary life and work. How appropriate for countless numbers of "men of the Book" to be trained in his honor, in the intensive collegiate program of the Memphis School of Preaching!

I predict that numerous friends of the Nichols family including those whose lives have been enriched by the work of brother Pervie Nichols, will respond out of great generosity and will rally to make this memorial and honor an overwhelming success. Brother Pervie Nichols loved preaching, and he loved preachers of the Word! Each contribution to the **PERVIE NICHOLS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR PREACHERS** will be acknowledged by letter, and the School will inform the family of the donations to the fund.

Curtis A. Cates, Director
Memphis School of Preaching

IBC Workshop '84

Continued From Page 3

program for the Madison congregation in Nashville, Tennessee.

At 11:00 on both Friday and Saturday, a special program, "Bread of Life For Starving Millions" will be conducted in the Alexander Activities Building. No other sessions will be offered in this time period. Twelve speakers, including current missionaries, six at each session, will chart the current progress of world evangelism and look at future opportunities.

Again this year young men participating in the *Lads To Leaders* training program will inspire and motivate audiences nightly in brief speeches prior to the keynote addresses.

There will be an attended nursery during the Workshop and Bible activities for older children during the night sessions. For any further information, please write: Evangelism Workshop, P.O. Box IBC, Florence, AL 35630, or phone (205) 766-6610 or 1-800-982-4807.

GUS NICHOLS - WORDS OF TRUTH

LECTURESHIP

SIXTH AVENUE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1984 - Jasper, Al.



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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NUMBER 36

The "National Israel" Mania

(NO. 3)

In THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, Memphis, Tennessee, March 8, 1978, there appeared an article that was filled and overflowing with Dispensational Premillennialism. It was entitled " 'Chosen People' Retain Backing." In this series for WORDS OF TRUTH I am giving the full article, segment by segment, and making appropriate comments as progression of the article occurs. Premillennialism and politics have far more in common than the simple fact that each term begins with the alphabetical letter "P." This is proved by the segment quoted and commented upon in this article. Much of the material presented will refer to Jimmy Carter, then President of our nation, but now an ex-president. However, the Carter case is not isolated as touching how high governmental leaders have felt (and do feel) relative to Arab-Israel relations, and how they touch our own policies.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

The press secretary said he was surprised during the presidential campaign when Carter's fundamentalist religion was questioned as possibly anti-Jew.

"Inevitably, when we make a decision on arms sales there is a tendency on the part of some to revive that issue," Powell said.

The Carter administration agreed last month to sell 50 F5E jets to Egypt and 60 F-15s to Saudi Arabia, along with 75 F-16's and 15 F-15's to Israel.

"We don't mind tough debates on the Middle East on issues," Powell said, "but it is bad for the United States and bad for Israel if the arguments are allowed to slough over into the question of anti-Semitism."

TRUTHS FROM TAYLOR--III

If Ex-President Carter believes that God still has a peculiar place for National Israel in a sense that he has NONE for other nations, and that heaven's eye is primarily focused upon a tiny land lying at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea, he has studied the Bible with very little profit. But that is par for the course of those who espouse materialistic premillennialism. Judaism died as a religious movement at Calvary, and the forty year political corpse was buried forever at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. For nearly two thousand years now, God has recognized no physical nation as being his in a peculiar sense. His people now are the ones who obey and revere his Son. His nation is now composed of Christians. Simon Peter, an inspired Jew of the first century, wrote of Christians, not the physical descendants of Abraham, when he stated in crystal clear language:

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ . . . But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath

called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (I Peter 2:5,9,10).

According to Titus 2:14 God's people are those who have been redeemed by Christ; they are the ones who are zealous of good works. Modern Israel does not qualify in a single one of these imperative essentials, these spiritual absolutes. They are not lively stones; they do not constitute a spiritual house. They are not holy as a priesthood; they are in no position to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Spiritual sacrifices MUST be offered through the mediatorial agency of Christ. But as a modern nation they could not care less about Jesus Christ than they currently do. If so, how, How, HOW??? Even individual Jews who do accept Christianity are excommunicated from a Jewish family. While in Jerusalem some years ago I talked with a young Jew who attended one of our devotional services in the hotel where we were staying. He exhibited an interest in Christ and Christianity, but told us what the cost would be from his family if he became a Christian; and the price as high. At that time he was not yet willing to pay the full price and bear the cross of Christ in a land long hostile to God's Son, and among a people who still count him an imposter and worthy of the very crucifixion a previous generation of infidelic Jews inflicted upon him. I have no way of knowing whether he ever obeyed the gospel or not.

Modern Israel is not a chosen generation; modern Israel is neither a royal priesthood nor a nation of holiness. They are not exhibiting the real praises of God which can ONLY ascend in the name of Jesus -- the very one they hate and despise. They are not the called out; they are not the people of God today. Yet our former president in particular, and all premillennial Southern Baptists in general, have just enough premillennial blood in their religious veins to honor religiously and spiritually those who hate and despise Jesus Christ. How amazingly amazing! How utterly incredible!! Southern Baptists in general and our former president in particular should realize


SENTIMENTS FROM SMITH--III

White House press secretary Jody Powell said in a Washington interview that Carter, a Southern Baptist, has a "basic feeling of identification with Israel because of his years of studying the Old Testament."

"Carter's religion," Powell said, "strengthens his commitment to basic American foreign policy, which is the survival of Israel." But, the White House spokesman added, "it does not affect Carter's day-to-day decisions."

"We do not look to the major and minor prophets to decide how many F-15's and F-16's to sell to somebody," Powell said.

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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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"Little Me"

Ola Edgeworth

I'm just a tiny baby. My weight:
No more than an ounce or two.
But we babies have our rights,
The same as any of you.

We have a right to be born,
The same as others do.
We have the right to be named:
Mary, Tom, Jack, or Sue.

We babies are very tiny:
But even we have a soul.
We have a life ahead
That any one of you can mold.

That is, if you will let us live,
As other children will.
We would like the chance to run and jump,
And climb every single hill.

But if you decide to kill me,
I will go beyond the blue.
But, you should prayerfully think about
What will happen to you.

When in that day we gather,
Each one around God's throne:
Will you be there? or, be reaping
The seeds that you have sown?

I'm truly very tiny, and
As helpless as can be;
But I don't see why any one
Would mistreat "LITTLE ME!"
--Route 2, Detroit, AL 35552

LECTURESHIP

GUS NICHOLS — WORDS OF TRUTH
SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1984 - Jasper, AL



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Fifth Annual Gus Nichols — Words Of Truth Lectureship

The "Gus Nichols--Words of Truth" Lectureship begins each year the last Sunday in September. During the last few years of my father's life, he conducted annually what some others organized as the "Gus Nichols Preachers' Workshop" near Mobile, Alabama. After his death the "Words Of Truth Lectureship" was held at Indian Creek Youth Camp, and later in Jasper. These two events were merged, and this will be the fifth annual combined lectureship.

Beginning September 30, there will be five nights and four days of intensive Bible teaching. All sessions will be conducted at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth . . ." (Romans 1:16). The GOSPEL is God's power to save! Yet it is not unscriptural to tell something about the "earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:3-7). The apostle Paul wrote some things about his own personal life (e.g., II Corinthians 11:23-30; Galatians 1:13-24). He put in writing some updated information about Onesimus (Philemon 9-21). In complimentary terms he described Timothy before sending him to Philippi (Philippians 2:19-23), and also gave an insight into the life of Epaphroditus (verses 25-30).

Here is some background information about some more of our speakers.

By request of the Eldership at Sixth Avenue, some member of the Gus Nichols family begins the lectureship each year. This year's first speaker will be Nick Hamilton, son of Carrie (Nichols) and W. T. Hamilton. His full name is "Gus Nichols Hamilton," but about the only name he ever has been called is "Nick." He is the only one in the family named for his grandfather.

Born in Frederick, Oklahoma, Nick received his B.A. from Oklahoma Christian College, then completed the classroom work for his Master's at A.C.U. He began preaching at Kress, Texas. After laboring with the New Hope church, Amory, Mississippi, he was for three years at White Rock in Dallas, then came to Little Rock, where he has been since 1976. For seven years he has spoken on the MASTER & HIS MESSAGE TV program over the



ABC affiliate in Little Rock on Sunday mornings. Although still a relatively young man, he has preached in 15 states and in Canada. He and his wife (nee: Kathy Belle Meeks, whose father, John Meeks, is a gospel preacher in New York) have two daughters.

Brother Hamilton's subject to begin our Lectureship Sunday night, September 30, at 7 p.m., will be: "Is The Young Man . . . Safe?"

The son of a gospel preacher, Joe E. Williams was born near Bells, Tennessee, and graduated from Freed-Hardeman College, and later from the University of Alabama. His wife (formerly Dot Welch) is also a graduate of FHC, and they have three children. Both their two sons, and also their son-in-law, preach the gospel.

For four years Bro. Williams preached in Parsons, Tennessee. He was at Amory, Mississippi, five years, and now is in his 25th year as minister at the Northport church, in the Tuscaloosa vicinity.

He has conducted regular radio and TV programs, and has done limited writing. He has appeared on lectureships, workshops, or special programs at Harding, Alabama Christian, International Bible College, Freed-Hardeman, and Alabama Christians School of Religion. Each year for 18 years he has served as Bible teacher at the area-wide Youth Forum at Columbus, Mississippi.

During our Lectureship Joe Williams will speak on the subject "What Is Thy Name?" at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 2.

Jere Via grew up in West Tennessee, and attended Freed-Hardeman College. He began preaching at his home, Alamo, Tennessee, in 1947 -- thirty-seven years ago! He married Sue Kelly, whose father (K.M.) was a gospel preacher also. After Freed-Hardeman, Jere attended Abilene Christian, and received his B.A. degree from David Lipscomb College. He continued his studies at Peabody College and earned his M.A. from Alabama Christian School of Religion.

He has done local work twice in Albany, Georgia, and has served churches in Manchester, Tennessee,



JOE E. WILLIAMS



NICK HAMILTON



JERE VIA
Douglasville, Ga.

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Going Down To Egypt For Help

God delivered Israel from the oppressive bondage of Egypt. Yet throughout her history Israel repeatedly showed affinity toward Egypt. God gave this warning: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help . . ." (Isaiah 31:1).

Israel was a type of the Lord's church; Egypt, a type of the world of sin from which the church has been separated. At times the tendency of the church is to return to "Egypt" (the world) for help. Surely God's woe is on us if we do this, just as it was on physical Israel as they gravitated toward Egypt. Israel's attraction to Egypt contains several analogies for us as we consider various ways she went down to Egypt for help.

Israel Used Egyptian Religious Helps

Scarcely had the Israelites been separated from Egypt until they made a golden calf to worship (Exodus 32:8). Although many modern-day scholars claim this calf to have been copied from Canaanite gods, the Bible connects it with Egypt. Stephen said, "our fathers . . . turned back again into Egypt . . . and they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol" (Acts 7:39-41). Later Joshua had to warn Israel to "put away the gods which your fathers served . . . in Egypt" (Joshua 24:14). Ezekiel wrote that Israel did not "forsake the idols of Egypt" when God brought them out of Egypt (Ezekiel 20:6-8).

A century ago many in the Lord's church followed Israel's example by returning to the world for religious help -- the instrument of music. We constantly need to remind ourselves even today that the Lord is pleased by our worshiping him in the way he has specified, not by doing what the world thinks best, or what appeals to our emotions. It is *never* right for the Lord's people to do something just because the world does it!

The religious world depends on entertainment and an unending array of gimmicks to draw people to their churches. Some of these means may draw multitudes, but this does not make it right for us to resort to such methods. The drawing power that God uses is the cross of Christ and the salvation it provides (John 12:32,33). Our part in this "drawing" process is to teach the gospel (John 6:44,45). Some may object that this will not bring the masses to the Lord; but if the salvation that God freely offers and the story of what Christ endured to provide it will not interest people in the Lord's way, he has no other attractions! The gospel is God's power to save! (Romans 1:16).

Israel Longed for Egyptian Food

Numbers 11:4-6 tells of the rebellion of Israel against the manna God had so graciously provided during their stay in the barren wilderness. They longed for the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt. As a result, "the anger of the Lord was greatly kindled" (verse 10).

It has been our observation that some members of the Lord's church prefer for spiritual food *denominational* teaching, rather than the pure milk and meat of God's word (I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:14). Instead of the Bible, and good Bible-based articles in gospel papers that are written by faithful brethren, they prefer the latest articles and books of Billy Graham, Hal Lindsey, and the like. They love to listen to denominational radio and TV programs, talking of the "good" they get from them. They seem not to realize that they are feeding on poisonous 'junk food'



JOE E. GALLOWAY

that will weaken and kill spiritual life, rather than that which will nourish the soul! Several times through the years some member has enthusiastically told of some so-called "Bible movie" they have just seen, and of the help it provided in their better understanding the Bible. Later via TV we have viewed the same movies, and without exception have found many inaccuracies, including much denominational error. Why are we sometimes more hungry for the food of Egypt than the "manna of God?"

Israel Sent to Egypt for Help in Time of Trouble

God had repeatedly promised Israel that *he* would take care of them, fighting their battles for them, if they would be faithful to him (e.g., Deuteronomy 28:1,7). He had warned them not to possess horses and chariots, and not to make alliances with other nations (e.g. Deuteronomy 17:16). Yet, when Assyria became a threat, Israel asked Egypt to help them. God's prophet wrote: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay ['rely' -- A.S.V.] on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!" (Isaiah 31:1). He reminded them that "the Egyptians are men, and not God" (verse 3), that Egypt would be like a broken reed staff, which would pierce the one leaning on it (36:6), and that such would be a shame to them rather than profit (30:3-7).

Israel Sought Counsel of the Wise Men of Egypt

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of men . . . that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!" (Isaiah 30:1-2).

It is to *our* shame that *we* sometimes may do this in lawsuits (see I Corinthians 6:1,5) or in using worldly counselors for marriage (or other family) problems, when competent Christians could provide much safer advice. It is our studied conviction that godly elders can usually provide much better counsel than some secular-oriented 'professional' counselor. Congregations have been known to use non-Christians to teach them church-growth methods, or to lecture on matters relating to morality and the home. Are there not wise, competent men among *us* who can be used for such needs? Although some good material may be presented, error may also accompany it. Besides, we have shown acceptance and approval to

those in denominational error! Although we may deny it, compromise has begun that breaks down the separation (II Corinthians 6:17) that must be maintained between truth and error, between right and wrong, between denominationalism and the Lord's church.

Israel Longed for the Ease of Egypt

At the time of the Babylonian threat some were saying: "We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war . . . nor have hunger" (Jeremiah 42:13,14). This "ease" in Egypt was only imaginary, for God warned them that the sword would overtake them in Egypt, along with famine, and they would die there (verses 16, 17).

Some Christians appear to spend all of their lives wishing they could enjoy the pleasures of the world. They, too, forget that the pleasures of the world are actually bondage (John 8:34) -- bondage that will terminate in eternal misery.

Israel Desired Egypt More Than the Promised Land

This statement sums up the attitude of the many we have been considering who were attracted to Egypt. God had prepared a land that was physically attractive for his people, a land which abundantly flowed with "milk and honey." It was to be a land in which his people could, with proper effort, grow and develop into the proper environment for the work of Christ and the beginning of the church. Yet, few in Israel had the faith and vision to see its superiority over Egypt, that highly developed civilization of which they had been a part for some four hundred years.

Let us not make the same tragic mistake. This world with its attractions of wisdom, material things, pleasures, and the sensational *now* often causes *us* to lose sight of the more important things of the Lord's kingdom which will benefit *eternally*. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4). "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18). — 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.

The "National Israel" Mania

Continued from Page 1

this; and they COULD if they would remove their pre-millennial goggles and see the Bible through a clear lens for a change.

But some reader may say, "Are unbelieving Gentiles any better than the infidelic Jews you have just depicted?" NOT ONE BIT! But here is the difference: I know of no one who refers to Gentiles who hate and despise Jesus Christ, the New Testament and the Christian religion, as "God's Chosen People." Do you? If so, who would they be? People, as a rule, do not have any trouble placing unbelieving Gentiles in a proper category -- children of the devil. The very same category belongs to every accountable Jew on earth today who has rejected Christ and Chris-

tianity. And that is just where Jesus Christ placed such infidelic Jews at Smyrna and Philadelphia in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9.

We need men in high places in Washington who will resist all efforts from the "National Israel" Mania proponents to have political decisions made which are based upon a total misunderstanding of Old Testament prophecies. We are in real trouble when premillennial policies are guiding decisions made relative to Israel-Arab relationships. There have been far, Far, FAR too many decisions made in Washington in recent decades where plain old premillennialism was leading around politics on a leash. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Fifth Annual Gus Nichols - Words Of Truth Lectureship

Continued from page 2

and at Bradenton, Florida. For more than ten years he has preached in Douglasville, Georgia. His radio experience includes both daily and weekly programs. He has served as moderator and panel member of a weekly TV series from Albany, Georgia. He has helped in the establishment of new congregations, and gospel campaigns have taken him to the West Indies

as well as to several states. He has been a Bible Camp director, and a counselor of youth for a quarter of a century.

During our Fifth Annual GUS NICHOLS -- WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship brother Via will speak on the subject: "Was It Not In Thine Own Power?" Thursday, October 4, at 1:30 p.m.

Getwell Church of Christ presents

The Ninth Annual "SPIRITUAL SWORD" LECTURESHP "The Book Of Ephesians"

Oct. 21 - 25, 1984

1511 GETWELL ROAD, MEMPHIS, TN 38111

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21

- 9:30 G. ELKINS
The State Of The Ephesians While They Were Still In The World (Eph. 2:1-12)
- 10:20 H. McCORD
Greeting And Benediction (Eph. 1:1-2); Expression Of Praise Of God (Eph. 1:3-14)
- 3:00 G. WORKMAN
Paul's Prayer (Eph. 1:15-23)
- 7:00 N. MERIDETH
Introduction To The Book Of Ephesians
- 8:00 T. WARREN
The Only Christians Are In The One Body (Eph. 2:13-18)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22

- 9:00 B. SMITH
The Present Condition Of The Ephesians Versus Their Condition While Yet In The World (Eph. 2:19-22)
- 10:00 C. CATES
Paul's Commission To Preach Unto The Gentiles The Unsearchable Riches Of Christ (Eph. 3:1-13)
- 11:00 W. CLARK
The Main Theme Carried On In Paul's Prayer In Regard To Knowledge Which Is Crucial To The Fulfillment Of His Eternal Purpose (Eph. 3:14-19)
- 1:00 D. CONLEY
Description And Praise Of God (Eph. 3:20-21)
- 2:00 W. TEMPLE
Paul Beseeches The Ephesians To Walk Worthily Of Their Calling (Eph. 4:1-3)
- 3:00 F. SMITH
There Is One Body (Eph. 4:4)
- 7:00 R. TURNER
There Is One Spirit (Eph. 4:4)
- 8:00 F. NICHOLS
There Is One Hope (Eph. 4:4)



Jody Apple



C.W. Bradley



Darrell Conley



Kenneth Jones



Billy Smith



Andrew Connally



Kerry Knight



Foy Smith



Roy Deaver



Dub McClish



Robert Taylor



Buster Dobbs



Hugo McCord



Winston Temple



Garland Elkins



Noel Merideth



Rex Turner

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23

- 9:00 B. DOBBS
There Is One Lord (Eph. 4:6)
- 10:00 R. TAYLOR
There Is One Faith (Eph. 4:6)
- 11:00 T. VARNER
There Is One Baptism (Eph. 4:6)
- 1:00 J. APPLE
There Is One God (Eph. 4:6)
- 2:00 W. WILDER
The Christian Walk Promotes Usefulness And Maturity (Eph. 4:7-16)
- 3:00 R. JOHNSON
The Christian Walk Is Characterized By (1) Putting Off "The Old Man" and (2) Putting On "The New Man" (Eph. 4:17-32)
- 7:00 G. MUSIC
The Christian Life Is One Of Imitating God And Christ And Of Not Partaking In Evil (Eph. 5:1-7)
- 8:00 A. HIGHERS
The Christian Life Is One Of Accepting Light And Of Rejecting Evil (Eph. 5:8-14)

Lunch Break - 11:45-1:00
Dinner Break - 3:45-7:00
ATTENDED NURSERY



David Brown



Curtis Cates



Winifred Clark



Wayne Coats

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24

- 9:00 V. HOWARD
The Christian Life Is One Of Walking In Wisdom In A Spirit Of Gratitude To The Lord (Eph. 5:15-21)
- 10:00 K. KNIGHT
Relation Of Husbands And Wives Explained By The Relation Of Christ And The Church (Eph. 5:22-32)
- 11:00 D. BROWN
Parents And Children (Eph. 6:1-4)
- 1:00 D. GULLEDGE
Masters And Servants (Eph. 6:5-9)
- 2:00 D. McCLISH
The Basic Warfare And The General Equipment Of The Christian Soldier (Eph. 6:10-13)
- 3:00 W. COATS
The Specific Equipment Of The Christian Soldier-And His Resulting Boldness In The War Against The Forces Of Evil (Eph. 6:14-20)
- 7:00 C. BRADLEY
Paul Sends Tychicus To Ephesus: A Final Prayer In Regard To Peace, Love And Grace (Eph. 6:21-24)
- 8:00 R. DEEVER
SPECIAL CONCLUSION: A Concluding Overall Look At The Book Of Ephesians

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25

- 9:00 B. JACKSON
If He Refuse To Hear The Church (Mt. 18:15-17)
- 10:00 T. WARREN
Some Crucial Questions On Christian Unity
- 11:00 K. JONES
Let There Be No Divisions Among You (I Cor. 1:10-13)
- 1:00 G. RAMSEY
Withdraw Yourself From The Disorderly (II Thess. 3:6-15)
- 2:00 J. MOFFITT
Marking And Refusing (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11)
- 3:00 R. PETERS
"Put Away The Wicked Man From Among Yourself" (I Cor. 5:1-13)
- 7:00 A. CONNALLY
Jesus Came To Bring Unity AND He Came To Bring Division (John 17:17-23; Mt. 10:34; Lk. 12:51)
- 8:00 W. WINKLER
Preaching The Whole Counsel Of God



Dennis Gulleage



Jerry Moffitt



Terry Varner



Alan Highers



Goebel Muisc



Thomas Warren



V.E. Howard



Flavyl Nichola



Wendell Winkler



Bill Jackson



Ray Peters



Gary Workman



Roger Johnson



Glenn Ramsey



William Wilder



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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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1984

NUMBER 37

The "National Israel" Mania

(NO. 4)

In a series of some six articles for WORDS OF TRUTH I am presenting material that touches much of the premillennial "fodder" that is being fed to our almost totally-gullible world through the media of the day. Quite specifically, I am currently reviewing a rather lengthy article that appeared in THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, March 8, 1978, and was entitled, "'Chosen People' Retain Backing." The article was penned by Philip W. Smith, and is a Nashville-based story. I am presenting it segment by segment, sentence by sentence, and word by word, along with my comments of refutation as progression is made.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

along with many others in the Christian community feel that God's hand is upon Israel in a special way."

TRUTHS FROM TAYLOR -- IV

These statements reflect just how deeply rooted dispensational premillennialism is in denominational thinking in our time. Evidently, Lewis of the church of God has spent far, Far, FAR more time with the works of J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield (the father and chief promoter respectively of dispensational premillennialism) than he has with the writers of the New Testament! His views fit precisely the popular sentiments of one Hal Lindsey and THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH (a book of flagrant falsehood and egregious error and yet it has sold into multiplied millions of copies. A movie was even made some years back which was based on the book).

Just who are these people who live in modern Palestine? Are they Christians? Are they trying to evangelize the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ as the gospel story of redeeming love? Are they preaching and practicing the terms of truth as set forth in the Great Commission? Are they championing the courageous case of New Testament Christianity as declared within Holy Writ? Are they leading the defense in the Battle for the Bible that now faces so critically and crucially the whole religious world? If one goes to Palestine today, will he find the Lord's church in every city, town, hamlet and rural section, planted in each of these places by the very people Lewis affirms have the focus of God's attention upon them? Will he find the land buzzing with the noble narrative of redeeming love as set forth in the sacrifice of a Galilean Carpenter more than nineteen centuries ago? No! This is not what he will find at all! It is not what I found when I walked the streets of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Bethany, Tel-Aviv, Jericho, or the rural sections of Southern, Central, and Northern Palestine.

Here is what modern Israel contains, as one able writer has correctly appraised the situation:

Today some 2.7 million Jews are living in Palestine, and they to a great extent are reviving many of their distinctive historic features and customs. However, the religious faith of the vast majority is neither true Judaism nor Chris-

tianity . . . Most of them hold to a modified and liberalized Judaism, and some are atheists. Very few accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah or look for God literally to fulfill Old Testament scriptures some time in the future (Tom Holland, PREMILLENNIALISM, TRUE OR FALSE? Wendell Winkler, Editor, p. 86).

This is from a 1978 book and therefore a fairly up-to-date appraisal of the situation there. The ONLY change in the statements might be the exact number now living there. The other statements are just as true in 1984 as they were when brother Holland gave them in 1978.

Mr. Lewis needs to take another look at the people he thinks enjoy the focus of high and holy heaven resting upon them. Note that most of them have modified and liberalized their own inherited religion from ancient times. Very few of them are "Christians" -- and yet Willis has God's special favor resting upon them!

But look at the real facts to which Willis deliberately shuts his eyes in order to keep from beholding: modern Jews in present Palestine could not care less about the Christ and the New Testament than they now do. They are infidels as far as Christ and Christianity are concerned!

Yet the misled and misguided religious leaders in the United States today, such as Willis of the church of God, affirm these infidelic Jews to be God's special people today! They even affirm that what Israel now does just *has to work*. They say we are witnessing God's focus upon a nation. They affirm that Jehovah's hand is upon modern Israel in a powerful, special way. Religious leaders such as Willis understand neither Old Testament prophecy nor New Testament teaching. Did they never read, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him?" (Acts 10:34,35). Did they never read, "For there is no respect of persons with God?" (Romans 2:11). Did they NEVER read, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus? And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise?" (Galatians 3:28,29). — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

SENTIMENTS FROM SMITH -- IV

When U.S. politicians seem to shift toward the Arabs, "there is a feeling that these people are messing with God's people," said Lewis J. Willis, a spokesman for the Church of God.


Based in Cleveland, Tennessee, the Church of God with between 2 million and 3 million members, is among the more conservative of Protestant denominations.

Willis said Carter and Congress "may get a chance to test these feelings" on the sale of planes to Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

There is a feeling among members of the Church of God that "Israel is God's nation and what they do has to work," Willis said.

"This is the focus of God on a nation," he added.

"While it is not proper for us to say that whatever Israel does is OK," Willis said, "I



Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

More About Lectureship Speakers

With full awareness that the saving power is in the MESSAGE, not the MESSENGER, I continue to write about some of the men who will speak in our Fifth Annual *Gus Nichols* — WORDS OF TRUTH Lectureship September 30- October 4, 1984. Just as it is appropriate to state orally some introductory remarks about a speaker to introduce him to the audience, it likewise is fitting to write in WORDS OF TRUTH about speakers at the lectureship which bears the name of this journal and its founding Editor, the late Gus Nichols. This is done in the sincere HOPE ("desire, plus expectation of receiving") that knowing about the speakers will stimulate a desire to hear them personally. — Editor

JAMES F. WYERS

Born in Fayette County, Alabama, James F. Wyers is the son of a gospel preacher, Marshall Wyers. Marshall's father was Gus Nichols' uncle (brother to his mother); and his mother was Mrs. Gus Nichols' sister.



JAMES F. WYERS

James began preaching in 1959, and has preached since 1982 at Winfield, where his father formerly was the local minister for several years --and is yet a member. The previous twelve years he was at Amory, Mississippi; and from 1965-1970 he preached at Sulligent, Alabama. Before that he was at Reform, Alabama, for three years.

Married to the former Loretta Butler, they have two daughters.

He has 15 years radio experience, and has held meetings in Alabama and Mississippi, beside a campaign in the Cayman Islands. Both Alabama Christian College and Freed-Hardeman College have had him on their lectureships, and he has also conducted chapel services elsewhere.

The topic "*What Lack I Yet?*" has been assigned to James F. Wyers for the 1:30 session on Wednesday, October 3, during the *Gus Nichols* — Words of Truth Lectureship at Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama.

BOBBY DUNCAN

Monday night the speaker at the Gus Nichols --Words of Truth Lectureship will be Bobby Duncan. His topic will be: "Who Is On The Lord's Side?" Different song leaders will direct the congregational singing beginning at 7:00 p.m., and the evening Lecture begins at 7:30 p.m.



BOBBY DUNCAN

Bobby Duncan was born in Jacksonville, Alabama, and was baptized by Joe S. Hyde, whose grandfather (C. A. Wheeler) converted Gus Nichols and started him to

preaching. Brother Bobby Duncan began preaching in 1951 at Jacksonville, and attended Freed-Hardeman College, Jacksonville State, Birmingham Southern, and Alabama Christian School of Religion (B.A., M.A.).

Since 1956 brother Duncan has been the local minister at only three congregations: Munford, Adamsville, and Jasper, all in Alabama. After 18 years at Adamsville, he came to Sixth Avenue for seven-and-one-half years, and then returned to Adamsville a year ago. While in Jasper he served as Editor of Words of Truth, in addition to conducting daily radio and television programs. At Adamsville he is on cable television five days a week for thirty minutes a day.

He and the Adamsville church began a monthly publication, VIGIL, in 1973, of which he again now serves as Editor. He preaches in five-to-ten meetings a year, and has appeared on lectureships of Christian colleges, schools of preaching, and others. In 1971 he toured Russia and the Bible lands, and hosted a tour of Bible lands in 1978.

He and his wife (nee: Lois Ann Elliot) have two children: Mrs. "Butch" (Jill) Wallace, and Tim.

JERRIE BARBER

A native of Centerville, Tennessee, Jerrie Barber graduated from Freed-Hardeman College while it was a Junior College (1966), where he also received the Third Year Certificate in Bible. In 1967 he graduated from David Lipscomb.

He preached his first sermon at the age of sixteen, and since that time has preached for three congregations locally, while holding meetings in several states. He is now preaching at Central church in Dalton, Georgia.



JERRIE BARBER

Married to the former Gail Champion of Cullman, Alabama, he and his wife have two children: Jerrie Wayne, and Christi Gail. His hobbies are jogging and ventriloquism.

In addition to his local church work, he also holds several workshops, speaking at youth rallies, and preaching in about four gospel meetings a year. He is a frequent speaker on lectureships, in training series, and in workshops.

Brother Barber will speak each morning at 9:30 (Monday through Thursday) on the question: "Lord, What Wilt Thou Have Me To Do?"

Continued On Page 4

The Widow Of Zarephath

Great lessons about life and death, faith and devotion can be learned from the study of the lives and deeds of others. This study is about the widow of Zarephath, who fed and lodged the prophet Elijah during a long and painful famine (I Kings 17:8-24).

The Cast of Characters

There was Elijah, "the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced" (Dean Stanley). Elijah is called "the Tishbite"



JOHN WADDEY

since he hailed from Tishbe, a village east of the Jordan. He was a prophet of Jehovah. A prophet was primarily a spokesman for God (Exodus 4:16). As he delivered God's message, he might (or might not) predict future events. Elijah has been styled the prophet of fire, since on two occasions God confirmed his words with lightning bolts from heaven (II Kings 1:10).

Elijah was a strange and eccentric man. He lived the life of an ascetic--apart from society. He never married and we often find him dwelling in the desolate wilderness country. The Bible calls him "a hairy man" which suggests a heavy beard (II Kings 1:8). He wore the coarse prophet's mantle that would be comparable to our burlap, and was girded with a large leather girdle or belt.

His manner and method were unsettling to the wicked. His mysterious appearances from the back country; his bold, daring condemnations of idolatry, its promoters and practitioners, struck fear in their hearts (I Kings 19:10). When he appeared to the widow of Zaraphath he was a fugitive, a wanted man. He was homeless, friendless, and hungry.

The Widow

The heroine of our story was a poor widow with a young son to care for. She was painfully

(Continued on page 3)

The Widow Of Zarephath

(Continued from page 2)

poor. In those days, there were no pensions, no social security, no insurance. She was down to her last bite of food with no hope of another. Starvation was staring her in the face. The woman was a Gentile, living in a pagan land. Zarephath was a city of Phoenicia, near the Mediterranean Sea. It was situated between Tyre and Sidon.

The king of Sidon was Ethbaal, whose evil daughter Jezebel, had married Ahab, ruler of Northern Israel (I Kings 16:31). In the domain of her father was the last place Jezebel would think to search for God's prophet.

Despite her unfavorable background, this poor lady was a kind, benevolent and hospitable soul.

The Times

The date was approximately 905 B.C. Ahab and Jezebel ruled the kingdom of Israel in classic despotic corruption. She had converted her weak husband to the degenerate Baalism of her homeland. They were determined idolaters and dedicated enemies of Jehovah. His servants they persecuted to death. They were especially determined to lay hands on Elijah, their outspoken critic and judge. Never was the true religion of Jehovah at a lower ebb, or in greater jeopardy (II Kings 19:10).

As a judgment on those evil rulers, God sent an extended drought and famine upon their kingdom. It came as a direct response to Elijah's prayer (James 5:17). The drought brought terrible hardships upon all the people of the region, whether good or bad (Matthew 5:45).

The Episode at the Gate of Zaraphath

Elijah met the widow as she was gathering a few sticks of firewood to cook her last meal (I Kings 17:8-12). We can imagine how she reacted at his ragged appearance. (How would a modern lady react if she were unexpectedly confronted by some shaggy, bearded stranger, dressed in an eccentric way?) It probably terrified her at first. He asked her to fetch him "a little water in a vessel that I may drink." That she graciously consented to do. But then he asked her to "Bring me . . . a morsel of bread . . ." He was asking for her last bit of bread, not only from her mouth, but her son's as well! She protested, I have "but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse." "And Elijah said unto her, Fear not! go and do as thou has said; but make me thereof a little cake first . . . and afterward make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith Jehovah . . . The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail until that day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth" (17:13-14). She believed the man of God. She shared her last bit of food with God's prophet and received a prophet's reward (Matthew 10:41). To receive God's servant is to receive the Lord himself (Matthew 10:40). She gave unto God, and God gave unto her (Luke 6:38). Rather than her generosity leaving her hungry, it resulted in her eating more than she would have otherwise!

Faith's Double Reward

"The son of the woman . . . fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him" (I Kings 17:17-24). Her grief was unbearable. She agonized if perhaps it were her fault? Was he punished for her sins? The prophet did not chasten her for lack of faith, or faulty ideas; rather, he took her case directly to the Lord. For one who had done so much for him, he dared to ask what had never been seen nor done before. He asked God to bring the dead back to life. Three times he cried mightily unto Jehovah, "I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him . . . and he revived" (I Kings 17:21-22). The rugged prophet delivered the son to his mother's waiting arms. We can visualize the overwhelming joy of the happy moments. Tears of happiness would

have filled their eyes as the wide-eyed child embraced his weeping mother.

"And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is truth" (I Kings 17:24). Here is faith's confession. The evidence was overwhelming! She had to believe!

Lessons To Remember

Blessings are often wrapped in strange packages. There were blessings for her even in the death of her dear son. It brought her to a fuller faith. It made her conscious of her sin. Through the experience, she better understood death and resurrection. By this, she learned to follow God's ways. She learned the power of Israel's God to work all things for good for those that love him (Romans 8:28).

God often uses the most unlikely people to help his saints. It is doubtful that Elijah would have expected to find refuge in the home of a Gentile in Jezebel's home territory. A song writer expressed the thought:

"God moves in mysterious ways,
His wonders to perform."

Tobacco: Is It A Sin?

VICTOR M. ESKEW

On many occasions the question is posed: "Is smoking a sin?" This question is usually followed by another, which inquires: "If it is, what about the chewing of tobacco?" These questions may be asked by insincere querists, whose minds will not be changed regardless of the truth presented them. They will continue to puff and dip even if it is a transgression of God's law.

But to those who are sincere in their questioning, we first respond with a question: Can you imagine the Son of God with a cigarette clenched between his teeth, eyes watering because of the irritating smoke? Can you imagine our Savior's cheek bulging with tobacco, a trickle of juice running down his chin, and an outline of a can of "Skool" in his pocket? These pictures seem ridiculous, don't they? Of course, we can not see our Savior in such light. Then if not, we, as Christians, people who are *Christ-like*, should not be of such appearance either. We, the disciples of Christ, are to follow in his steps. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). We are to be a people who have Christ living in us. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). If I can not see Christ smoking, or chewing tobacco, yet I continue to do so, is Christ living in me? or, am I living for myself?

Secondly, we point out that smoking and chewing are nothing but lusts of the flesh. Peter, when writing about such lusts, said: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11). By these lusts Satan entices. If we allow them to conceive, sin will result. And the end of sin is death (James 1:14,15). Thus, one must learn to deny 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). Self denial must be practiced in many areas of living, if we want to be faithful followers of Jesus. Denying oneself the use of tobacco is just one of the many areas.

Not all the women of Phoenicia were evil, like Jezebel. We must not judge folks by their race or origin; but, by their character.

Benevolence extended to poor saints is a good investment which pays rich dividends (Proverbs 17:17). God has a law of reciprocity: "Give, and it shall be given unto you . . ." (Luke 6:38).

Faith is found in unlikely places. Few Hebrews would have expected to find such faith in heathen Phoenicia. We must never "write off" a community, or a person, because of race, or economic status, or present religion. All men need the gospel of Christ, and even among the most difficult and unresponsive groups, there are honest and good hearts waiting for the good news of Christ.

No home is exempt from suffering and death. Even saints must bear this burden (Hebrews 9:27). But he who puts God first in his life will be sure to find God with him at the last when he walks the valley of the shadow of death (Psalms 23:4).

May we "forget not to show love to strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Thirdly, we place before you the fact that a Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Corinthians 6:19,20). Anything which harms this temple, and which does not glorify God is sinful. "Investigation shows that the so-called 'benefits' from using tobacco are groundless assumptions and advertising humbug. The use of tobacco does not preserve the teeth, assist digestion, etc. It does shorten life, cause cancer, paralysis, hardening of the arteries, heart trouble, insanity, etc." In addition to nicotine (one of the deadliest poisons known), there are eighteen other poisons in tobacco. Thus, one can see that tobacco does harm the temple of the Holy Ghost. And lest we think that smokeless tobacco does not take its toll, listen to these words: "Smokeless tobacco is known to produce . . . oral leukoplakia (a precancerous condition) . . . gingival recession (gum decay) . . . and, periodontal bone destruction (the bone in which teeth are set). Physicians are urged to take a strong public stance in opposition" (The New England Journal of Medicine, April 3, 1980). Also, consider what the Journal of the American Medical Association had to say in the June 11, 1980 publication: "Snuff seems to be even more injurious to the oral cavity than cigarettes . . . (One chemical in) snuff has been shown to be tumorigenic (cause tumors) . . . The case against chewing tobacco may prove to be even more damaging. Overall, chewing or smoking, or both, accounted for 70 percent of cancers of the oral cavity, 75 percent of cancers of the hypopharynx and larynx, and 50 percent of cancers of the esophagus (in a study of 2,005 cancer patients)."

Are smoking cigarettes, cigars, and pipes, and chewing tobacco a sin? They are not Christ-like. They are fleshly lusts which war against the soul. They harm the body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. We ask you to make up your own mind. Then, repent and pray God that he will forgive you of your transgressions. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Is It A Sin To Debate?

One of the misconceived ideas of the religious world, and one which is entering the church, is that the Bible teaches it is a sin to debate. The proof texts that are so widely used are Romans 1:29 and II Corinthians 12:12, where the King James version uses the word *debate*, but which is accurately translated "strife" in the American Standard Version. The word "strife" (Greek: ERIS) means "contention; is the expression of enmity" (Vine). *Strife* is wrong. *Debating*, as we know it, is not wrong, but is scriptural. *Debating* is defined as to "dispute; to contend; to argue in detail" (Webster).



GEORGE REED

righteousness, Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (verse 10). John the Baptist tells the religious hypocrites of his day just about the same: "... Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:7,8). Don't forget, brethren, these were men who spoke the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

We Must do the Same

Peter tells us to "sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give *answer (apologia)* to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). Paul says, "... that ye may know how ye ought to *answer (apokrinomai)* each one" (Colossians 4:6). Jude tell us we are "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The word *eponizestha* is translated "contend earnestly."

Jesus was a Debater

Jesus was a man of controversy; a man of hard words (John 8:39,44; 5:39-41; 6:60-68; Matthew 23:3-39). Jesus used logic to refute the Jews in Matthew 12:24-31. In logic this type of reasoning is called an *argumentum ad hominem*. This is the arguing from an opponent merely to defeat him. This is what Jesus did in Matthew 12. In verse 24 the Jews accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus replied, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation..." (verse 25). Jesus continued in verse 27: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges." The Jews at this point are "pinned against the wall" with no place to go. Lenski shows this point as made by Jesus: "Your sons drive out devils by means of devils; how, then, can you object to me for driving out devils by the help of the chief devil? your sons will convict you of injustice."

Due to lack of space, we cannot give every example in detail of Jesus' debating, but we will list some. Jesus showed his disciples were right in plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath day and eating them (Matthew 12:1-8). One should examine Matthew 9:14-15 to see how Jesus puts forth an argument on why his disciples do not fast. Also read Matthew 21:23-27 where Jesus gives the Jews an alternative on the baptism of John.

If debating is not scriptural, then our brethren in Christ have misrepresented Jesus. Alexander Campbell said of the Lord: "He unsheathed his sword at the Jordan River, and threw away the scabbard." Any student of the Bible should surely be able to see this.

The Apostle Paul was a Debater

Paul said, "Brethren and fathers, hear ye the *defence* which I now make unto you" (Acts 22:1). "Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my *defence*" (Acts 24:10). Before Agrippa Paul stretched forth his hand "... and made his *defence*" (Acts 26:1). Paul was "set for the *defence* of the gospel" (Philippians 1:16, cf. verse 7). In all the above-mentioned scriptures, Paul uses the Greek word *apologia*. Vine says this word means, "a verbal defence, speech in defence." Paul illustrates the principles of debate in Acts 18:28: "For he powerfully *confuted* the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." The word "confuted" means to cast down intensively. Vine says, "Implying that he met the opposing arguments in turn and brought them down to the ground."

Notice the masterful way Paul deals with the false prophets of his day in Acts 13:6-12: "O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all

More About Lectureship Speakers

Continued From Page 2

HUGO McCORD

For more than half a century brother Hugo McCord's name has been synonymous with sound and faithful, yet kind and loving, preaching of the gospel. He and his wife, the former Lois Henderson, have two children: a son and a daughter.

Brother McCord was educated at Freed-Hardeman College, University of Illinois (B.A.), Virginia Seminary, Southern Seminary (B.D.), University of Tulsa (M.A.), and at New Orleans Baptist Seminary (Th.D.). His preaching and teaching has been enhanced as he sharpened his skills to reach the hearer, as well as diligently studied God's word. With pathos and conviction he can penetrate and stir the sincere listener's heart.

Books he has written include THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER, THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY, GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH GOD, HAPPINESS GUARANTEED, THE ROYAL ROUTE OF REVELATION, and possibly others.

He was Vice President of Oklahoma Christian College, where he also served as Professor of Bible and Biblical Languages, now retired. He has made three study trips to the Holy Land and British Museum. Gospel meetings have taken him all over this nation, and into at least eleven other countries--Sierra Leone, England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, and Trinidad. Many lectureships have featured him, and last year he was the first "Boles Lecturer" in a new lectureship series at David Lipscomb College.

While still in his twenties, brother McCord was in a meeting at Carbon Hill, Alabama, when he was challenged for his first debate. The brethren agreed to have it, and brother McCord solicited the help of the late Gus Nichols to prepare for the discussion. During a discussion of "Hereditary Total Depravity" his opponent was interrupted by a crying baby. His opponent remarked that it was because that baby



HUGO McCORD

The word means "to be a combatant in the public games, to contend, to fight, to strive earnestly" (Roy Deaver). Paul also uses this very word in Colossians 1:29 and II Timothy 4:7.

Alexander Campbell rightly raises the question as to "how an activity could be 'unchristian' or 'ungodly' while the Bible clearly teaches that various men are pleasing to God while engaging in that activity." To say debating is not scriptural is to speak blasphemously against the Bible. The prophets of old engaged in debating. Moses took on Jannes and Jambres (II Timothy 3:8,9); Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:19-46); and Job silenced the princes of Edom. Let us conclude with a statement from Lindsey Warren: "Each person must decide either (1) to be a religious person and, thus, be involved in controversy, or (2) to leave religion in general alone." To that statement I say, "Amen." — 17691 Pesante Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.

had inherited "Adamic Sin" that made it cry! It was the devil in him that made him cry! Brother McCord says that my father at that point whispered to him: "Jesus Wept" (John 11:35) -- and he used that text with telling effect on his audience!

Prior commitments will keep him from speaking daily, as he usually does, on our Lectureship; but he will close out the series on Thursday night, discussing the Bible question: "Whither Goest Thou?"

Running Aground in the Seas of Life

ANCIL JENKINS

Riding through the marina, we stopped where sailboats were rented. A long list of rules for renters contained one that particularly caught my eye: "Running aground is not an act of God."

I could imagine the number of times people had called for help to get the boat refloated. It is amusing to consider their reasons for being aground: "It was an act of God." They probably blamed the winds, the tide, or the location of the land; but they refused to admit it was their fault.

Do you blame God when you run aground? Even in the very beginning, Adam refused to admit he disobeyed God and ate the fruit. "It was the woman--" to paraphrase what he said, "--it was the woman's fault." Eve was no better: "It was the serpent," was her reply-- "The serpent deceived me and I ate." Since this first sin by the father and mother of us all, man has not changed.

But consider seriously who is to blame for your mistakes? Will you blame your parents? What about your education (or lack of same)? Do you blame a strong desire you cannot control? It is true that our physical and emotional make-up affect us. No doubt we are affected by our past and present circumstances. Yet in the final end, we all *choose* to be what we are.

Life is what you make of it. Someone said to a person who had just experienced tragedy, "Suffering colors life, doesn't it?" "Yes," was the reply, "but I intend to choose the color." With God's help, you can be what you want to be and make your life what it can be. — 425 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.



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 "National Israel" Mania

(NO. 5)

In the previous article I took note of what a spokesman from the Cleveland, Tennessee, based Church Of God had to say about modern Israel's being God's people, and that heaven's focus was upon these people. He contended that what the Israelites did had to be right. If they trigger World War III that kills hundreds of millions of people, will this be right on their part? Of course dispensationalists like



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

Hal Lindsey, author of *THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH* which has sold into the multiplied millions (which made its visionary author a very rich man, and is the basis of a movie made during the 1970's), believe that Old Testament prophecy actually predicts World War III. Lindsey's book of flagrant falsehood even has a chapter on World War III. It is highly doubtful he knows any more about it than Jeanne Dixon did. She predicted it would break out in 1958 -- twenty-six years ago!! Her crystal ball misled her! Lindsey thinks it will be this very decade or within the early 1990's at the latest. His crystal ball may be as cracked as Dixon's! Lindsey's last chapter is entitled, "Polishing The Crystal Ball." Lindsey's book and this Nashville-based religious newspaper article under current review are both filled with premillennial falsehood. But here is another segment of the newspaper article and it gets much closer home.

SENTIMENTS FROM SMITH--V

Interviews with a dozen ministers at churches of several denominations here indicate similar feelings go down to the grassroots level.

For example, the minister of a Church of Christ in the affluent Brentwood section of Nashville said, "I would say Israel is the only place in

the world where the members of my church would willingly send their sons to fight if necessary."

TRUTHS FROM TAYLOR--V

I am not the least bit surprised to read of *denominational* preachers who espouse feelings relative to some special purpose that God has (?) for Palestine and its present Jewish population of some 2.7 million plus. Most denominations are premillennial in position and secular in their stance relative to the Abrahamic promises of the Old Testament. They cannot conceive anything except gross materialism connected with such precious promises. But I stand somewhat amazed and astonished to read the quote from a supposed preacher of the gospel in the Brentwood section of Nashville, Tennessee. I say "somewhat," because a gospel preacher in the north really took me to task during the 1970's when I wrote against this "National Israel" Mania in the *GOSPEL ADVOCATE*. He wanted to know how I could be so sure that God was not behind the establishment of Israel as a nation in May of 1948. All this "fodder" put out by the "National Israel" Mania proponents had unduly influenced him to a large degree.


If Philip W. Smith, the author of the article, has correctly quoted the Brentwood preacher, he has lined up likewise with the very same sentiments as expressed by outright premillennialists. He is quoted as saying that Israel is the only place in the world where members of the church where he preaches would send their sons to fight. He evidently feels like modern Palestine is still some type of "Holy Land." This was the same monumental mistake and egregious error made by the Crusaders back in the Middle (or "Dark") Ages. They left their homes and families by the masses and traveled hundreds of miles to capture the so-called Holy Land back from the despised Turks. In all probability many of these crusading soldiers would not have traveled that first mile in order to preach Christ to the lost of their era. I stand amazed that a so-called soldier of Christ who marches under the banners of the Great Commission and the illustrious Prince of Peace should speak of sending their sons to Palestine as twentieth century crusaders for a carnal conflict. It would be ten thousand times better and wiser to be equipping our sons to be good soldiers of Christ and thus arming

them for the kind of warfare depicted in Ephesians 6:10-18. Just what would be accomplished if their sons *did* go and fight carnally in the land of Palestine? Does this preacher envision the youth of his congregation lining up with the armies delineated by Lindsey and the dispensationalists of our day? If so, how pathetic! If so, how very little he has spent with Spiritual Christianity and the fulfillment of the REAL Abrahamic promises. This preacher knows too little, FAR TOO LITTLE, about the Bible to be writing such "fodder!"

It strongly appears to be the case that this "National Israel" Mania is not all on the outside. It has influenced one preacher in the north known to me by his communications of opposition to the truth set forth relative to this "National Israel" Mania. It has even begun to affect at least one Tennessee preacher and his congregation among us. That preacher and congregation where he preaches need to have someone like brother Guy N. Woods come into their presence and preach for a whole week (or, at least some week-end) on premillennialism and what is wrong with all this "National Israel" Mania. Brother Woods does not live far from the Brentwood section in Nashville. I dare say that not much preaching against premillennialism has been done in that congregation in recent years! If the preacher has been quoted correctly, it is a sure thing that *he* has not done so, for he does not know enough to do so. This preacher and congregation need to realize that modern Palestine is no more "holy" than Nashville, or Davidson County. The land on either side of the Jordan River is no more sacred in God's sight today than is the land on either side of the Cumberland, or the Harpeth -- rivers that flow near Brentwood in Nashville, Tennessee. Somebody needs to wake up in a congregation that fails to recognize rank premillennialism in its very preacher. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

God Put His Law In Writing



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Even in the Old Testament God wanted man to read his word. Otherwise, thy would he put it into written form? "And the Lord spake unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them" (Exodus 24:12). "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount

Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18). "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables" (Exodus 32:15,16).

In Moses' absence his brother Aaron made the golden calf, before which Israel offered burnt offerings (Exodus 32:6). "And it came to pass, as soon as he [Moses] came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (verse 19). [Moses was the only man in the Bible who ever "broke" all the Ten Commandments at one time!!!] Subsequently God directed Moses to "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest" (Exodus 34:1). Moses did this (verse 4) and took them up to mount Siani. Upon his return with the two tables of testimony in his hand, he "wist not that the skin of his face shone" (verses 29, 30).

Forty years later Moses reminded Israel that "the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: . . . and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:12,13). He also explained: "And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them . . ." (verse 14). Moses then repeated the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:1-21), and said: "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me" (verse 22).

Moses also declared: "When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: and the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the Lord spake with you in the mount out of the

midst of the fire in the day of the assembly" (Deuteronomy 9:9, 10). He related the breaking of the two tables of stone (verses 15-17), and repeated the divine instructions which called for him to "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first" (Deuteronomy 10:1). Moses faithfully complied with these directions (verses 3-5).

After Moses had rehearsed all these matters, he inquired: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13).

However God foretold that Israel would desire a king "to be like as all the nations that are about me" (Deuteronomy 17:14). God through Moses specified that "when he [the King] sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life" (verses 18, 19). Reference is here made to the book "before the priests," which Moses described in Deuteronomy 31:24-26: "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."

After God had talked with him, "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses WROTE ALL THE WORDS OF THE LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:3-9).

To this event the writer of Hebrews (9:18-22) referred: "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined upon you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The Lord told Moses to warn Israel: "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are

The Great Lottery Bonanza

MARTEL PACE

When another of our "lucky" fellow-citizens wins a huge jackpot in a state-run lottery, it encourages others to gamble on this most-rapidly growing phenomenon. When a casual visitor from Birmingham wins in Washington State, many fine Alabamians are persuaded, "That's just what we need here."

USA TODAY reports (8-14-84) that eighty-percent of our citizens believe some form of gambling is permissible. I am amazed we still have twenty percent who yet try to judge something by its fruits! In twenty years of state lotteries, 950 people have become millionaires.

But most states don't bother to tell their people the odds: "The odds against winning are astronomical; usually 2 million to one. You have a better chance of getting hit by lightning." (USA TODAY, August 14, 1984, p. 10A). I have no doubt that voters in California, Oregon, Mississippi, and West Virginia will vote for this new "easy-way-to-raise-taxes" scheme.

One needs to listen to the counselors who deal with compulsive gamblers, and to the wives of gamblers who have to go on welfare. The real victims are the unemployed, uneducated, and those with an empty life who dream of the "big killing." Gambling causes divorce, much more crime, and suicide. Gamblers are often ambitious and energetic people whose abilities could help all of society if channeled into a productive avenue. But gambling is productive only of bad. It appeals to the weaker elements of man's psyche, and helps to create poverty while enriching (?) the state coffers. However, states do not make nearly as much as they would like to make, because so much has to be spent in advertising, and the prizes have to grow bigger to attract the foolish "investor."

When our government exploits man's frailty, it helps destroy initiative and hard work -- the qualities which make our nation great. Legalizing gambling is another chink broken off from our moral armor. It will take a generation or so to see much of its evil effects, and to get eighty percent of the populace educated against it. It will lose in the long run; but there will have been too much grief and heart-ache. The majority is seldom right in the short-run, on any moral issue. All the sound reasoning in the world cannot defeat men's basic greed, and the desire to "make it" the easy way. Robin Hood took from the rich to give to the poor; this takes from the poor to enrich a few. We have now come to the amazing end where we pay our state governments to exploit us under the guise of "helping education." We'll see how much education is helped by it! — 3414 Elaine Drive, Montgomery, Ala. 36109.

Continued on page 3

“Then Whose Shall Those Things Be?”

While addressing the people on the subject of possessions, Jesus posed a poignant question: After death “whose shall those things be” (Luke 12:20). The point should be pondered by every disciple in reference to all his earthly possessions.



JOHN WADDEY

In this article I would direct the query to fellow gospel preachers in reference to their personal libraries. Most men who preach for many years accumulate a sizeable number of good religious books to assist them in their studies. If this be your case, ask yourself: “When I die, who will receive my books?”

Some Sad Observations

I found one great preacher’s library for sale in a junk-and-salvage store! What a sad resting-place for that noble collection of spiritual books.

Another notable preaching brother’s books were found in a used book-store. They were scattered abroad to customers at \$1.00 per volume. Many of them were priceless treasures.

Some are left to be picked over and scattered by sovenier collectors -- many of whom will never use them for their intended purpose. Such I am told was the fate of Alexander Campbell’s library.

Some “libraries” occupy closed rooms and gather dust for decades as mice and moths feast on their valuable contents. Some will later be disposed of in estate sales to the highest bidder. Often such a buyer has no real use for these valuable tools. He may be a dealer looking for a bargain for resale.

A Better Use

Would it not be a better, more fruitful use of your books if they were placed in the library of a school dedicated to the training of gospel preachers? There,

housed in a comfortable environment, they will be properly cared for; and they will be used for generations by faithful brethren preparing their lives for gospel service. Think of the blessings they will bestow on the young minds that will eagerly feed upon them. Fifty, or even a hundred, years after you had read your last page, they still will be accomplishing the task for which you bought them. What a satisfaction that should be! Such is good stewardship of the gifts God has placed in our hands (I Peter 4:10).

If you have a *will*, why not ask your attorney to prepare a codicil stating your desire to do this. (If you have no will, seeing to that need should be a top priority). Select the school you feel could make best use of your collection, and stipulate that in your testament. It is a decision you will not regret.

If you would like to remember the *East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions* in your will, in this or any other ways, please write us for helpful information. Material will be sent without charge. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

“Relatives Dropped In”

VICTOR M. ESKEW

took place that day? Of course not. All can see the ridiculousness of such reasoning. But this some individuals must concede if they believe they can stay at home and not worship God when relatives visit.

The command to attend the worship services is given for a reason. The Lord did not intend for any individual to miss the gathering of the saints together unless he is truly hindered beyond cause. Excuses for not attending are merely that, *excuses*.

And excuses are only good for them who make them. The Lord will take no excuse, “relatives visiting,” no exception.

One last point which should be mentioned is that these same facts remain true when *we* are the ones *doing* the visiting. We are no more free to miss worship, then, than we are when our relatives drop in on us. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

God Put His Law In Writing

Continued from page 2

written in this book, . . . then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee . . . And ye shall be few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 28:58-60).

Of course, this was not purely an exercise in writing; nor was God’s word written simply to have a book to ‘show off.’ God intended that his word be read --be studied, and obeyed. After Moses’ death, God told Joshua, his successor: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, 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 1:8). After the fall of Jericho and the defeat of Ai, Joshua “wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses . . . And afterward he read all the words of the law . . . according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the

congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant with them” (Joshua 8:32-35).

In his address to the elders and the people, Joshua admonished them: “Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 23:6). After he called upon them to “Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . .” (Joshua 24:15), they vowed: “The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey” (verse 24). “So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day . . . And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak . . . And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us . . . lest ye deny your God” (Joshua 24:25-27).

The prophet Isaiah called upon the people to “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read” (Isaiah 34:16). He also 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” (Isaiah 8:20).

How fortunate for man that God gave us his WRITTEN word!

In Hebrews 10:25 the writer placed a very simple and straight-forward command upon the children of God: “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.” To avoid this command many excuses have been conjured up in the minds of the guilty. One excuse which can be often heard is, “Well, my relatives dropped by unexpectedly. They live very far off, so we do not get to see them very much. Therefore, we stayed at home last Sunday to visit with them.” Isn’t this a common reason (?) individuals miss worship services? Does it, though, stand the test of the Scriptures? NO! NO! NO!

The first reason this excuse is not valid is because it causes one to misplace his priorities. In his sermon on the mount, the Lord has ordered the faithful child of God’s priorities for him: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). To forsake the assembly because of visiting family members, shows that the Christian’s priorities have been mis-arranged. The individual has placed family first, and God’s kingdom and righteousness second. In doing this we might as well not be seeking the kingdom *at all*. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

To stay at home with visiting relatives rather than coming to the worship services, shows that one’s love for family is greater than one’s love for the Master. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37). Unless one wants to be unworthy of Christ, he must attend the services even when family is visiting. This is the second reason this excuse is void.

A third consideration which will make this excuse ridiculous is to be found in common sense. If it is right and if no sin is committed when *one* Christian, or *one* family, stays home with visiting relatives, why would it not be proper for *all* Christians, or *all* families, to do so? Let us take for instance that ten families have relatives visiting for the weekend. If one family could stay home without being involved in error, why could not all ten do so? What if our congregation were composed of only ten families? Could we shut the church house doors that Sunday and be right in God’s sight -- even though no worship



Invite Some Friends To Church
Sunday And Watch Your
School Grow!

Biting And Devouring One Another

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:15).

The Galatians to whom Paul addressed the warning contained in the text quoted above, were members of the Lord's church (Galatians 1:1-12; 3:26-29). All the churches of God, in New Testament times, were in Christ (Galatians 1:22; I Thessalonians 2:14). No denominational churches are in Christ, for such



W. A. HOLLEY

(being human in origin and design), did not exist in apostolic times. The Saviour does not add members to denominational churches. He does add those who hear and obey his divine will to his church (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). Members of denominational churches have never obeyed the gospel of Christ (Cf. I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Rather, denominational people claim they have been saved by faith only, or by direct operation of the Spirit, or in answer to prayer, or by unconditional election before the world began. In fact, obedience to denominational doctrine cannot prepare for one's entrance into the church of Christ. (Romans 6:3-4).

The apostle Paul recognized that the Galatians were Christians and that they should conduct themselves as Christians. But Paul also recognized that children of God might, through disobedience, "bite and devour one another," and "be consumed" (to destroy, use up, to spend up, in a bad sense) "one of another." That lesson taught so many centuries ago is just as applicable now as in the days of Paul.

(I) *Think of the evil atmosphere.* When we are quick to imagine that others have done us wrong; when we are more interested in having our way than we are in allowing the Lord to have his way; when we have tongues tied in the middle but loose at both ends; when our tempers are hot and burning out of control; when our religion is more or less superficial; when the spirit of distrust prevails; when we unfeelingly wound the souls of others; when we gleefully heap reproaches upon others; when the Spirit of Christ burns low in our hearts -- we are traveling a wicked road that leads to destruction.

(II) *What will be the end result?* If the situation continues as described in Galatians 5:15, we will be "consumed one of another." The spirit of love and trust and confidence in each other will be lost. "Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. For this wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (James 13:13-16, ASV). Faction -- *Gr. erithia* ---denotes "ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes party-making" (W. E. Vine).

Christian fellowship is hampered or curbed. The progress of the gospel is hindered, along with the prayers of faithful brethren (I Corinthians 9:12; I Peter 3:7).

"Biting and devouring one another" leads to the sin of heresy --- a terrible sin in God's sight! The word (Greek: "haireisis") denotes "a choosing, choice; then, that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division

and the formation of sects, Galatians 5:20; such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage . . ." (W. E. Vine). A heretic, after the first and second admonition must be rejected (Titus 3:10).

Where some "bite and devour one another," the influence of godly elders, faithful deacons, loyal preachers, and steadfast Christians is impaired. When even a few members insist on "biting and devouring one another," the whole church suffers. It would be better to stand in the place of the Roman soldier who pierced the physical body of Christ, than be one who is guilty of piercing the spiritual body of Christ, the church (Proverbs 6:16-19; Matthew 18:1-6). The disgruntled, like spilled paint, draw attention to themselves: but it is always harmful attention. We may gain much publicity through quarrels, fightings, parties, temper-tantrums, destructive controversies, and such like; but such can never glorify God (I Corinthians 10:31-33). Genuine Christians will have no part in the works of Satan.

(III) *What Is The Remedy??* The Bible answer is simple: "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation" (footnote: persuasion) "of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of

one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . ." (Philippians 2:1-5, ASV).

Repentance is always in order (II Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31; II Corinthians 7:8-10). Confession of sins is a must (I John 1:6-10). When factions arise, spend much time and effort in earnest prayer unto God (James 5:16; John 9:31; Psalms 66:18). Resolve to settle all difficulties at once --- the sooner the better! The proper application of the Golden Rule will help in a wonderful way to solve problems of the most severe kind (Matthew 7:12). As faithful brethren, let us grant to others those things we claim for ourselves. If we claim perfection for ourselves, then we may logically, if not Scripturally, demand perfection of others.

According to Jesus, judging one another is a dangerous practice (Matthew 7:1-5). Our judgment of children of God must be charitable (John 7:24; I Corinthians 13:5-6), in remembrance of the fact we are God's servants (Romans 14:4), and that God reserves the ultimate right to judge all in the last day (I Corinthians 4:3-4; II Corinthians 5:10).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Why You Should Be A Christian

Man, being a rational creature, seeks for reasons when he is challenged to do something. I suggest eleven good reasons why all responsible people should want to become Christians.

1. To please your Creator. This is the "whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). All normal people feel a responsibility to those they love, to those who have been their benefactors. God has given us our very lives, and daily sustains us (Acts 17:25). He has blessed us with our family, our health and a good earth. As a child seeks approval of his beloved parents, so should we seek to please our God.

2. To express your appreciation to Jesus for what he did for you. He died for you (Romans 5:8). He will save you (Luke 19:10), if you love him and keep his commandments (John 14:15). Ingratitude is one of the most heinous of all of man's sins (Luke 17:12-19). No good man who truly understands the price Jesus has paid for us will refuse to obey him.

3. To lay hold on the abundant life *now* (John 10:10). Christ gives us *peace* (Philippians 4:7); *joy* unspeakable (I Peter 1:8); *security* (Matthew 6:33). Ours is a world of miserable, unhappy people. Sin has tainted and spoiled every life it has touched. Jesus, the great physician, can cure our malady and give us a new life that is truly worth living.

4. To prepare your life for eternity. "Lay hold on the life which is life indeed" (I Timothy 6:19). From ancient times, men have pondered "If a man die will he live again?" (Job 14:14). Christ drew back the curtain to show us life and immortality (II Timothy 1:10). He invites all men to be his guests in eternity (Matthew 11:28-30). You must decide to accept, or to reject, his invitation.

5. To escape the judgment of hell (Matthew 23:33). "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40). Just as you would exert every effort to

save yourself from a burning house, so you surely should want to save your undying soul from torment (Luke 16:19-31).

6. To strengthen your home against the ravages of disruption caused by sin (Psalms 127:1). Never has the home been under such heavy attack as in our generation. To save our family, to rear our children successfully, we need God's help. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31).

7. Because you love your mate and want to be the best marriage partner possible. No finer gift can be offered than a Christian life. Solomon says of a righteous woman, "Her husband also . . . praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:28). Husbands must love their wives even as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25).

8. Because you love your children and want them to have the best home possible . . . because you want them to have the best example to follow (Proverbs 20:7; Ephesians 6:4). Your children can have the best of food, clothing and shelter, medical care and education, and yet be neglected and deprived -- if you do not give them a *Christian home* environment.

9. So that you might be in a better position to help preserve our country and maintain our freedom. "Righteousness exalts a nation" (Proverbs 14:34). Our nation is deteriorating morally at a frightening pace. But a nation is only the sum of its people. A better world begins with you, with me. Christians are the salt of the earth that will not only flavor a society for good, but also preserve it from moral decay (Matthew 5:13).

10. To stop being just a spectator, and to become a participant in the greatest cause in the world. All that is needed for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

11. For the personal satisfaction of knowing you have done the right thing, the noble thing, the best that you could do. You can then walk in your integrity with a good conscience (Job 27:5). — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.



JOHN WADDEY



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

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The "National Israel" Mania (NO.6)

This will be the sixth and final installment for WORDS OF TRUTH in reviewing an article which appeared in THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, March 8, 1978, on the so-called "Chosen People" of Palestine. The article continues by saying some more things from another religious leader as well as some final comments from Philip Smith, the writer.



ROBERT R. TAYLOR, Jr.

SENTIMENTS FROM SMITH--VI

A Methodist minister said, "Several members of this church have been to Israel and I doubt if you could find people who feel stronger about the country than they do."

Each year, thousands of members of Protestant churches visit the Holy Land on tours organized by travel agencies which specialize in tours for church groups.

Usually, according to a spokesman for one such travel agency in Jackson, MS., a minister and his wife lead such a tour. Often the minister and his family travel free provided they sign up a specified number of people from his church.

TRUTHS FROM TAYLOR--VI

It is one thing to visit Bible lands because of the events that once occurred there, and the personalities of Holy Writ who once sojourned there, and quite another thing to visit Palestine today because one possesses the current thought that this land today is *holy*, and all other land areas of the world are not holy. It is one thing to visit Bible lands in an effort to understand better the harmony between the land and the Book, and quite another thing to visit Palestine because one believes this land means more to God than the rest of the world combined. I am in full sympathy with the former thought in each of the foregoing statements. I am unalterably opposed to the latter concept in each of the foregoing declarations. It was because of these very momentous matters that I

made a trip to Bible Lands more than fourteen years ago (1970). After that trip was concluded I wrote some articles for WORDS OF TRUTH relative to that pleasant, informative, and rewarding experience. In the intervening years I have shown my slides and given illustrated lectures to numerous congregations and social groups. The gist of the emphasis I give in every lecture is on what OCCURRED there in Bible times, not the trumped-up events that many pseudo-prophetic speculators claim are being fulfilled in Palestine during the present. When I made this trip I did not feel I was in a nation upon which the whole focus of God's eye rests day and night in a peculiar sense. The non-Christian people I saw in Palestine were just as lost in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem, in Nazareth, in Bethany, in Tiberius, and other Israelite cities as if they had been non-Christians in London, in New York City, in Jasper, Alabama, or in nearby Memphis, Tennessee. Being a Jew in the flesh does not save one. Living in Palestine does not save one from sin. Neither the blood that courses one's veins, nor the location of his home, has that first determining factor in his lost -- or saved -- condition. Either his lost or saved condition is deter-

mined by the gospel of Christ and his response to it.

When Paul wrote the Romans he did not ask them to check their blood to determine if it contained strains of Abrahamic blood. He did not tell them to move to Palestine in order that they, by strict geographical location, might be under the special focus of God's eye. In Romans 1:16,17 he pointed them to the gospel -- not their blood, origin, or where they chanced to live -- as being God's power to save. In Romans 5:1 he spoke about justification by faith -- not flesh. In the first, sixth, and sixteenth chapters of Romans Paul gives emphasis to gospel obedience -- not what blood flowed through their veins or where they chanced to live.

CONCLUSION

We desperately need a whole army of preachers today who will teach people that when they go to Palestine today they do not leave an UNHOLY LAND back home, and set foot on a present-day HOLY LAND at the eastern extremity of the Mighty Mediterranean Sea or when they land at the airport at Tel-Aviv. — P.O. Box 464, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Have You Been With Christ

CURTIS W. POSEY

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13 R.S.V.).


It was most certainly true that Peter and John had been with Jesus; but can it be truthfully said of us that we have been with him? It is true that the only way that we could be with him is through a study of the Bible. Does the world around us understand that the foremost thing in our lives is our commitment to Christ and his mission for this world? (Read Luke 14:33; I Corinthians 4:1,2; II Corinthians 5:15, 18-20).

Being with Christ made a difference in the life of Peter. Where he was once fearful, now he was bold. Where he appeared uneducated, now he appeared eloquent and persuasive. And, the efforts of his life are now clear; he is committed to teaching the gospel; he is forthright in his condemnation of evil; his love for the souls of the lost is expressed positively; and

his influence was only for good.

What a glorious thought this verse contains for us today, as we strive to be God's people. It teaches us that the lives of Christians ought to point others to Jesus Christ our Lord. Hence, our conduct, language, action, even our attitude should testify to the fact that we are followers of Jesus.

How many who profess to be Christians today can honestly say that being with Christ has made that kind of difference in their lives? Simple Christian people who above all are committed to Christ can still have a tremendous impact in the world today. There is strength in commitment, a strength that attracts, identifies, impresses, and glorifies. You, too, can have this strength-- this enabling power-- to lead others to the Lord: but nothing less than total commitment will produce it. Being with the Lord makes the difference. — East Winfield Church of Christ, Highway 29-N, Winfield, AL 35594.



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

Another Lectureship Speaker

We have taken a brief look at most of our speakers for the Fifth Annual "Gus Nichols--Words of Truth Lectureship" which will be held at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, September 30--October 4, 1984. There remains one: brother Hugo McCord, whose schedule this year permits him to be with us only the closing night. I have gleaned the following biographical facts regarding him.

For more than half a century brother Hugo McCord's name has been synonymous with sound and faithful, yet kind and loving, preaching of the gospel. He and his wife, the former Lois Henderson, have two children: a son and a daughter.

Brother McCord was educated at Freed-Hardeman College, University of Illinois (B.A.), Virginia Seminary, Southern Seminary (B.D.), University of Tulsa (M.A.), and at New Orleans Baptist Seminary (Th.D.). His preaching and teaching has been enhanced as he sharpened his skills to reach the hearer, as well as diligently studied God's word. With pathos and conviction he can penetrate and stir the sincere listener's heart.

Books he has written include THE DISCIPLES'



HUGO McCORD

PRAYER, THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY, GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH GOD, HAPPINESS GUARANTEED, THE ROYAL ROUTE OF REVELATION, and possibly others.

He was Vice President of Oklahoma Christian College, where he also served as Professor of Bible and Biblical Languages, now retired. He has made three study trips to the Holy Land and British Museum. Gospel meetings have taken him all over this nation, and into at least eleven other countries -- Sierra Leone, England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, and Trinidad. Many lectureships have featured him, and last year he was the first "Boles Lecturer" in a new lectureship series at David Lipscomb College.

While still in his twenties, brother McCord was in a meeting at Carbon Hill, Alabama, when he was challenged for his first debate. The brethren agreed to have it, and brother McCord solicited the help of the late Gus Nichols to prepare for the discussion. During a discussion of "Hereditary Total Depravity" his opponent was interrupted by a crying baby. His opponent remarked that it was because that baby had inherited "Adamic Sin" that made it cry! It was the devil in him that made him cry! Brother McCord says that my father at that point whispered to him: "Jesus Wept" (John 11:35)-- and he used that text with telling effect on his audience!

Prior commitments will keep him from speaking daily, as he usually does, on our Lectureship; but he will close out the series on Thursday night, discussing the Bible question: "Whither Goest Thou?"

Can One Sinner Tell Another To Stop Sinning?

We are all sinners (Romans 3:10,23). We all need Jesus as our Saviour (Luke 19:10). If we say we do not have sin, we are liars (I John 1:8,10). Since we are sinners, how can we tell another sinner to stop sinning, seeing Jesus said what he did in Matthew 7:1-5? And, since he told the men who caught the woman in adultery, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7)?



RAY HAWK

It is true that we all sin. However, there is a difference between *continuing* in sin, versus having one-time sin which we try to correct as quickly as possible. When Paul rebuked Peter to his face for Simon's hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-14), was Paul living a life of perfection? The answer is obvious (Philippians 3:12). Paul tells saints: "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). James tells us: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19,20). The purpose of restoration is to bring one back to Christ when he is in the process of leaving him, or has left him. Discipline is not meant to hurt, but to help. May we all look upon it as such.

The reason one saint helps another to overcome sin, is because we love one another. To rebuke someone who continues in sin is to be done, not out of hate, but of love -- just as a parent rebukes a small child who is trying to stick his hand into an open flame. It would be sadistic to allow the child to burn himself because we *loved* him too much to correct (discipline) him!

Although we sin from time to time, we need to encourage one another to live righteously rather than stand by and say nothing when a brother falls into iniquity. — 1461 East Chester, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

God's Written Word Was To Be Read

Last week we saw that God explicitly directed that his word be put into written form. This made for accurate transmission from one person to others, and from each generation to the succeeding one. After Moses referred to God's law written on two tables of stone (Deuteronomy 5:22), he quotes God as having said: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (verse 29). Then God said unto Moses: "Stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it" (verse 31). Moses related this to Israel, stating: "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess" (verses 32-33). The fact that God's word was in written form made it much easier to obey these directions.

He continued to instruct them, saying: "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 6:6-9). The generation to come was to be told: "The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive . . ." (verse 24).

By way of encouragement Moses stated: "The Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: if thou shalt harken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn into the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this command-

Continued On Page 4

Divine Origin Of The Local Church

JOHN WEEKLEY

Today it is not uncommon to hear such statements as, "Do I have to place membership with some congregation?" or, "Do I have to attend all the services of the church?" These questions by weak and failing Christians arise due to a lack of knowledge and appreciation concerning the local church. The word "church" is used in three different senses in the New Testament. It is used to refer to the church in a general or universal way (Matthew 16:18, Colossians 1:18); a local sense (I Corinthians 1:2, Romans 16:16); and in the sense of an assembly (I Corinthians 11:22; 14:34). We are going to consider the second of these.

When one rightly divides the word of God, he will find that the local church is of divine origin, i.e., local churches in the Book of Acts are not just a matter of convenience, but are in the divine pattern. The Book of Acts is a commentary on the local church pattern. It introduces the church universal in Acts 2:47, but proceeds to deal with local churches. The separate congregations or local churches in Acts are of divine origin because of organization. God is one of organization. In the first chapter of the Bible, God is not only presented as one of power but also of organization. He created, and he arranged laws, systems, days, nights, and seasons in the universe. We find him creating from general to specific. He created water (Genesis 1:1 "... face of the deep"). This encompasses the whole concerning water creation. But then he goes from general to specific, from whole to parts, i.e., "He divided the waters" (verse six). He created light (verse three). Here we see the whole; but then he divides light with a "greater light" in the day and a "lesser light" in the night (verses 14-19). We see man created whole, but also composed of many systems which combine to bring about functions for the whole body. The same one who laid the foundations of the heavens and earth also laid out the pattern for the church of Christ.

In the physical creation the Father, Word, and Holy Spirit made wholes composed of parts. The church (Matthew 16:18) is composed of local churches (Romans 16:16) just as each congregation is composed of individuals. The local church is God's pattern as is seen in the eldership. Elders were ordained in all the churches (Acts 14:23). The ordination of elders is from God. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, *over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers . . .*" (Acts 20:28). Paul said that this pattern was from the Holy Spirit, the revealer of all truth (John 16:13). That there should be local churches, and that Christians should be members in these congregations is also seen in James 5:14. Of course, the miraculous part of this verse does not apply today (I Corinthians 13:8-10); but God's pattern is that there be elders locally (I Peter 5:1-2), and that members obey and rely on them (Hebrews 13:17 and I Thessalonians 5:12).

The local church is of divine origin; it did not come from man's thinking, but originated in God's wisdom. What better way could there be to evangelize the world? By there being local congregations, each flock can take care of its particular community. Cultural differences and customs demonstrate that this is very expedient. Also, by there being self-governed churches, this acts as a barrier to false ways and apostasy. For example, if one church goes over to liberalism, or into radicalism, the other churches are not compelled to go with them.

Certainly we can see also that the local church arrangement helps in doing benevolent work. Each church in its own community is better equipped and informed as to the needs of its home community. The Jerusalem church had first-hand knowledge of the needs of the widows and orphans at Jerusalem, but would be limited in information as to the needs of the people at Corinth. So having churches in each

location developed a healthy and thorough way of doing global benevolence.

The local church is of divine origin for God had the pattern for the local church system when he had the plan of salvation in mind (Ephesians 3:10).

Another reason we see from the Scripture that the local church is of divine origin is due to edification. It is God's will that individual Christians grow (Ephesians 4:13-16; John 15:1-8). One of the ways he purges and develops us is through the local church. There are other things involved, such as the providence of God (Romans 8:28; James 1:2-4); and the word of God (Acts 20:28). But the local church is one of God's ways to bring about continual growth and cleansing. In Hebrews 10:24 we read: "... consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." The next verse tells us how this is done: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." To know how they understood this "assembling" is to look at the concept as used elsewhere. The assembly at Jerusalem was the local

church: "all that believed were together . . ." (Acts 2:44) and they were "... having favor with all the people . . ." i.e. the people of that community. Also, the local church was coming together on the Lord's day (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Therefore, to edify one another they were to be a part of the local church and attend all the services.

Another reason that the local church pattern is of divine origin is that God gave instructions for personal disputes. In Matthew 18:17, God said if the parties to a personal offence could not work things out after a private confrontation, then take witnesses; if this did not resolve things, then tell it to the "church." What "church?" The church *universal*? No, for that would be impossible, and inexpedient. Tell the *local* "church," is what our Lord meant.

So, the next time some one is critical of the local church, let him remember that it is God's pattern. Therefore, we should honor it and "place membership" with a local church and seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). — 1100 N. Nashville, Ave., Sheffield, Alabama.

When To Preach Them

VICTOR ESKEW

THE SCENE

Mary: Did you hear the sermon which our preacher preached yesterday?

Sue: Yes, I did, and I don't know what to think about it. It sure did get many people upset.

Mary: It sure did. It seems that every time something is brewing, that preacher just has to preach about it.

Sue: I know it.

Mary: Now, do not get me wrong: his preaching is very good. It is also true to God's Word. I just think his timing was off. That sermon would have been better at another time rather than at the present.

The above conversation has been repeated time and time again by those who have listened to sermons over the years. Satan and his forces raise their heads in the congregation. The Lord's army rises up in battle to conquer the foe, and then the preacher or elders are charged with bad timing in the presentation of truth. Because this does happen, we ask the question: "When is the proper time to present those hard-to-digest lessons?"

First, sermons should be preached on certain subjects before a controversy arises. This could be termed "preventive preaching." An old axiom rightly says that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The apostle Paul was a preacher who warned the brethren. We see this clearly in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). This statement immediately follows a warning directed to the elders themselves, a warning of apostasy which would develop first in the eldership of the local bodies. All faithful gospel preachers, then, will warn the brethren before problems develop.

Second, sermons should be preached on particular points while the need is present. This Peter did on Pentecost (Acts 2). Stephen did this when he spoke to the Jews (Acts 7). And Paul did it when writing to the church in Corinth (I Corinthians 5). If sin is present and no effort is made to stop its spread, then error has a foothold from which the faithful may never recover. These are the sermons, however, which are frowned upon the most, but are perhaps

most rarely needed. Therefore, preaching to immediate needs must be realized by every faithful gospel preacher.

Finally, messages should be preached after troubles have ceased. These are used to guard against a recurrence of a similar nature. The writer of Hebrews used this in the third chapter of that masterpiece. Unbelief had been prevalent among the Jews in time past, and he sought to prevent unbelief from destroying God's people again.

When is the proper time to preach certain sermons? Before, during and after? So long as the word of God is preached, let us rejoice, hear with open ears, and heed that which is applicable to us. Let us never be angry when the truth is presented, for anger works not the righteousness of God (James 1:19,20). — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

The Guilty Party Innocent?

RAY HAWK

In I Corinthians 5:1-11 a member of the church was guilty of living with his father's wife (verse 1). This action was met with Paul's command to withdraw from him (verses 4,5). As long as he lived with this woman, he was in sin; he was withdrawn from, and was lost (I Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-10).

If this brother had lived in the 20th century, he could have "had his cake, and eat it, too!" First, he could have talked his father's wife into divorcing her husband. Second, after the divorce, he could have married her. Since Paul does not correct her, she must have been a pagan. According to a new teaching just recently developed, she is not amenable to Matthew 19:9, and she would have been free to remarry. Since she is free to remarry, he could have married her! Third, the church could not have withdrawn from this brother because, according to this new teaching, no sin has been committed. And, fourth, if this marriage had not worked out, he could have divorced her and remarried again. Again, this new teaching tells us he would not be sinning, because *she* was not under Matthew 19:9 since she wasn't a "saint," and the passage would not apply to their marriage or divorce!

--Too bad the young man of I Corinthians 5:1-11 did not know about this 20th Century doctrine! If so, he could have had her without any sin being involved! That is, IF you believe this new doctrine that the guilty party is *innocent*! — 1461 East Chester, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

The Spirit's Words

"We speak," wrote an apostle, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (I Corinthians 2:13). Since the Holy Spirit uses words to influence the minds of men, and since those words "are spirit (spiritual?), and are life (life-giving?)" (John 6:63), all men who fear God will "day and night" meditate on them (Psalms 1:2).



HUGO McCORD

Pistis. One of those words is "faith," a mental recognition that Jesus is "the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Sometimes the word refers simply to a conviction of the deity of Jesus (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12; 18:8). Sometimes, however, it compasses more than a mental act, becoming a comprehensive word, a "four-pack," with repentance, the confession, and baptism being implicit (Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1; 10:10; Ephesians 1:13). As the one word "grace" in Ephesians 2:8 is a carrier containing all of the divine side of salvation (namely: his love, mercy kindness, the cross, the blood), so the word "faith" in Ephesians 2:8 comprehends all of the human side of salvation (namely: mental conviction, repentance, the confession, and baptism).

At times, however, the word "faith" includes more than the four requisites for a sinner's "cleansing from his old sins" (II Peter 1:9). Very often the one-word-carrier includes everything required of a man to go to heaven, from beginning to the end, "from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17; cf. John 3:16, 36; I Peter 1:5; I John 5:4; Revelation 2:10).

Metanoia. Another Spirit-selected word, a requisite for salvation (Luke 13:3), is "repentance" (*metanoia*, literally, a change of mind). Like the word "faith," the word "repentance" sometimes is restricted in its meaning to a mental act (Matthew 3:8, Acts 2:38; 3:19). But also it is used as a package word comprehending all that is required in becoming a Christian (Luke 24:47; Acts 11:18).

Homologia. The word "confession" first refers to a statement that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16; Romans 10:9; I Timothy 6:12-13). "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:11; cf. Acts 2:21) is a requirement in becoming a Christian; but a confession limited to the physical "confess with thy mouth" (Romans 10:9) is far from achieving salvation (Mark 1:24; Matthew 7:21).

In a broader meaning, the word "confession" includes the whole of a Christian's life: "let us hold fast the *confession* of our hope that it waver not" (Hebrews 10:23; cf. 4:14; I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 9:13; Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10; I John 4:15).

Baptisma. As with the words "faith," "repentance," and "confession," so the word "baptism" the Holy Spirit has employed with two meanings: First, it refers to the physical act of dipping in water (Romans 6:3; Acts 10:47); Second, it refers comprehensively to that dipping along with faith, repentance, and the confession without specifying them (I Peter 3:21).

Eis. Though each one of the four preceding words is used to encompass the four commands that put a sinner into Christ, not one of them in its first meaning puts one into Christ. Entrance into Christ is not effected until the four initial meanings are fused together into an integrated whole, which is the New Testament plan of salvation. The four are like connecting doors. (At an Air Force base outside

Wichita, Kansas, no one descends hundreds of feet underground to see an intercontinental missile until he has entered a surface door, and two elevator doors, and one more.)

This writer, along with many other preachers, has preached that faith and repentance and the confession are "unto," and baptism is "into," Christ (Romans 10:10; Acts 11:18; Galatians 3:27, AV & ASV).

In Jakarta, Indonesia, Bud MacFarland, preaching through an interpreter, urged the sequence of the four commands, with three being "unto," and baptism being "into." David Tuanakotta, the interpreter, interrupted to say, "Bro. MacFarland, in our language there is no difference."

When one examines the word used by the Holy Spirit, *eis*, he finds that same word after each of the four commands. Because of the fact that in the Greek *eis* follows all four commands, the late and respected R. L. Whiteside refused to use the "unto-into" line of reasoning, saying: "I will not use an argument that an inspired apostle could not use."

However, the apostles, if they had used English, could very well have used that simple and convincing argument. This is true because none of the four commands, though followed by *eis*, alone puts one into Christ. In John 12:42 "faith" is followed by *eis*, but it is faith only, and that in the heart of cowards. Thus it is clear in English, as it was to John in Greek, that *eis* after "faith," though essential to entering Christ, does not by itself put one into Christ.

It follows then that the first meaning of "faith" plus *eis* is that which is to, toward, on the way. And the same thing is true of "repentance." It is an essential to salvation (Luke 13:3), but alone (without *faith*, John 8:21; the *confession*, Romans 10:10; and *baptism*, I Peter 3:21), it does not put one *into* Christ. Similarly, as important as is "the good confession" (I

Timothy 6:12-13), alone it does not put one into Christ (Mark 1:24). Likewise, "baptism," though it is the entrance into Christ, alone is merely getting wet. Dissociated from faith, repentance, and the confession, baptism is hypocrisy.

Since one of the established usages of *eis* is "to," "toward," "in the direction of" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 228), and since faith, repentance, and the confession alone do not put one into Christ, it becomes clear that the "unto-into" sequence is altogether scriptural. The fact that the "faith" spoken of in Romans 10:10 refers to the whole of the plan of salvation (comprehending faith, repentance, the confession, and baptism) in no wise negates the fact that faith can be, and at times is, one step on the way to salvation (Romans 10:9; Mark 16:16). Similarly, the fact that the repentance of Acts 11:18 is collective, comprehensive of the four initiatory commandments, in no wise sets aside the fact that sometimes the word is employed as a step on the way to salvation (Acts 2:38). Likewise, the fact that the confession of Romans 10:10 encompasses all four of the commands does not offset the fact that the word can be, and is, used to refer to a statement on the lips (Romans 10:9), and so is a step on the way to being in Christ.

The fact that the word "unto" is now, according to the dictionary, archaic does not remove the fact that the old meaning of the word (to, toward, in the direction of) never gets acquainted in the gospel plan of salvation. Without the archaic word, the same idea must be preached. Accurately it may and should be proclaimed that faith, repentance, and confession ARE "to," "toward," "in the direction of" salvation, while baptism is the final step that puts one "into" Christ. — 2300 Pleasant Drive, Midwest City, OK 73110.

God's Written Word Was To Be Read

Continued From Page 2

ment which I command thee this day, *it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off . . .*" (Deuteronomy 30:9-11).

God's written law was to be read to the congregation. Here are Moses' words: "When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, *thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.* Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" (Deuteronomy 31:11-13).

About a thousand years after Moses, we read of such a public reading of God's word to the assembled

congregation: "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street."

When God's book was opened, all the people stood up (verse 5) as an indication of their reverence and respect for God's word. Before reading to them, Ezra "blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

Ezra stood on a pulpit, with six men on his right, and seven men on his left. As the word was read, one would give the sense, and cause the people to understand (verse 4). Is not this the way many Bible classes are conducted even to this day, except that the people usually remain seated to do the reading? Much fine Bible teaching is done by thus reading and explaining God's word. God wants his word read, and understood.

HOUSEPARENTS NEEDED

CHILDHAVEN, Inc., Cullman, Alabama, has been completely restaffed, and has a new opportunity to serve the needs of homeless children. Already some counties have sent more children to Childhaven. Other cottages must be opened up to house additional children who presently need a home. This requires more houseparents. Christian couples are being sought for this immediate need. Applications should be sent to:
Mr. Larry Milligan, Executive Director
Childhaven, Inc. (Phone 205-734-0387)
P.O. Box 160
Cullman, AL 35056-0160

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Alabama Christian College has two full-time positions open for Admissions Counselor. A minimum of a bachelors degree is required and some experience is desired; but the school will train qualified individuals. The salary is negotiable based on experience. Benefits. There will be some travel; provide your own car.
Send resumes to: Admissions Department, Alabama Christian College, One ACC Way, Montgomery, Alabama, 36193-4601. For more information contact Phil Eddings: (205) 272-5820, Extension 116.



Words Of

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

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Abortion: The Moral Imperative

God's church has a manifold purpose for existence. We must preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). The poor and unfortunate must be ministered to (James 1:27). We must be a moral beacon pointing men and women to the Savior's path of conduct (Philippians 2:14-15). The evil forces of unrighteousness must be opposed (Ephesians 5:11-12).



JOHN WADDEY

The first two of these duties are generally understood and fulfilled; the latter two demand our urgent attention. While numerous moral issues confront us, we limit this discussion to the related matters of abortion and infanticide.

Abortion is the most volatile issue in modern America. Its ramifications spill over into numerous areas of life. Like the facets of a diamond, we see it as a religious, moral, ethical, and social issue. It is a matter of civil rights, a political, judicial, legislative and constitutional question.

Abortion is the planned destruction of a living human babe while yet in the mother's womb. We speak not of medical procedures to save a mother's life; we speak of abortion for social reasons, for the convenience of the mother. Abortion is now legal throughout the entire nine months of pregnancy. Every large city in every state has its abortion chambers. In the eleven years of legalized abortion over 16 million innocent babies have been destroyed in our land alone.

With the growing acceptance of abortion, we now see the extension of selective killing to include newborn handicapped children such as Baby John Doe of Bloomington, Indiana.

God's word speaks to the abortion issue. Human life is made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26-27). "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). God hates hands that shed innocent blood (Proverbs 6:18-19). The "Golden rule" of Jesus forbids involvement in abortion (Matthew 7:12). We

are commanded to "work that which is good to all men" (Galatians 6:10). Killing by abortion can never qualify as a good deed to perform on a helpless babe.

Abortion is evil and wrong on many counts. It is a sin against God who gave the child its life (Zechariah 12:1). It is a crime against the unborn child whose life is violently taken away. "Thou shalt not kill" (Romans 12:9). This alone lifts the question about the "religious realm" to that of moral and civil rights. Abortion is exploitation of women by doctors who grow rich off of their misery. Amos condemned the wicked who would sell "the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes" (Amos 2:6). To make \$180, abortionist doctors will destroy a baby. Under the evil of concern for a woman's right to "control her body," they promote their business with zeal and gusto.

Abortion violates the long-established medical ethic that says a patient has the right to know the risk involved before submitting to a medical procedure. Abortionists militantly oppose "informed consent" laws. Abortion is a serious medical procedure with frequent complications and sometimes fatal consequences for the mother. It is always fatal for the child.

Abortion is a genocidal attack against the poor and minority people. A recent study by the New Pittsburg Courier showed that black Americans have sixty-seven percent more abortions than whites. Welfare bureaucrats and social engineers promote abortion for minority mothers with a zeal that borders on oppression.

Abortion is warfare on the home and family. It attacks one of the primary reasons for marriage which is child-birth (Genesis 1:28). It has destroyed parents' rights to guide and protect their minor children. The Supreme Court has ruled that any girl old enough to get pregnant is old enough to make her own decision about abortion without parental knowledge or involvement (Dansforth vs. Planned Parenthood). The same ruling denies a father the right to protect his child should the wife wish to abort.

Abortion is a cop-out to avoid responsibility for one's personal conduct and for one's fellow-man. It is easier for those pregnant out of wedlock to abort rather than give birth. Unwed fathers find it easier to provide \$180 for an abortion than to accept responsibility for the child they generated. Such is an attempt to avoid reaping what has been sowed (Galatians 6:7). Parents find it simpler to push for abortion than to accept an illegitimate child in their

family. God would have us bear one another's burdens -- not cop-out (Galatians 6:2). Government and society find abortion a better investment than helping to rear and educate an unwanted child. God wants us to help, not destroy the unfortunate (Galatians 6:10).


Abortion is one further step in the moral decline of our nation. It is government-sanctioned violence. It is a prelude to the unmasked killing of the handicapped, the disabled and the aged. Infanticide is being practiced in the newborn nurseries of many of our hospitals. Promoters of euthanasia are openly pushing their cause.

We have a clear duty before us. God wants prophets to cry aloud and spare not to tell the people of their sin (Isaiah 58:1). Teachers are needed to help the masses discern between the good and the evil (Leviticus 10:11-12). Churches must reach out with hands of compassion to assist unwed mothers and poor mothers so they will not be driven in desperation to the abortion mills. Christian citizens must work diligently and sacrificially to change the bad laws that allow this evil to flourish. Christ's people are like salt to flavor, cure, and preserve society with their Christian influence (Matthew 5:13). We must remind America and her politicians that "the care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government" (Thomas Jefferson, 1809).

There is a special need for *ministers* to lead the way in this great struggle. First you must *inform yourself* so you may speak forcefully with knowledge and conviction. Ignorance disarms and destroys (Hosea 4:6). Speak to your congregation giving them God's truth on this subject (Jeremiah 23:28). Arrange for education presentations on abortion to your teens, young adults and parents (John 8:32). In counseling, always encourage those girls and women with problem pregnancies to choose life rather than death (Deuteronomy 30:19). Educate and lead your congregation to be supportive of unwed mothers. It is easy to condemn and reject them; it is Christ-like to reach out and help them. Be open and available to the young girl in trouble or the couple with a problem pregnancy or a handicapped child. Always encourage them to protect life, not to destroy it (Exodus 20:13).

Reach out to oppose this vile plague; write letters to the editor of your paper. Look for openings to speak to

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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What Is God Like

Almost from the beginning men have pondered, "What is God like?" This is seen in Moses' question to God when he was told to lead the children of Israel out of captivity. "Now they may say to me, 'What is his name?' . . ." (Exodus 3:13). Their concern was not what to call God, but what is God like. They thought that when they knew his name, they would know his nature, or what he is like.



ANCIL JENKINS

This knowledge has been given to men gradually. Adam and Eve learned that God means what he says and will punish disobedience. Abraham learned that he was consistent and will do what he promised (Romans 4:21).

Man's knowledge of God was greatly enlarged with the giving of the law of Moses. Man was given a written record of what God is like. This law, however, did not give a full picture of God. If this were the total picture, God would be strict, and exact. He would be concerned primarily with the letter of the law.

God did not leave us with the wrong idea of him. He sent the greatest revelation of all. Jesus is called, "Immanuel" or "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). His disciples asked for Jesus to show them what God is like. He told them, "He who has seen me has seen the Father . . ." (John 14:7). The writer of Hebrews goes even further to say that Jesus is the exact image of the Father (Hebrews 1:3).

What does this mean to us? It means that when we see Jesus' love and kindness, we know the Father is just like that. When we see Jesus and his concern for the purity of his Father's house, we know his Father is just as concerned. It means we never have to wonder, "What is God really like?"

We have heard, "When you get to know . . . you will really like him." How much truer is this of God! Man cannot love God until he knows him. When we know him, we see so many reasons to love him. If we do not know him, it is not because he has not given us many opportunities. — 425 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.

Answering Old Quibbles

I never cease to be amazed at the tactics of false teachers. One of the most common is that of making old, fallacious quibbles that have been answered many times. Sometimes the people who read them have not been exposed to the answers and really believe they are valid. One must examine both sides of any issue to avoid being deceived (Ephesians 4:14). Our brethren with whom we disagree over the care of orphans are especially prone to keep on making these arguments and ignoring the fact that they will not stand the test of investigation in the light of the Scriptures (I Thessalonians 5:21).



ROGER JACKSON

A recent issue of a Florence, Alabama, based magazine used a number of these old "quibbles" as if they had never been answered. Since the Bible demands that we "try the spirits" (I John 4:1), it is in order that we do so.

The first quibble is that those of us who support orphanages out of the church treasury are the ones who are guilty of causing division. Anyone who is familiar with the "anti" movement knows such is not the case. The truth is that orphanages existed, and were supported from church treasuries, many years prior to the opposition that split the church. What split the church is the insistence that men's opinion must be accepted as law. It must always be remembered that we who contribute to orphanages out of the treasury do not object to our "anti" brethren's right to do it their way and refuse to thusly contribute. We do not make the manner of the care of orphans a test of fellowship; others do. We refuse to extend our fellowship on the basis that these brethren make laws where God has made

none. In 1951 Yater Tant made this startling statement: "We are committed to battle, and that without restraint, yes, even to the point of division." Let the point of who caused the division forever be settled!

The second quibble is that emotions should play no part in the issue. One church was told that it did not believe in helping starving babies. They do not like such accusations, but are they true? In a debate with W. L. Totty, A. C. Grider affirmed: "The Bible teaches that it is a sin for the church to take money from its treasury to buy food for hungry destitute children, and those who do so will go to hell." While denying such a thing in public they will acknowledge it in private. They often find a place in their budgets for fertilizer to feed the lawn, but not for food to feed hungry destitute children. When the charge is made that they will not take a dime out of the church treasury to feed a starving orphan, it is a valid charge. Yes, it is an emotional issue, and it ought to be. Someone has a problem with his heart who cannot be touched by the plight of poor, homeless children.

A third quibble centers around statistics. In a last-straw effort the editor whose work we are reviewing, makes reference to a survey in which it is reported that among orphan-home-supporting churches the amount of money contributed per member was 7 cents. This is held up as a terrible shame. The editor further suggests that those who attend at other places take a survey to see if the figure is any higher. This is an old prejudicing trick. You see, it leaves the impression that since no more than that is being done the faithful brethren should give up the work.

I might make an alternate suggestion. Why does not the editor take a survey of his own house and give us the figures. Perhaps it is because, since they do not believe in supporting orphans at all unless they are Christians, instead of 7 cents per member they would get 0 cents per member. We individually are doing what they are (often much better), and then 7 cents per member more. — 940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 36203.

You Are Carrying The Ball

Someone has written this very excellent challenge a father gave to his son. "I'm giving you the ball, Son, and naming you quarterback for your team in the game of life. I am your coach, so I'll give it to you straight.

"There is only one schedule to play: it lasts all your life but consists of only one game. It is a long game with no time out, and no substitutions. You play the whole game . . . all your life.

"You'll work behind a truly powerful line. End to end, it consists of Honesty, Loyalty, Devotion to Duty, Self Respect, Study, Cleanliness, and Good Behavior.

"The goal posts are the pearly gates of heaven. "God is the referee and sole official. He makes all the rules and there is no appeal from them.

"There is also an important ground rule. It is: 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.'



EDSEL BURLESON

"Here is the ball: it is your immortal soul! Hold on to it! Now, Son, get in there and let's see what you can do with it."

A more complete picture of the challenge facing each of us would be difficult. We determine what we do with our lives; and some of us play the game very carelessly. We never will be challenged by seeing through our task, till we recognize the challenge of seeing our task through.

We can't make Christ mean anything to others until we make him mean everything to us. Let us not jeeringly say, "Look what the world is coming to!" But, joyfully say, "Look what has come to the world." We will never get *others* to see the joy of *claiming* Christ; until we get *ourselves* to see the joy of *proclaiming* Christ.

James said, "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). No amount of verbal instruction will influence our neighbors unless they see an example of obedience in our lives.

We cannot expect the world to react to the WORD until we act on it. We will not have to pay the penalty in the reaping, if we are willing to pay the price in the sowing. — 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

The Sacredness Of Marriage

One's attitude toward God's word is the ultimate criterion of one's spirituality. One's attitude toward marriage, based upon the teaching of God's word, will determine whether his marriage succeeds or fails (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:17). Does one believe, wholeheartedly, God's word? and does one wish to please him at all cost? -- Ah, that's the question!!



W. A. HOLLEY

The sanctity (holiness of life and character; sacredness) of marriage is demonstrated because marriage is given by God a place of honor. He commands husbands to love their wives and not to be bitter against them. The Bible also commands wives to see that they reverence their husbands, because they twain are one flesh. They were made in the image of God, and their union symbolizes the unity of Christ and his church (Hebrews 13:4; Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:33; Matthew 19:3-9).

Marriage is not a human institution. It is not a product of some so-called evolutionary development, as those who wish to leave God out of their lives argue (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:21-24). Jesus Christ the Son of God sanctioned and certified the Genesis account as authentic, genuine, veritable (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12).

The marriage institution is good for the human family, morally, spiritually, and socially. In recent years, as we have observed the home under attack, the fruits of such opposition have caused terrible problems and exacts higher and higher prices in human destruction: in abandoned children, crime, drug addiction, alcoholic consumption, child abuse, and the like. New permissiveness is reflected in American society, for statistics reveal that one of every four or five highway fatalities was the result of alcoholic beverage consumption. The divorce rate in 1983 is twice that of ten years ago. Think of it: More than 1,000,000 unmarried teenage girls became pregnant in 1983. The average person spends more than twelve years of his life watching TV. More than 1,554,000 babies were murdered (aborted) in the United States last year. Yes, we have a sad state of affairs!!

Almighty God joins men and women together for life (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:21-24; Matthew 19:3-9). "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." There is one, and only one, Scriptural cause for divorce and remarriage: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." So teaches the Lord Jesus Christ. Burning the toast, poor housekeeping, laziness, old age, etc., are not Scriptural grounds for divorce and remarriage.

"For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (Malachi 2:14-16). These verses talk about "the wife of thy youth" and "the wife of thy covenant." Thus God Almighty expects both parties to the marriage contract to live up to the promises made to each other. In what relationship is it more honorable for two people to sedulously keep their vows to each other than in the marriage relationship itself? If this were done, so many problems would be solved at once!!

Sexual "freedom" is one of the great problems of our day. If one reads the newspapers and magazines,

or watches TV, one might think that all there is is sex. Sex is used to sell automobiles, beer and wine, the latest styles of clothing, and almost everything else. In one sense we are living in the middle of Sodom and Gomorrah. It seems that when "the sons of God" married "the daughters of men," an intolerable situation was created, causing the destruction of those cities (Genesis 6:1-8; see also chapters 7,8,9). Homosexuality was so bad in Sodom and Gomorrah ten righteous souls could not be found (Genesis 18th and 19th chapters; cf., Ezekiel 16:48-50). Today, the sins of homosexuality, lesbianism, sodomy -- sins of the ancient past -- are smiled upon by many, and called "an alternate life-style;" but nevertheless such are sins against God and man! White-washed tombs may appear beautiful on the out-side; but the inside is just as repulsive as ever (cf. Matthew 23:27-28). Those readers who do not know the meaning of the three main words of this paragraph, please check any standard dictionary for their definition. The practice of Sodomy was forbidden by the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 23:17), because in the sight of God it was a despicable and contemptible custom among the heathen nations. During the reign of King Rehoboam (I Kings 14:24), Sodomites were found in the land; but Asa and Jehoshaphat, two of God's better Kings, cut them off (I Kings 15:12; 22:46). Sinful practices die hard, for other Sodomites arose to take their place (II Kings 23:7); but King Josiah, devoted to the Lord, destroyed them.

Deuteronomy 7:1-8 contains warnings against intermarriage between the Israelites and the seven nations of Canaan. Read this section of Scripture. Israel's frail character, and her close proximity to the Canaanites, would lead to the dissolution of Israel's distinctiveness, to foreign and idolatrous allegiances, and finally to Israel's own destruction. There may be no greater danger to the Lord's church than the destruction of the home (Ephesians 5:23-33; I Corinthians 7:1ff).

The Book of Ezra reveals a tragic report of mixed marriages into which Israel had given herself, after the Babylonian captivity. Ezra demanded correction be made. The text shows that seventeen priests, ten Levites, and eighty-six men of the congregation were guilty before God, and were required to put away their wives. This was a bitter pill to swallow but they did it! "All these had taken strange wives: and some of them had wives by whom they had children" (Ezra 10:44). It seems, although separated from their wives and children, adequate financial provision was made for them.

Nehemiah 13:23-28 shows that the Jews had also intermarried with Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab -- in spite of the reforms initiated by Ezra some thirty years earlier! The children of these unions could not speak pure Hebrew: "And the children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people." As an example of those who had so sinned, Nehemiah uses Solomon: "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin" (Nehemiah 13:26; cf. I Kings 11:1ff).

There are some marriage partners whom it is unlawful to have. "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:3-12). Thus, Herod was condemned for taking Herodias, a woman already married to another man. Today, countless men and women are living with companions to whom they have no right. "To look upon a woman to lust after her," shows that the sin of adultery is deeper than the overt act (Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32). Let all men and women take warning!! He who divorces his wife, except for adultery, and marries another, committeth adultery against her (Mark 10:2-12). Romans 1:26-27 condemns all homosexuality, in whatever form, between men with men, or women with women, as acts of

depravity, degradation, and perversion which deserve the severest punishment. Unless they repent and are converted to Christ, those who practice such sins are certain to end in hell (Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8).

— P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

Smoking And Health

The Chatanooga News-Free Press, 6/1/84

About 75 to 80 percent of all lung cancer cases are found among cigarette smokers, who represent less than 1/3 of the adult population.

Lung cancer is the No. 1 cause of cancer deaths among men. There has been a 400 percent increase in women's lung cancer deaths in the last 30 years. By the late 1980's lung cancer is expected to surpass breast cancer as the No. 1 killer of women.

Cigarette smoking has been implicated in cancers of parts of the body other than the lungs, including the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas.

Smoking is a primary cause of drug interaction. Effects of medication taken by a patient may be increased, decreased or cancelled by smoking. Diagnostic tests may give seriously inaccurate results in smokers.

Nicotine, a psychoactive drug found in cigarette smoke, reaches the brain of a smoker within six seconds of being inhaled -- this is twice as fast as mainlining heroin.

Teachers, doctors, dentists and pharmacists are groups that have shown high quitting rates.

Only 1/3 of smokers gain weight when they give up cigarettes. One third actually lose weight as a result of combining a general fitness program with their efforts to quit.

Cigarettes are the cause of more than 1/3 of all fire deaths. In 1981 cigarettes ignited over 63,000 homes, killed over 2,000 people, injured 4,000 and caused \$305 million in property damage.

Increasingly hotels and motels are setting aside rooms, wings, and floors for non-smokers. In 1982 the first motel for non-smokers opened in Dallas, Texas. Guests checking into the Non-Smokers Inn must sign an agreement not to smoke or to permit others to smoke upon penalty of \$100.00 cleaning charge and an immediate departure. — Submitted by Arnold Sexton, P.O. Box 345, Mabelvale, AR 72103.

Abortion

Continued From Page 1

the issue at every opportunity, such as civic clubs, schools, youth camps, etc. Be available to discuss the issue on talk shows and at school forums.

Keep your congregation informed on pertinent pro-life matters that they need to act upon, such as legislation that affects the life issues, and voting records of candidates at election time. Ways to be involved should be presented.

Preachers are encouraged to make contact with and be involved in the *Right To Life* organization of their community. The organized forces of the abortionists will not be driven out by scattered individuals. In a common effort with others who share our convictions about the sacredness of life, we can gain the victory. — 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

**Invite A Friend
To Church Sunday!**

The Church And The World

In his parable of the tares, Jesus said, "The field is the world; and good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom" (Matthew 13:38).

There often has been confusion as to just what should be the relationship of God's church and the world. Jesus did not endorse the world as sufficiently good; nor did he condemn it as totally evil. He lived in the world, but continually worked to reform it by bringing man back to God and the divine standard. It is our duty to reflect the same attitude toward the world.

Christ Intended For His Church To Live In The Midst Of The World

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world, and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom . . ." (Matthew 13:37-38). Clearly Christ has placed us in the world for a divine purpose. At his departure, his final charge to his disciples was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). They were to be his witnesses unto the "uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Disciples and congregations have always been tempted to withdraw from society into a controlled environment of their own, in order to escape from the wicked world. In the early centuries, thousands of sincere (but misguided) disciples turned to monasticism, living in caves and in the desert, dwelling alone on pinnacles to escape temptations. Their heirs are yet seen in Catholicism's monasteries, and in the Amish (and other groups) who live lives of separatism. The Shakers were a flourishing group of "reclusive" worshippers in the 1800's. Their total seclusion from the world was their ruin — the last Shaker died in 1920. Today, their communes are preserved as memorial museums to their memory.

We of the Lord's church are not totally immune to this temptation. Frequently we encounter a "stained glass mentality" that views the church as a fortress with high walls, our mission being to keep our people away from the world and the world away from us. However, the early Christians did not pursue such a course. The great Tertullian of Carthage wrote to this point, "We are not Brahmins or Indian devotees who live naked in the woods, or recluses in exile from other men. We avoid not your forum, your markets, your baths, your shops, your forges, your inns, your fairs. We are one person with you in all worldly commerce."

While the Lord has stationed us in the world, we must not partake of the sins of the world. Jesus said in his prayer, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). The Lord's church is not a worldly kingdom like our United States, nor does it use worldly methods to accomplish its goals (John 18:36). We have a definite purpose for being here. The Lord said "I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit . . ." (John 15:16). Like Legion whom Christ healed, we must "Go to (our) house unto (our) friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for (us) and how he had mercy on (us)" (Mark 5:19). So our task in the world is to preach the gospel, gather in the converts and plant colonies of disciples in every community. We must maintain his standard of living before the lost world and glorify his holy name (Matthew 5:13-16).

The Church Is Against the Wicked World

Many people of the world will hate God's people. Our Lord taught us, "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you . . . because you are not of the world . . . therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). Since our true citizenship is



JOHN WADDEY

in heaven (Philippians 3:20) we must view ourselves as pilgrims, strangers and sojourners in the world. "Such things make it evident that we are seeking after a country of (our) own" (Hebrews 11:13-14). As pilgrims we will "abstain from fleshy lusts, which war against the soul . . . having (our) behavior seemingly among the Gentiles . . ." (I Peter 2:11).

A third century disciple wrote an *Address to Diognetus* which beautifully describes our relationship to the world:

For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind in country or speech or customs. For they do not live somewhere in cities of their own or use some distinctive language or practice a peculiar manner of life. They have no learning discovered by the thought and reflection of inquisitive men. They live in Greek and barbarian cities, as each man's lot is cast and follow the local customs in dress and food and the rest of their living, their own way of life which they display is wonderful and admittedly strange. They live in their native land, and every native land a foreign country. Like everyone else, they marry, they have children, but they do not expose their infants. They set a common table, but not a common bed. They find themselves in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They remain on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they surpass the laws. They love all men, and are persecuted by all men. They are unknown, and they are condemned; they are put to death, and they are made alive. They are poor, and they make many rich. They are in need of all things. They are dishonored, and in their dishonor they are glorified. They are abused, and they are vindicated. They are reviled, and they bless. They are insulted, and they do honor. When they do good, they are punished as evildoers: when they are punished, they rejoice as though they were being made alive. By the Jews they are warred upon as aliens, and by the Greeks they are persecuted, and those who hate them cannot give a reason for their hostility.

To state it briefly, what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world. The soul is scattered through all the parts of the body, and Christians are through all the cities of the world. The soul lives in the body, but it is not of the body; Christians also live in the world, but they are not of the world . . . The flesh hates the soul and wars against it, though it is done no wrong, because they oppose its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh which hates it, and loves its members, and Christians love those who hate them. The soul is shut up in the body, but itself holds the body together; and Christians are kept in the world as in a prison, but themselves hold the world together; The soul, though it is immortal, lives in a mortal tent, and Christians live as strangers in perishable ones, waiting for immortality in heaven. When the soul is badly treated in food and drink it is made better; and Christians when they are punished increase the more in number every day. To so high a station God has appointed them, and it is not right for them to refuse it.

We must continually remind ourselves that "we are of God and the whole world lieth in the evil one" (I John 5:19). The world's sinful lusts and pleasures are forbidden to us. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). Friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). As light and darkness are antagonistic to each other, so is the world and the church. Each has a different lord (I John 5:19). The allegiance of all men is sought by each. The lifestyle and philosophy of

each are mutually antagonistic.

At times the world will manifest different attitudes toward the church. It may militantly persecute or it may only scorn and ridicule. It may treat the church as archaic and unworthy of notice as sinners create their own worldly, evil environment. Such is common today in America. The world may seek to take over the church as did Constantine, or as has Communism done the Russian Orthodox Church. Some worldlings would manipulate the church for their own purposes and ends. Rarely does the world allow the church to function unaccosted. When the church finds itself at peace with the world she had best heed the warning of her Lord: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26).

Not only must we abstain from the sins of the world, we must cry out against them (Ephesians 5:11-12). It is a tragedy when the church absorbs the values of the world and defends the sins of the world. Many denominational churches were chief supporters of slavery, and (later) segregation; and sadly so did some of ours. Liberal Protestant churches openly promote abortion, defend homosexuality and the panderers of sexually-explicit movies, magazines and books. Catholicism proudly engages in the liquor and gambling business. Have they not read Paul's admonition, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21)?

The Church Must Serve the World On Christ's Behalf

When the apostles competed for station and honor, Christ showed them "whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 20:27). Our principle service to the world is to proclaim the gospel plan of salvation to all men (Matthew 28:19-20). "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God was entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20).

We demonstrate by our lives the superiority and desirability of the Christian way. "In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation . . . (we) are seen as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

We minister to the needs of suffering people in the world, doing "good toward all men, and especially toward them of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:10). When we meet the needs of our fellowmen, we do it unto our Christ and shall be so rewarded (Matthew 25:34-40).

We serve as a moral conscience to the world, prompting men to do the right, and accusing them when they do wrong. The world will hate us, like it hated Jesus, when we testify of its evil works (John 7:7). Thus it is essential that our manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:27).

We constantly seek to permeate the world with our Christian influence. We flavor our society as salt does meat (Matthew 13:33).

Whether we be teachers or craftsmen, business men, homemakers or students, we are priests of God on service in his world, "showing forth the excellencies of him who called (us) out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

In closing I offer this challenge from Paul, as rendered by J. B. Phillips: "Don't let the world around squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds . . ." (Romans 12:1). May the church of today not forget its proper place and duty in the world.

*The author is indebted to Dwight Stevenson's book: *The Church What and Why* for the thoughts of this lesson. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.



Words Of



(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

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NUMBER 41

Politics, Morality, And Religion

Presidential candidate Walter Mondale has taken president Reagan to task for affirming that politics, morality and religion are vitally related. He is seeking to make it a major campaign issue for lack of more substantive issues. The media has thrown their stones as well. The fact is, America has always subscribed to Mr. Reagan's viewpoint until Humanism became entrenched as the self-appointed



JOHN WADDEY

National standard. The following quote from *George Washington's* farewell address shows how different Mondale's view is from the traditional American view:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them . . . let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National Morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Whatever may be said of Mr. Mondale, his brand of politics and his ideas about public morality are

remarkably different from those of the president who has been honored as the "Father of our Country."

Dr. George Dollar wrote:

On the Bible, America was founded. With the Bible, America was built. Because of the Bible, America chose the high road of morality and idealism. For the Bible, America was willing to throw off the shackles of tradition and tyranny. Under control of the Bible, America demanded that her leaders believe in and follow God and (that) her teachers teach the ways of God.

Russ Walton adds, Without the Bible, America flounders. Without the Bible, she rejects morality and idealism, and

adopts the rubber rule and the sliding scale. Without the Bible, America sinks back into the traditions of men and the tyranny of totalitarianism. Without the Bible, American no longer demands that her leaders believe in and follow God, and no longer demands that her teachers teach the word and ways of God -- but, in fact, demands that they do not. (Church & State Newsletter).

King David wrote, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Psalms 33:12). What, then, is the status of a nation who rejects Jehovah?

Christians must exercise their rights as citizens, or lose them. Register and vote! — 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

If You Are Going To Do A Thing, Do It Right

WINFREY HENNESSEE

A denominational preacher was once asked why he sprinkled young babies. "Would you expect me to submerge a child so young?" came his reply. The next question was, "If a child is that young, why 'baptize' him at all?" This was his answer: "We know that babies have no sins; but when God gives us a command, we like to go one step further in order to show him that we are willing to do his will."

Could this also be the reason they have added mechanical instruments of music to their worship?

We are told by inspiration that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). But nowhere are we directed to baptize innocent babies, nor to sprinkle. It would seem there are those who cannot even do something *wrong* without lousing it up. It would be much better if they left baby 'baptism' out of their plans, altogether!


Then there are those fanatics who handle poisonous vipers in order to prove (?) their faith, and force (?) God to perform a miracle. But the snakes

keep on biting; and they keep on dying. Just what are they proving by doing this? Would it not be much better if they just let it alone? Those to whom the promises were made in Mark 16:17-18 did "confirm" the word (Mark 16:20). Those promises are not for us today!

When this subject comes to mind, our attention naturally turns to the "faith healers" who always have a collection of walking sticks, crutches, and wheel-chairs displayed near the pulpit. But where are the wooden legs, glass eyes, and empty caskets? Some say, "Oh, don't be ridiculous!" But is this really asking too much??? Christ and his apostles raised the dead, didn't they? (Read John 11:43-44; Acts 20:9-12). Would it not be much better if this subject were not even brought up at all, since it only draws attention to their failures?

Now and then one predicts the exact day in which

Continued On Page 2



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

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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If You Are Going To Do A Thing, Do It Right

Continued From Page 1

the Lord shall come. His foolish followers sell their belongings, and waste and give away their money, while they make ready and wait, and wait, and wait. We are told in the New Testament, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:10). If we could know the exact hour in which the Lord shall come, then many would continue to be charmed by the world until just before he comes; and then they would make ready. God will not allow it to be this way, for we do not and can not know when he is coming (Matthew 25:14).

There are those who do not intend to have anything, whatsoever, to do with God's word: they just go their way, and "hope" that in the end God will make allowances for them. Of course this is wrong (John 12:47-48); but are they any worse than those who do all of the things mentioned here? There are people who "bungle" any job which they set out to do. It seems as though they go to extremes in order that they might confuse any issue that comes up! This prompts one to wonder, "If they insist on doing it at all, why can't they at least do it right?" — P.O. Box 185, McMinnville, TN 37110.

Franklin Camp, Gus Nichols, John Waddey, Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Bobby Duncan, John Gipson, Dalton Key, Flavil Nichols and Dub McClish are among the 36 men who have written articles which were included in a new book compiled by Barry Cunningham entitled, "The Work Of A Preacher."

Among the 72 articles published in this 139-page paperback book are the following: "The Work Of A Preacher" by Franklin Camp; "Preaching And Divine Providence" by Gus Nichols; "The Preacher's Salary" by Bobby Duncan; "Why Preachers Move" by Robert R. Taylor, Jr., and "Preaching A Positive



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

God's Written Word Can Be Understood

God revealed his will to mankind. When he spoke audibly, mankind understood what he said orally; and when man reads what has been written, he can understand that also. Listen to Israel's illustrious king: "All this, said David, the Lord made me to understand . . ." (But how was this accomplished? was it by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon David? was it by some other miracle? or, did the Lord make him to understand through his written word? Hear David's explanation: "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me . . ." (I Chronicles 28:19).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

A classic demonstration of the fact that God's written word can be understood when it is read, or heard, is recorded by Nehemiah. Upon Israel's return from Babylonian captivity, Ezra read from God's written law to "the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto all the book of the law" (Nehemiah 8:3). Six men were on his right, and seven on his left (verse 4), plus the Levites: and these "caused the people to understand the law" (verse 7). But note how this was accomplished: "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (verse 8).

After the assembly, where they heard God's word read, "all the people went their way . . . to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" (verse 12).

The next day came the "chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law" (Nehemiah 8:13).

On that (second) day, "they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the

feast of the seventh month: and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written" (verses 14, 15).

God's law concerning the "Feast of Tabernacles" was written in Leviticus 23:40-43. When Ezra read this to the people, they could understand and obey it, although it had been neglected ever since the days of Joshua (Nehemiah 8:17). Their forefathers had failed to obey God's will in this matter for about 1,000 years-- yet when they read his law, they learned exactly what God meant, and they could understand it.

Although this is in the Old Testament, remember that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4). Jesus said that some people's hearts are "waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15).

One who hears God's word, or reads it for himself with an honest and good heart, can understand what God wants him to "do." He may not grasp all the signs, symbols, and figures of speech; but he can know what God's will for mankind is: "Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul wrote that ". . . ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel . . ." (Ephesians 3:2-6).

Paul avers that what he wrote was revealed to him by the Spirit. But he also asserts that when you read what he wrote, you can understand what had been revealed to him, and what he thus wrote. In other words, he says in substance: when you read what I wrote you can know what I know.

The Bible is the mind of God written for man, in words man can understand and obey.

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Why I Go To Church Regularly

(1) To learn what I must do to be saved (Acts 16:30-34). I realize I must know what the Lord requires of me, and that this knowledge must be acquired, because I was not born with it (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

(2) To learn how to live a life of soberness and righteousness. In the midst of a sinful world, there are many conflicting voices calling, saying, "Follow me." But not every voice, however pleasant, leads to heaven. There is a way that "seems" right, but it is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12). No one can be saved unless he meets the demands of God (Revelation 22:14; Matthew 7:21-27).

(3) To learn how to worship God acceptably, and to worship him "in spirit and in truth" (Hebrews 12:28; John 4:23-24; Matthew 15:9). The use of mechanical instruments of music, or the counting of beads, or burning incense, or humming, in worship makes worship null and void in the sight of God (Mark 7:6-13). Nothing can be used acceptably in the worship which the Lord has not authorized (cf., Leviticus 10:1-2). What folly is wrought in God's scheme of things when men presume to improve his worship of God! In fact, man has gone very far from God when he dares to take matters into his own hand! God will punish in the day of judgment the unrighteous, "but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities" (II Peter 2:10, ASV; cf. Psalms 19:13; Numbers 15:30). Unscriptural acts of worship, however sincere the worshipers, can never please God!

(4) To learn how to treat my neighbors, friends and brethren with kindness, respect and deference (Ephesians 4:31-32). It is no sign of weakness to "be courteous" (I Peter 3:8, KJV), gracious, polite, and affable toward saints and sinners alike (Matthew 5:43-48). We should put the Golden Rule into continuous operation (Matthew 7:12). Children of God need to be taught how to "love life and see good days" (I Peter 3:8-12; John 10:10). It is good to be associated with others who are interested in the nobler ideals of life.

(5) To learn how to face the stark realities of life. I live in the real world, not the ideal world. The real world in which I live is hard and tough, and I must, somehow, gain the strength and fortitude to meet life's pressing problems. The Prodigal Son found life away from his father's house rough and tough; even so, life away from the Lord's church is fraught with many dangers lurking by the wayside. No man, not even a Christian, can live life free from hardship and toil, sickness and heartache, persecution and death. Life is not a bed of roses. Faithful attendance of the Lord's assembly enables one to fortify his soul, his inner self, with strength (Ephesians 3:16), vigor, holy might, and ever-present endurance, in the presence of the greatest obstacles -- to live a life with joy and gladness, without a feeling of endless frustrations (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 90:1).

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Where-



W. A. HOLLEY

fore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:1-2).

(6) To learn how to prepare to meet God Almighty. And meet him, we will! (Amos 4:12; Hebrews 9:27). Preparation must be made this side of the grave -- for "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3). One must be prepared to go to heaven. Heaven is a prepared place for a *prepared* people!

A life spent in disobedience to God, is a life wasted! Life is too short to squander it away in fussing, quarreling, fighting with one another, thus pursuing the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). As a matter of fact, one cannot be saved upon his moral goodness; but one can "work the works of God," which determines one's salvation (John 6:28-29; Acts 10:34-35; James 2:14-26). Although the law of Moses was "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12), it demanded perfection on the part of the Jews; and since the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, a better sacrifice became necessary (Acts 15:6-11; Romans 3:19-31; Galatians 3:10; Hebrews 10:1-4). Hence, God demands more than moral goodness -- he demands obedience to his law as stated in the New Testament (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38).

(7) To obey God Almighty. A Christian cannot remain at home when the saints worship, and fulfill one's obligation to God and the church. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubborn-

ness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee . . ." (I Samuel 15:23). Those who think more of Grandma, or the beach, or the river, or remaining at home, than they do of the Lord and his church, will find themselves turned away at the "Great White Throne" Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10).

(8) To learn how to die in peace with God Almighty. At the very best, life is brief; and death is certain (I Peter 1:24-25; Hebrews 9:27). Death is the inevitable fate of all except those alive when Jesus returns from heaven (I Corinthians 15:51; I Thessalonians 4:15). All preparation for eternity must be made before death -- there will be no second chance!! (Read Matthew 25:1-13 and Luke 16:19-31).

"The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31, ASV).

Thus the great Judgment will be universal. Jesus Christ will be the great Judge. All nations will be gathered before him. The standard of judgment will be his word (John 12:48). From Jesus' decree there can be no appeal. All accountable people will spend eternity in either heaven or hell. Which will it be for you? It is your choice -- you make the decision. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

"That You May Know You Have Eternal Life."

John makes a bold claim: we can KNOW eternal life is ours! This knowledge is the basis of our confidence in our approach to God.

This knowledge, however, is based on faith. It does not come from feeling, testing, or smelling. There is overwhelming evidence that eternal life is the inheritance and promise of the Christian. This faith causes one to act the same way as if it were empirical knowledge.

What is the evidence of our salvation? John mentions five reasons we can have assurance:

(1) **THE PROBLEM OF SIN IS SETTLED FOR THE CHRISTIAN** (I John 1:7-2:2). The Christian is saved by the blood of Christ. This blood redeems us from our past bondage of sin (Ephesians 1:7). John shows this same blood also continues to cleanse the Christian. The conditions: He must walk in the light; and he must acknowledge his sin. The Father wants no one to sin. Yet, if one does, we have one who speaks for us -- Jesus Christ. The Christian has assurance because past and present sin is taken care of

(2) **WE HAVE ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF OUR CONTINUAL OBEDIENCE** (I JOHN 2:3). We cannot hope to be saved because of our perfection. No one is able to keep all of God's commandments. Yet John is not teaching a legal fulfillment of the law. The only obedience that can bring eternal life is continual. The Christian is one who makes it his manner of life to



ANCIL JENKINS

obey. He will stumble, yet his tendency is to obey God. If this is our tendency, it can bring us comfort.

(3) **WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SALVATION BECAUSE WE LOVE OUR BROTHERS** (I JOHN 3:14). This is not a cause of our salvation; it is a result. If we make it our habitual manner of life to love our brethren, we can know we have passed from death to life. This also cannot be done perfectly. This also must be our settled way of life.

(4) **THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US ASSURANCE** (I JOHN 3:24). The Holy Spirit gives us evidence of eternal life by the Word he inspired. We can have assurance we are being led by the Spirit when our deeds and attitudes are those shown us in the Word. Some have thought this gives them a special "feeling" that demonstrates their salvation. Feelings are never the cause of ones assurance of salvation: they are the result. They may or may not be present. Salvation does not depend on "feelings."

(5) **OUR FAITH GIVES US ASSURANCE** (I JOHN 5:10). Assurance comes by faith. The stronger our faith, the stronger our assurance. We find eternal life in Christ (I John 5:11). We can know if we are in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). We produce fruit by abiding in Christ (John 15:4).

When we can see our lives becoming richer in Christ and being more like Him, we can find deeper faith and assurance. — 425 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.

Invite A Friend
To Church Sunday!



Words Of Truth

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tus; but speak forth
ness."

— Acts 26:25

Church Discipline

No. I

From the lack of attention given to "Church Discipline" in many congregations, one might think that the Bible says nothing about discipline. But man's negligence does not excuse such lack of teaching on this vital subject. According to Strong's EXHAUSTIVE Concordance of the Bible, the word *discipline* is used one time in the Bible. Elihu, one of Job's friends, a man who seems to have been very wise, said: "He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity" (Job 36:10). Moreover there are others words (e.g., chasten, chastisement, and correction, which indicate disciplinary action) which are used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. God means that some measure of restraint must be exercised.

Hebrews 12:5-6 says: "My son regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reproved of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (This quotation is from Proverbs 3:11-12). Just as our children need chastisement and correction from us, even so do the children of God need to be chastened of our Heavenly Father.

Correction or discipline is as old as the history of man. Discipline began in the early morning of time, when Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden; and cases of discipline continued throughout the patriarchal age. Romans 1:20-32 shows that the Gentile world was disciplined because of its total rejection of God's supreme authority. The Mosaic age is punctuated with thousands of examples showing God's efforts to discipline the Israelites. In the Christian age there are numerous instances of correction and punishment, thus showing that God's law is not to be trifled with.

We shall now note a few examples which illustrate this lesson. Korah, Dathan and Abriam



W. A. HOLLEY

(Numbers 16:1-35), plus 250 others were slain because of their rebellion against the Almighty. Uzzah (II Samuel 6:1-11) lost his life because he dared to disobey God's command (Numbers 7:9). In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira (husband and wife) died in the Lord's assembly because they lied to God Almighty (Acts 5:1-11). Paul mentions for all time to come, Hymenaeus and Alexander, two brothers in the Lord, "Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:19-20).

What is the purpose of church discipline? The purpose is not "to turn some brother or sister out of the church." However, this seems to be the concept of many untaught members of the church. It needs to be borne in mind that the Lord adds to the church; and if its membership is to be diminished, the Lord is in charge of that operation. The purpose of church discipline is not to take vengeance against those we do not like (Acts 2:47; Hebrews 10:30-31; Romans 12:19). Nor is its purpose a means by which we can settle an old grudge long held against another.

Well, what is the purpose of church discipline? There are three basic reasons: (1) We must exercise church discipline upon a brother or sister who has departed from Christian duty and is now living in sin. This would be a person who became a Christian but is now backslidden (II Peter 2:20-22; Galatians 5:4).

What do the Holy Scriptures have to say about this situation? "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thessalonians 3:14) is the Lord's answer. Another passage is I Corinthians 5:5, which reads: "To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Thus, the church must exercise church discipline that those who are lost, who are not obeying their Lord in their Christian duties, may be made ashamed of their ungodly conduct. Now, it makes no difference what the sin is, whether adultery or negligence regarding the Lord's day assembly. If such transgression is not corrected, the church must withdraw its fellowship. Repentance for the erring child of God is the grand goal sought.

(2) We are deeply concerned about the lost souls in the world of sin who look to faithful Christians for


good examples of what Christianity ought to be. Jesus taught: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16, A.S.V.).

Why is the story of Ananias and Sapphira, as tragic as it is, told in the Bible? They lied to God Almighty regarding their contribution, and were stricken dead because of it. What use is made of this incident? Just take a look at Acts 5:1-11, and verse 11 in particular, which reads: "And great fear came upon all the church and upon as many as heard these things." Hence, this act of discipline caused others who heard of it to have a greater respect and reverence for God's will and way than they would otherwise have.

And (3) we are to exercise church discipline in behalf of the membership of the local church itself. First Corinthians, chapter 5, contains a rather long treatise on this very point. If the church cannot save itself, all is lost! There was flagrant sin in the Corinthian church and, if not corrected, it would destroy the whole church. Paul wrote, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened" (I Corinthians 5:6). Sin is a cancer which grows and grows and, if not excised, it will eventually consume the whole body (II Timothy 2:16-18; James 1:13-15). Where there is love for God and love for the brethren, there will be church discipline.

It is best to withdraw fellowship from erring children of God because God Almighty has so commanded it. For those who truly fear God, this is enough. (More later). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

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— Acts 26:25

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Prayer

There is much recorded for our edification and instruction in God's word on the subject of prayer. We are informed several times how our Lord went aside to pray (Mark 6:46; Luke 9:28; etc.), even continuing all night at times (Luke 6:12).

Jesus wants his disciples to pray. Luke (18:1) tells us that Jesus ". . . spake a parable unto them to this end, that *men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*"



CHARLES E. McDONALD

Yet, even in the early existence of the church, James seems to refer to a state of needless poverty produced by lack of prayer. "Ye lust and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Then there were those who asked, and received not, because they did not ask right (James 4:3).

Such a state as described by James was certainly not caused by bankruptcy in heaven, nor a lack of heaven's interest toward the people. It was produced by a lack of, or improper use of, prayer. How many blessings are missing in our lives for like reasons?

Are there not blessings that God will confer upon his children in answer to their prayers which he will give no other way? James 5:16 reads: ". . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Many make too much of prayer by making it a substitute for obedience to other plain commands. Others go to the extreme of rationalizing prayer out of the Bible and out of their lives. One should not be driven to either extreme.

If prayer is to be effective in our lives, we need to understand some things about it. Prayer is not a "stump speech" to God, nor a medium to display proficient use of adverbs and adjectives. It is not a means of side-stepping some other plain duty. There is no substitute for obedience! Even the prayers of

Continued On Page 3

Despised And Rejected Of Men

Isaiah 53 presents the prophecy of the suffering servant. The description is so detailed that one would have to be ignorant of the facts, or deliberately dishonest, to say that this is not Jesus, the Son of the living God. We read, "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). This verse



VICTOR M. ESKEW

vividly pictures a Savior who would be set at naught by mankind. The prophet makes manifest before the actual event that humanity would spurn the Messiah.

The gospel record as given by John more than adequately fulfills the statements made by the Seer of old. He opens his account of the Master's life with these words: "He came unto his own and his own received him not" (1:11). From this point onward we read of rejection upon rejection of our Lord by mankind.

In chapter four we read that the Jews "did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him" (verse 16). The Son of man had healed a man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years. This healing took place on the sabbath day; therefore, the Jews accused the Lord of doing that which was illegal, and sought his life.

John gives further fulfillment of Isaiah's prophetic words. The fulfillment is found in 6:66: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." These individuals were those who followed the Master only for the loaves and fishes (6:26). Upon hearing the message of the bread of life of which they could eat and live forever, they forsook

Jesus because of his hard saying (verse 60).

The fleshy brothers of our Lord also helped to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy. In John 7:5 we read of their disbelief in the claims of their brother. "For neither did his brethren believe in him." This must have been a great burden for the Lord to bear. When others disbelieve our claims we are able to continue; but when our flesh and blood turn against us, the weight is almost too much to bear.

The Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take the Lord (John 7:32-53). The Jews took up stones to cast at him (John 8:59). The Jews again took up stones to stone him (John 10:31). "Among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42)-- thus, another rejection. In John 13:21-30 Jesus foretells of the betrayal by Judas. And in John 18:1-5, we find Judas in the garden directing the leaders of the Jews to Jesus. John 18:25-27 records the three denials of the impetuous Peter. Pilate's rejection of the Christ is recorded in John 19:13-16 when he turns Jesus over to the people to be crucified. And his ultimate rejection is embossed in John 19:16-18 as the entirety humanity can be seen crucifying the Just One.

"Total Rejection" might be a sub-title to the gospel according to John. But even though he was cast aside by men, he was not to be defeated. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders *disallowed*, the same is made the head of the corner" (I Peter 2:6,7; emphasis mine). Will you also reject the Christ? Before answering read the words of Christ: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Do You Park Your Car By Ear?

Herbert Prochnow tells about a lady who was lucky enough to find a parking space right where she wanted to shop. She backed in until she hit the car in back of her with a loud bang. Then she pulled forward and smacked into the car ahead. This resounding crash drew the attention of the policeman at the corner.

Noticing that he was watching her, the lady called cheerfully, "Did I park all right, Officer?"

"Yes, Lady," he answered, "but do you always park by ear?"

We often give too little thought to the means by which a given result is achieved assuming that the end justifies the means. The expressions, "I know my rights," or, "I want my rights," usually indicate one's unwillingness to give much consideration to the rights of the other person.



EDELSEL BURLESON

result may be good, which is an imposition upon another, is wrong. I cannot succeed at the expense of another, and do so *honorably*.

This is one of the greatest faults of the tale-bearer. He is usually trying to build himself by reflecting upon someone else. This is the principle Jesus was teaching in the sermon on the mountain when he said: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).

Aldous Huxley said, "There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self. So you have to begin there, not outside, not on other people. That comes afterward, when you've worked on your own corner."

Too many of us conduct our lives on the new-style gasoline station plan-- "self-service" only. Usually, seeing ourselves as others see us would do very little good. We would not believe what we saw. — West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL, 35211.

Any action which one takes, though the ultimate

The Corinthian Converts

Paul's mission of evangelism among the Gentiles provides a fascinating study. Of equal interest is the study of the converts he made. This lesson will center on the first disciples in the Grecian city of Corinth, the record of which is found in Acts 18:1-11.

The City

Corinth was the fourth largest city of the Roman Empire with a population near 600,000 — the majority of which were slaves. It was the Roman capital of Achaia. In Paul's day it was the most important city of Greece. Her signal role among the Greek cities was reflected in the names and titles bestowed upon her. She was called "the star of Hellas," "the gate of the Peloponnese;" "the bridge of the sea," and "the lounge of Greece."

Corinth was a great commercial center. Strategically located on the Isthmus that joined northern and southern Greece, she stood at the crossroads of the Mediterranean world. She was an extremely wealthy city and a center of culture and art. The principle object of worship in pagan Corinth was Aphrodite, the goddess of love, sometimes called Venus. A thousand priestesses served in her temple as "sacred prostitutes" for the many worshippers. Like the ancient fertility cults of Baal and Ashtoroth, her devotees worshipped in sexual orgies.

Morally, Corinth was one of the most debauched cities in the world. With such an immoral religious system, there was nothing to ameliorate her morals. Her heathen citizens did not know the meaning of chastity or sexual virtue. Vice was considered a virtue. The very name, Corinth, was a by-word for reckless, riotous and immoral living. Aelian, the Greek literary person, said that if ever a Corinthian were shown on the stage in a Greek play, he was portrayed as drunken.

There were certain cultural advantages in such a city. The famed Isthmian games held in Corinth were second only to the Olympics. Her outdoor theater seated 20,000 while her covered theater accommodated 3,000.

It has well been said that in Corinth, men worshipped silver and gold; drank deeply at pleasure's fount; dined at the table of luxury; wallowed in the mire of every vice; they lived wholly for the here and now!

The Corinthian Church

The church of Christ was planted in Corinth by Paul while on his second missionary expedition in about 50 A.D. Her membership was composed of both Jews and Greeks. Most of the converts came from the humbler ranks of society. "Not many mighty, not many noble" were called (I Corinthians 1:26-31). Some of them had been steeped in pagan immorality beforehand. Paul speaks of former adulterers, idolaters, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards and extortioners that were now in her fellowship (I Corinthians 6:9-11). In Corinth, we witness the clash of Christian ethics and morality versus the pagan world and its standards.

Like all other early Christians, those in Corinth had no public "church building." Those came in the midst of the third century. Rather, they met in private homes, schools and halls when it was safe to do so. Often they assembled secretly because of persecution.

Paul's Work in Corinth

Upon arriving in Corinth, Paul struck a friendship with a Jewish Christian couple named Priscilla and Aquila. All being tentmakers, Paul abode with



JOHN WADDEY

them. To find converts for the Master's cause, Paul resorted to the Jewish "synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4). When prejudiced Hebrews closed the doors of the synagogues, "he departed thence, and went into the house of . . . Titus Justus," a Jew who lived next door (Acts 18:7). We should be reminded that prospective converts are not often found in our church buildings, but in the public places and homes of our communities.

The subject of the apostle's preaching was simple: he testified "that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:5). He delivered unto them "first of all . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried: and that he hath been raised on the third day . . . and that he appeared to . . . above five hundred brethren . . ." (I Corinthians 15:3-6).

The manner of his preaching is recorded for us. He taught "the word of God among them" for eighteen months (Acts 18:11). He reasoned and persuaded among them (Acts 18:4). He did his work "without any show of oratory or philosophy" (I Corinthians 2:1, Jerusalem Bible). Later he wrote: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (I Corinthians 2:3). The result of his work was mixed. On the part of the Jews there was open hostility (Acts 18:6). But "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:7-8). The Jews brought legal harassment and persecution upon him (Acts 18:12-13).

How The Corinthians Became Christians

Paul faithfully taught the word of God among them (Acts 18:11). They received the message taught and believed on the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 15:1-2). Upon hearing and believing they "were baptized" (Acts 18:8). Their baptism was a burial or immersion

in water (Romans 6:3-4). When they were baptized, God washed away their sins (Acts 22:16). In obeying Jesus' gospel commands they were saved (Mark 16:15-16). "In one Spirit . . . were (they) all baptized into one body" which is Christ's church (I Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18). They were "the church of God . . . at Corinth" (I Corinthians 1:2). There were no denominations for them to be part of, and Paul taught them never to be divided (I Corinthians 1:10). They were simply Christians, nothing more or less (Acts 11:26).

The Membership Roll

Among the charter members of the Corinthian church was Titus Justus who lived next door to the Jewish synagogue. The church first met in his home (Acts 18:7). Crispus, the former ruler of the synagogue, and his family soon took their stand for Christ (Acts 18:8). There was Gaius, who provided lodging for Paul and later a meeting place for the congregation (Romans 16:23). Erastus, the city treasurer, was won to Christ (Romans 16:23), as were Quartus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (Romans 16:23; I Corinthians 16:17). Paul himself immersed the household of Stephanas (I Corinthians 1:10), and later saw the family of Chloe added (I Corinthians 1:11). Sosthenes who at one point sought Paul's harm, was later converted (Acts 18:17; I Corinthians 1:1).

As in thousands of communities since that time, not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty or noble were called (I Corinthians 1:26), but they who gladly received the gospel and were baptized were saved. They became God's family in their town, worshipping and serving him through his Son.

Will you not do the same today! — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Prayer

Continued From Page 2

Christ and Stephen could not set aside the requirements of the gospel (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; 2:40-42; 9:18-19). Prayer is not just mere desire. Paul speaks in the same breath about his "heart's desire AND prayer to God" for Israel (Romans 10:1).

For one to realize the truth about man's absolute dependence on God (John 15:56; Acts 17:28) will naturally lead to prayer. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). We ought to take counsel of him as well.

The total context of the new covenant on the subject of prayer teaches us how to pray. There are some questions we might ask and thereby get a better grasp of what is involved.

1. AM I QUALIFIED TO PRAY? Jesus said pray to "our Father," etc. But, is your "Father?" To properly address God as "Father," one must first be his child. There is a difference in being God's *creature*, and in being God's *child*. All men are creatures of God; but only those born again, of water and the Spirit (John 3:1-6), are his "children." Also, after becoming God's child, one must have a proper spirit toward others, or his prayers will be hindered (Matthew 5:24; 6:12). Prayer must come from a believing heart or it is of no avail (James 1:6; 5:16). Domestic difficulties can hinder prayer (I Peter 3:7).

Further, are we ready to be satisfied with God's answer? It may be "yes," "no," or "wait a while!"

2. IS MY PRAYER SCRIPTURAL? One must pray in harmony with God's will. "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14). You cannot pray according to God's will, and ask him to cleanse the sinner before baptism, or without repentance.

3. IS MY PURPOSE UNSELFISH? "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). We can ask for self without being selfish. Jesus told the disciples to ask for their daily bread (Luke 11:3), and James said if you lack wisdom, ask of God (James 1:5). But the *selfish* prayer will be answered, "NO!"

A real test of one's faith in the power of prayer is given by our Lord in Matthew 6:6: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Children of God who practice this kind of prayer life will do one of two things: either stop praying, or stop worldliness. Let us pray! — Church of Christ, 417 Coosa Pines Dr., Childersburg, AL 35044.

Invite Some Friends To Church Sunday

And Watch Your Church Grow!

Do You Believe In Bible School?

We in the church of Christ teach and preach the importance of the Bible, God's Word. We say we believe in Bible classes on Sunday morning. When it comes to actual practice I wonder just how much we do believe in them?

I once heard of a brother who made public confession of his being opposed to Bible classes. He said, "For about thirty years I preached for non-Bible class churches of Christ and I debated against the principle of Bible classes. Now I believe I was wrong. . . I apologize to the brotherhood for the harm that I have done to the church. I am ashamed and sorry for it all. I feel that my work has been a failure. I hope I will be able to undo some of the harm that I have done."

There are many in the church who are "opposed" to Bible classes, yet I fear they will never admit it, and will never make a confession of such. Jesus said that if we were not "for" him, we were "against" him



J. V. COPELAND, Jr.

(Matthew 12:30). This being true, if we are not "for" Bible classes, we are "against" them. So, the church members who *do not attend* and *support Bible classes* must be "against" them!

If Bible classes are right, if people do learn God's word in them, if they learn of Christ, if the teaching of God's word will cause men to become Christians, make Christians mature in Christ (I Timothy 3:16,17) and give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified (Acts 20:28), then should we not be "for" Bible classes? regularly attend the classes? support them in every way possible? and work to get others to attend?

The greatest sermon that can be preached is the sermon we preach by our actions. People may misunderstand what we *say* or what we *write*; but they don't misunderstand what we *do*.

Luke wrote of all that "Jesus began both to *do* and *teach*" (Acts 1:1). Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia" (I Thessalonians 1:7 N.I.X.). By being a faithful attender of Bible classes you can be a model for others to follow, and that may be the saving of their souls. Wouldn't you like to know that by your faithfulness to Bible classes you were responsible for someone being saved? That could well be! Saving souls is what this is all about.

Many denominational churches boost their Sunday school more than their regular worship service. They are convinced that if they build their Sunday school it will in turn build attendance at the regular services.

In the surveys we have conducted of churches of Christ in the Atlanta area, it is quite evident many of us do not "believe" in Bible study classes. Bible class attendance in most churches of Christ is considerably lower than attendance at the worship service. It averages about 20% lower in the churches of the Atlanta area. We either have a lot of members who, in practice, do not really *believe* in Bible study in classes; or, we are having an unusual number of visitors at the regular Sunday morning services! I am constrained to believe it is the former.

We will never win many to the Lord unless we let them see our dedication to him and to the study of his Word. They cannot see dedication when there is none to be seen. Brethren, let us wake up and get to work! Let us work first to get our own members to *believing* in Bible school; that is, *believing* in the true sense of the word -- having a faith that works. James tells us faith without works is dead. A dead faith is fruitless and worthless. May we show our faith by our works. — Elder, Forest Park church, P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30050.

THIRD ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

STUDIES IN THE REVELATION



NOVEMBER 11-15, 1984

BOOK AND TAPES OF LECTURES AVAILABLE

DUB McCLISH, DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:00 AM Jerry Moffitt
10:00 AM Dub McClish
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Tom Gaumer
3:00 PM Jack Orbison
4:00 PM Ken Hope
5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Thomas B. Warren
8:00 PM Roy Lanier, Jr.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION — AN INTRODUCTION CHRIST ADDRESSES THE SEVEN CHURCHES (Rev. 1:1-20)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION KEYS TO INTERPRETATION DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN REVELATION: Is the Father or the Son speaking? (1:8); What is the "Lord's day"? (1:10); Who or what are the angels of the seven churches? (1:20); How will Christians have authority over the nations? (2:26)

ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES — REVELATION There will be separate resurrections of the righteous and the unrighteous (20:5-6). The church will be caught up from the earth for a seven year "rapture" (4:1-2). The "Great Tribulation" will occur while the saints are in the "rapture" (3:9; 7:14, etc.)

CHRIST, THE VICTORIOUS LAMB AND LION DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN REVELATION: Why does Christ speak of the Father as "my God" when Christ himself is Deity? (3:12); Who are the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures? (4:4, 9, etc.); How do the saints reign upon the earth? (5:10); Who are the 144,000? (7:4; 14:1, 3)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 AM Tom Gaumer
10:00 AM Marvin Weir
11:00 AM Byron Denman
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM W. B. West, Jr.
3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM
Edward Fudge
Garu Workman
5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
Garland Elkins
8:00 PM Robert Taylor, Jr.

WONDERFUL HEAVENLY SCENES AND THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS (Rev. 4:1; 7:17)

DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN REVELATION What is the "great tribulation"? (7:14, etc.); Who is "Abaddon" and "Apollyon"? (9:1, 2, 11); What is the "little book"? (10:2, 8, 10); Who are the "two witnesses"? (11:3-6)

DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN REVELATION Who are the radiant woman and her son? (12:1-2, 5-6); What is the war in heaven and the casting down of Satan? (12:7-9); What is referred to by the 42 months, 1260 days and "a time, times and half a time"? (11:2, 12:6, 14); What are the "book of life of the Lamb," "the books" and "the book of life"? (13:8, 20, 12)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION A SURVEY — I ETERNAL PUNISHMENT (Rev. 14:11, 20-10) The judgment of God against sinners will be eternal extinction rather than unending conscious torment. The judgment of God against sinners will be unending conscious torment rather than eternal extinction.

ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES — REVELATION Jesus is coming soon (3:11; 22:7, 12, 20); Instrumental music is scripturally authorized (5:8, 14:2, 15:2); Christ will come a third time, seven years after his "rapture" coming, to establish his millennial kingdom (19:11, 16)

LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES OF ASIA — #1 (Rev. 2:1-29)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM Mark Lewis

ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES — REVELATION There will be a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ (20:4-6). There will be innumerable conversions of the Jews during the "rapture-tribulation" (7:14). The kingdom and reign of Christ are yet future (11:15, 20:4-6)

10:00 AM Ollie Duffield
11:00 AM James Meadows
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM W. B. West, Jr.
3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM
W. Terry Varner
3:45 PM W. Terry Varner
Robert Taylor, Jr.
5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Garu Workman
8:00 PM Wendell Winkler

THE ANGELS OF GOD THE FALL OF THE HARLOT, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET (Rev. 17:1-19:21)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION A SURVEY — 2 THE GREAT JUDGMENT (Rev. 20:11-15) Is the second coming of Christ, ushering in the great day of judgment, yet in the future, or did it occur in A. D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem? Questions fielded from the floor

THE MILLENNIUM (Rev. 20:1-10) THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND ETERNAL REWARDS (Rev. 20:11-22:5)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 AM Robert Taylor, Jr.
10:00 AM Tom Bright
11:00 AM J. Noel Merideth
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Frank Dunn
3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM
Alan Highers
3:45 PM Alan Highers
Garland Elkins
Thomas B. Warren
5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Bert Thompson
8:00 PM Wayne Jackson

LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES OF ASIA — #2 (Rev. 3:1-22)

DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN REVELATION Who is the beast represented by "666"? (13:17-18); Who or what is "Babylon the great," "the great harlot"? (14:8; 17:1-6)

DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN REVELATION What is meant by "the spirit of prophecy"? (19:10); What is the "new heaven" and the "new earth"? (21:1); Why is the "new Jerusalem" described as coming DOWN from heaven? (21:2, 10)

THE SEVEN ANGELS AND THEIR SEVEN PLACES (Rev. 15:1-16:21)

SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM (Rev. 1:5) Must one understand that baptism is for salvation or the remission of sins to be scripturally baptized (and thus washed) loosed from his sins? Questions fielded from the floor

THE CHURCH OF THE TRIUMPHANT CHRIST SATAN, HIS PERSON, NATURE, WORK AND DESTINY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15

9:00 AM John Waddey
10:00 AM Wayne Jackson
11:00 AM Bill Jackson
12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
2:00 PM Maxie Boren
3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM
Alan Highers
3:45 PM Alan Highers
Garland Elkins
Thomas B. Warren
5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
7:00 PM Hugo McCord
8:00 PM Johnny Ramsey

THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS (Rev. 8:1-11:19)

ANSWERING FALSE DOCTRINES — REVELATION Christ is a created being rather than the Creator (3:14); The 144,000 alone will dwell in heaven, while the remainder of the saved will live on earth eternally (7:4-8, 14:1, 3); There will be a literal battle of Armageddon between the followers of Christ and his enemies (16:14-15, 19:19-21, etc.); There will be a renovated earth where the "earthly class" of the saved will dwell forever (21:1)

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN CHILD VS THE DRAGON AND HIS HELPERS (12:1-14:20)

THE BEATITUDES OF REVELATION WHO ARE "IN THE LORD"? (Rev. 14:13) Are there sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among practically all of the denominations? Questions fielded from the floor

THE LAST WORDS OF REVELATION (Rev. 22:6-21)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION — A SUMMARY

SPECIAL FEATURE: **DAILY DISCUSSION FORUMS ON CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS**

CHURCH OF CHRIST 312 PEARL ST DENTON, TX 76201



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 21

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1984

NUMBER 43

Church Discipline

NO. II

We suggest that you read our prior article which deals with this same subject. Christians should understand that the obligation of church discipline is a continuous one. It has ever been so since the apostolic age, and will be so unto the second coming of our Lord.

From whom should the church withdraw fellowship? We should withdraw fellowship from those members who are living immoral lives.

Hear the Scriptures: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Corinthians 5:9-13).

The above Scripture names six acts of misconduct for which an erring church member must have the fellowship of faithful Christians withdrawn from him. What are these six sins?

(a) Fornication. This is the term used in the Bible to comprehend all forms of illicit sex relationships. The word *fornication* includes all homosexual acts, all lesbian sexual acts, and all acts of sodomy (Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13).

(b) Covetousness. To desire inordinately what belongs to another, is the sin of covetousness. In the Bible covetousness is said to be idolatry because one tends to worship that which he covets (Colossians 3:5). Covetous members of the church who will not



W. A. HOLLEY

repent of their sin, but refuse to begin giving generously of their time, talent, and money, should be withdrawn from.

(c) Idolatry. Many churches of our modern day have their icons, images, rosaries, incantations, and the like. Although a child of God may not literally bow down before his money, yet if he worships his wealth (whether it be great or small) he is guilty of idolatry, nevertheless. Jesus warned of the difficulty of those who trust in riches entering heaven (Mark 10:23-27). "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in their riches to enter into the kingdom of God," said Jesus. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Corinthians 8:6).

(d) Reviling. To *revile* another is to subject him to verbal abuse --- to use abusive language; to scold --- to find fault noisily and wordily --- to censure severely or angrily. Church members who are guilty of this sin should be withdrawn from unless they will repent of this sin.

(e) Drunkenness. Drunkenness, unlike covetousness which is a hidden sin, is more or less a public sin, which most are ready to condemn openly; so action is more readily taken. Drunkenness is not a disease, but a sin before God and man (Galatians 5:19-21). Christian fellowship must be withdrawn from all impenitents within the Lord's church.


(f) Extortion. An extortioner is a man or woman who through the power of his/her own threats takes away what is not rightfully his or hers. One who takes advantage of another's poverty, or his necessities, to obtain inordinate or excessive gain, is an extortioner.

How often have such members lived their lives without any action being taken against them? But God does not collect all his debts in the fall of the year! (Cf. II Corinthians 5:10-11; Acts 17:30-31).

I Corinthians 5:1-13 contains four strong terms which indicate that fellowship must be withdrawn from those members who refuse to repent of their sins. What are these terms? (1) "Deliver such an one unto Satan," (2) "Purge out the old leaven," (3) "Have no company with fornicators . . ." (4) "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." These are commands from the God of Heaven. We must not dare trample them under our feet.

What is the object of true law enforcement, as far as civil law is concerned? It is two-fold: (1) To prevent lawlessness, and (2) to punish those who commit crimes. In the same likeness, church discipline is designed to prevent children of God from departing from the good and right way of the Lord, through proper training and correction, so that no problems will arise. But, if a brother or sister, after due admonition on the part of the whole church, stubbornly refuses to make that correction demanded by the Lord God Almighty, the next necessary step is the withdrawal of Christian fellowship. Admittedly, this a very painful act, both for the church and the person from whom fellowship is withdrawn. "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow that which is good, one toward another, and toward all" (I Thessalonians 5:14-15, A.S.V.). (More to follow).
— P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

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And Watch Your Church Grow!**



Words Of Truth
(USPS 691 760)

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

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Written Word Can Be Understood

Luke, whom Paul called "the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), expected his writing to be understood. To Theophilus, he said: "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:3-4). By reading this written account, a disciple could "know" with certainty what the writer said!



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Jesus customarily went to the synagogue on the sabbath day. On one particular sabbath day he "stood up for to read" (Luke 4:16). This indicates that he thought the scriptures could be understood. Hear Luke: "When he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:17-21). Yes, he knew they could understand the scripture in its proper light. He made truth clear to them --so plain that they sought to kill him (verses 18-30); but he escaped!

Jesus often inquired if his hearers had never "read" the written word of God. Notice how many times reference is made to such inquiries: "Have ye not read what David did . . . ?" (Matthew 12:3; cf. Mark 2:25; Lk. 6:3). "Have ye not read in the law . . ." (Matthew 12:5). "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning . . ." (Matthew 19:4). "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matthew 21:16). "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner" (Matthew 21:42; cf. Mark 12:10). "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham . . . ?"

Furthermore, to the lawyer who tempted him with the question: "Master, what shall I do to inherit

eternal life?" Jesus responded: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:25-26). This clearly indicates that our Lord expected one to understand what he reads.

To his apostles Jesus explained the prophecies which his suffering and resurrection had fulfilled. Luke states that in so doing he "opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45-47). In the light of the written New Testament explanation, we, to this day, still can understand the same scriptures -- and we understand them just like the apostles did! No scripture meant *one* thing to one apostle, but something *different* to another! Nor does any text teach *me* one thing, but *you* something different! We all understand the Bible alike! Else, one of us does not truly "understand" it, or perhaps both of us misunderstand it.

The evangelist Philip inquired of the Ethiopian: "understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30). That nobleman's reply was: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:30-31). You realize, however, that he had only the Old Testament; he did not have the written New Testament as we do. From it WE learn what had to be taught HIM orally: that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah 53. We can understand, not only the written record of their fulfillment, but the written prophecies themselves, by **READING**, just as he understood them through Philip's oral explanation.

Paul, Barnabas, Judas (Barsabas), and Silas delivered to the church of Antioch the first written lines of the New Testament (of which we have any account), "Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation" (Acts 15:31). They could understand the written word! Else perhaps they should have wept for the rebuke it contained!

The apostle Paul said he wrote what he had received by revelation, which "when ye read ye may understand my knowledge. . . ." (Ephesians 3:4). For this very reason the written word of God was commanded to be read to the churches. To the Colossians, Paul wrote: "When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16). This necessarily implies that entire congregations should understand what had been written in those two epistles. The same apostle wrote to the Thessalonians: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren" (I Thessalonians 5:27). If not "all the holy brethren" could understand what had been written, it would have been an exercise in futility to have read it to them all! Therefore, we are driven to the conclusion that God's written word is capable of being understood when read.

Are you a daily Bible reader?

Runaways

The problem of runaway children has reached epidemic proportions in our society. Each year thousands of kids hit the road without parental knowledge or approval. The results are always painful for the parents but they can be disastrous for the teenager. We will survey the dangers and causes and propose some preventive cures.

Some Obvious Dangers

On the streets of a big city with little or no money in their pockets, runaways are almost certain to encounter some frightful dangers. Vice and violence are always lurking in the underground world of runaways. Hunger drives a person to desperate measures such as stealing, robbing or prostitution. A kid hitchhiking alone, or seeking refuge, may fall victim to the violence of rapists, perverts or even murderers. Drug pushers look for easy targets. Homosexuals and pimps prowl the streets looking for these naive, runaway drifters. Members of far out religious cults make "lost kids" a special target for their outreach. In their desperation, thousands of kids have been "won" to a cult of religious slavery. But even should a youngster escape the dire problems cited, he finds himself adrift on a lonely sea of lostness. Such has the tendency to leave a soul depressed and despondent . . . for some, suicide is the only way out. Truly the way of a transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). Lots of kids think their problems at home are unbearable. But where is the returned runaway who would recommend that route?

Why Do Kids Run Away?

Surely every case is different but we can spot some obvious reasons that provoke some kids to flee. Heading the list would surely be *unhappy homes*. Children whose home life is plagued with continual quarreling or drunkenness or lovelessness find very little to make them want to stick around. If they detect

Continued from page 2

WORD of GOD		
New Testament	church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:	And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;
Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the		and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
		James 5:14, 15

Runaways

Continued on page 3

parental favoritism toward brothers or sisters while they routinely get no consideration, they find it easy to run. When discipline is too harsh or without proper love and forgiveness, they may feel they are unloved and unwanted. *Lack of communication* with parents prompts many teens to bail out. These are frequent provocations that drive some kids to the streets.

Involvement in drugs or alcohol is a common cause for children leaving their homes. Awareness of their parent's strong disapproval makes many flee rather than face the consequences. Addiction may drive them away from home to fulfill their bodies' craving and to get the funds for their expensive habit.

Problems at school may provoke such a flight. Especially if the child finds it difficult to communicate with his parents at home. Problems involving scrapes with the law might evoke a similar response.

A crisis such as pregnancy out of wedlock has been the occasion for thousands of runaways: some to marry in haste, others to avoid facing their parents.

Adolescent years are turbulent and confusing for youngsters in a space age society. Even good kids in solid Christian homes have their moments of stress and disorientation. To steer our young people around the temptation to run away, we can do the following:

Treat each child with a high degree of personal respect and dignity. No one enjoys being just part of the herd. Love him and treat him as you want to be treated (Matthew 7:12; 22:39). Be loving and kind. Provoke them not to wrath (Ephesians 6:4). It's a rare person — young or old — who will run away from genuine love and affection. The cords of love draw us close and bind us together (Hosea 11:4).

Strive for a happy, joyful home environment. That everyone loves. No one enjoys a lodging place in a verbal war zone. Rash speaking pierces like a sword (Proverbs 12:18). "A soft answer turns away wrath: but a grievous word stirreth up anger (Proverbs 15:1). A child, like an adult may conclude it is better to dwell outside the home than with constant contention (Proverbs 21:19).

Have open lines of communication with your children. Don't do all the talking. Learn to listen to their problems; their ideas; their needs. "Come let us reason together" is good for all human relationships, even parents and children. How else can you know when a crisis is brewing? Parents must build these lines early. It is extremely difficult to begin communication at 16.

Help your children feel that they have a meaningful stake in their home and family. Invite their input and opinions. Include them in your daily routine and activities. Many young people complain that they are alienated from their folks. They hardly know their parents. Mom and Dad: it takes TIME to nurture kids in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Time spent together in meaningful activity will promote family loyalty and prevent alienation.

Be firm in your discipline but always be fair and consistent. Few children resent fair discipline. Proper discipline demonstrates parental love (Proverbs 13:24). But "he that is soon angry will deal foolishly" (Proverbs 15:17). Never be a respecter of persons with your kids (James 2:9). By all means, be loving and forgiving after the discipline is administered. Holding the child's mistake against him may well drive him away.

Maintain a strong spiritual atmosphere in your home. It is no idle saw that says, "a family that prays together stays together." It is a rare thing to hear of a runaway child from a truly devout Christian home. Prayer, Bible study, full involvement in the local church, a Christ-like spirit: these are the best medicine for a healthy home relationship.

Keep your eyes and ears open. Know who your offspring's friends are and what they are like. Guide them in their choice of friends. You know that evil companions can corrupt good manners, even if they

don't (I Corinthians 15:33). Know where they are. Don't be naive thinking your children won't get into any trouble (I Peter 5:8). Kids are human. Satan is constantly at work for their souls (I Peter 5:8).

Be alert for teen crises such as school problems, romantic conflicts, drug abuse, lingering depression. Prevention is the key word. Meet your children's needs before they break your heart.

When It Happens

Parents, if you have the misfortune of a runaway experience, don't be too proud to admit the reality. Don't think, "my kid would never do that!" Get in touch with the police immediately. Check every available source for information. Try to contact your child. Let them know you love them and are anxious to have them home. Don't threaten and rage against them lest you drive them further away. Don't be too stubborn or proud to give them a second chance. There's no motivation to return to an unforgiving home. If a child is under age, of course, you must insist on their return, but if they are older you can only rely on persuasion. They must be convinced you want them back.

If this question were raised to most individuals in the denominational world, the answer would be in the affirmative. Their answer, however, springs from a false sense of love. Their concept of love can be seen when we read their bumper stickers which say: "Honk If You Love Jesus." Their concept of love is a feeling within the individual which expresses itself outwardly in saying: "I love you, Jesus."

This warped concept of love for God is making inroads into the church. Youth rallies are filled with loud "Amen's" in response to the energetic evangelist's question, "Do you love the Lord?" Love is being preached more and more as an emotion which fills the soul out of which will proceed a smile, or clap, or hoo-rah.

The Biblical concept of love, however, is much different from the definitions of men. Jesus loved us and died on our behalf (John 15:13). Because he first loved us, we love him in return (I John 4:19). The manifestation of this love, Jesus said, is much more than the recital of the phrase, "I love Jesus." Love for Deity is expressed through obedience to the commands of the Master. To his disciples Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The apostle John expressed it in these words: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Therefore, the Bible plainly teaches that obedience manifests my love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and not a mere mouthing of the words "I love Jesus." Love and obedience are as closely tied together as faith and obedience (Romans 1:5). The Holy Writ never tries to separate the two.

Our Savior also expressed this same thought in a negative manner. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear

One word of admonition. We must not be so overwhelmed that we welcome a child back on just any terms. A decent parent is obligated to say "no drugs and no booze." Some conduct is so outrageous it cannot be tolerated. Most kids will appreciate your firm stand for righteousness. Parental integrity and respect are essential ingredients to a stable family (Proverbs 20:7).

When the Prodigal Comes Home

God's word paints a beautiful picture of just such a joyful occasion in Luke 15:11-24. From this lesson which Jesus taught, any parent with a runaway child can learn the proper response when the crisis is over. The father was always waiting, watching and hoping for that return. He did not have to be begged or prodded to forgive. He not only welcomed his son, he was anxious and ready to restore him to his place of honor and dignity in the family. He was not ashamed to invite his friends and family to share in the joyful occasion celebrating the prodigal's return. **May we learn that lesson well and be able so to treat the prodigals of our family should occasion ever demand it. May God give us the grace to do so. — 6612**

Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

Do You Love Jesus?



VICTOR M. ESKEW

is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:23,24). When one understands the content of what is stated, he comes to an amazing reality. In order that we might see what is being said, let us illustrate with two examples. First, the Bible plainly teaches that singing is the way we are to worship our God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:17; John 4:24). To go beyond this and add an instrument is a violation of God's will. Therefore, all those who use the instrument of music do not love Jesus for their actions show otherwise. They do not keep the sayings of Jesus. Second, the Scriptures demand that one not forsake the assembly of the saints (Hebrews 10:25). Yet, there are many individuals who forsake on a regular basis. If questioned, they would say they love Jesus. But Jesus said they do not love him, for they keep not his sayings.

This matter is very serious. If we do not love the Lord, the only other alternative is to hate him. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). In other words, there are many in the world today who claim to be religious and who openly avow they love God, whom he sees as his enemies, ones who hate him -- for they do not those things which he says. The Lord's question to them still sounds forth with no response in return: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

WORD of GOD

Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Psalm 28:6-9

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Seek the Lord

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

Psalms 14:2

Preachers And Prayer

Preachers of the gospel ought to be disposed, perhaps more than anyone else, to prayer. This statement does not imply that prayer is not important to *all* Christians, but simply emphasizes the fact that preachers, of all people, should really take prayer seriously.

Earlier this year Charles Hodge wrote of a statistic he had seen which really caught his attention: preachers, on the average, spend seven minutes per day, praying. Could this be true of preachers in the Lord's kingdom? If a survey were taken and preachers were totally honest about their prayer lives, would this statistic prove to be accurate?

Prayer, no doubt, is the key to a successful ministry. Without a serious commitment to prayer, the preacher should not expect to accomplish great things for the Lord. Any preacher without dedicating himself to prayer will probably have a completely ineffective ministry.

Why do preachers sometimes neglect consistent and earnest prayer? There are several possible reasons. The first is simply that preachers oftentimes do not realize their personal need for daily prayer, nor the strength prayer can provide. Another prime problem with all who preach is the problem of being so busy coming and going, that they have little time for the spiritual exercise of prayer which is absolutely necessary to undergird their work. Preachers are also under constant pressure to prepare for the next sermon, or class. This means there is the tendency to overlook prayer.

What happens when a preacher fails to pray regularly? Batsell Barrett Baxter said, "The result of all this (the preacher not praying as he should) is a rather barren spiritual life which shows itself in the ineffectiveness of his work and the unspirituality of his life."

Preachers must pray! All great men of God were men of power because they prayed. The following serve as models of prayer for all Christians, including gospel preachers today: Abraham (Genesis 20:17), Moses (Numbers 11:2), Samuel (I Samuel 8:6), Elisha (II Kings 6:18), Ezra (Ezra 10:1), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4), Job (Job 42:10), David (Psalms 5:2), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 32:16), Daniel (Daniel 9:4), Jesus (Mark 1:35), Peter (Acts 10:9), and Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25).

The difficulty of the preacher's work calls for unusual spiritual strength. Preachers -- of all people -- need strength! Strength can be obtained through prayer. Satan is far more concerned to destroy the preacher than almost anyone else, because the effect would be more devastating. The preacher needs strength because he must assist in the problems and suffering of all those with whom he works. The preacher needs strength because of the various temptations he faces: immorality, carelessness with money or the truth, compromise, pride, envy, laziness, ugliness of spirit, criticalness of others, etc. The preacher needs strength to live a pure and clean life. The preacher needs strength because he must be a source of spiritual power to those who are weak.

Every gospel preacher should take time to be "alone with God." This cannot be stressed too much. In daily devotionals the preacher should use the channel of prayer freely. In this time of prayer the preacher should have a list of people and causes for which to pray. Pray for the elders, deacons, and missionaries. Pray for the members. Pray for the sick,



JIMMY EDWARDS

weak, hungry, hurting, guilt-ridden, unfaithful, and unsaved. Pray for the young, old, widowed, and orphaned. Pray for the local work; pray for the brotherhood. Pray for fellow preachers and their work. Pray. Pray. Pray. Never stop praying!

Perhaps more now than ever before gospel preachers need to really concentrate on spending

more time in prayer. As a preacher develops a greater prayer life his success as a preacher will grow. The more a preacher prays the more effective and spiritual his life will be. The more a preacher prays the more God will be pleased, and (as a consequence) bless! -- 512 Gardendale Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110.

Are You A Drifter?

"Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Hebrews 10:25, ASV.) The forsaking of the assembly seems to be an age-old problem. Such words as "custom," "habit," and "manner," describe the conduct of many lukewarm churchmembers who neglect the assembly on almost any excuse. A Christian does not attend the assembly as a matter of *convenience*, but as a *privilege* and as a matter of *duty* to God Almighty.

The early Christians assembled themselves together on the Lord's day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). The sabbath day is not, nor has it ever been, "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). Those Jews living under the law of Moses were required to keep the sabbath; but no Christian has ever been required to keep the sabbath day. After the establishment of the Lord's church, it is true that Paul and others visited the synagogues and preached there; but they were not there to "keep" the sabbath! They were present because they knew an audience would be there, and they would have an opportunity to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to those thus assembled (Acts 17:2; 18:4).

The sabbath and all that pertained to the law of Moses ended (was abolished, taken out of the way), when Jesus nailed that law to the cross (Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 10:9-10; 8:6-13).

Notice the verse we are studying says, "Not forsaking OUR OWN assembling together . . ." This writer can appreciate the necessity for being away from the Lord's services occasionally; but when one's absence becomes a matter of "custom," or "manner," or "habit," then it is time to become alarmed. Does one need to visit Grandma every other Lord's Day? Does one need to sleep every other Sunday morning? Why does one become "sick" so often, thus necessitating one's absence from the assembly? Does one need to take a vacation from the Lord's assembly so often? In apostolic times, the same as now, there were more local churches than one; but the Hebrew writer says, "Not forsaking OUR OWN assembling together . . ." Verily, excuses may sound plausible to us, but they are never acceptable to our Lord and Master (Luke 14:15-24; Romans 1:20).

Members who are drifters --- drifting from one congregation to another --- never permit themselves to become rooted and grounded in the Lord's work. When members become confirmed drifters, they never assume any responsibility for the success of the church, whether morally, or financially, or spiritually. Such members always fill the place of "visitors."



W. A. HOLLEY

They refuse to stay in one place long enough to become assets to the church. How would students do if they remain in one school for a few days, then move to another school, and another, every few weeks (or months) -- finally ending the school-year having attended a dozen schools?? Teachers know such conduct would result in disaster for such students!

Some church members have built quite a reputation as wandering, straying, roaming, rambling, "traipsing," gallivanting members who never settle down and go to work, in one place, for the Lord. All elders and preachers are well acquainted with such unsteadfast members! A strong and vibrant church cannot be built upon such "wood, hay, and stubble" (I Corinthians 3:9-15). A tree can never bear fruit unless it is planted in the ground and stays planted! If it is dug up and transplanted every few weeks, no fruit can ever be produced! (cf., Ephesians 3:17-19).

The Old Testament informs us that God had a special place of worship for his people. For example, recall Abraham's altars, and (later) the Tabernacle, and then the Temple. The Lord God did not permit his people to go to Damascus, or Samaria, to worship as they pleased; rather, Jerusalem, after the construction of the Temple, was the place where God had recorded his holy name (John 4:20-24). In those days those who pleased God went to the right place to worship him. Just any old place would not do! It was not a matter of choice!

Again, we want it understood that we are not saying that one can never be away from his home congregation's assembly; but we are saying that one cannot, with the Lord's blessings, always be a drifter, drifting here and there, always a visitor, and never assume any responsibility for the furtherance of the gospel (Philippians 1:12,25). To be "on again, off again, gone again," is to lose meaningful connection with Christ and the church (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 20:7).

A wandering church member can never be depended upon. It is never known whether he/she will be present or not. In such instances no assignments can be made. Frankly, we don't know just how to handle the situation, since such members seem to consider themselves visitors. "Floating" members cost the church much in the loss of their talents for the advancement of the kingdom of God (Matthew 25:14-30).

What should those members who "drop in and drop out" do? (1) They should repent and confess their sin unto God Almighty. (2) They should ask Almighty God and the church to forgive them of their sins. (3) They should go to the elders and inform them that they wish to be considered members of the local church, thus placing themselves under the oversight of the Lord's overseers (Acts 20:28). (4) They should ask the elders for specific assignments so that they can go to work for the Lord (John 9:4; I Corinthians 15:58). (5) These steps should be taken immediately --- right now --- today.

— P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.



Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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Church Discipline

No. III

Since the church is a divine institution it must be kept just as holy and as free from sin as possible. Personal or private sins can be dealt with on an individual basis; but when sins become public, and no individual effort is made to correct them, the church must take action, as we shall see.

Sin has stages, and God takes notice of it from its very first germination in the heart; thus one's soul is imperiled long before sin begins to show itself in evil fruits (Matthew 5:21-22; James 1:13-15). It was for the foregoing reason that Jesus said: "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). To worship God acceptably, one must remove all obstacles that might stand in the way.

To attempt to worship God with stained hands is an abomination unto him. God wants from his worshipers more than outward manifestations (I Samuel 15:22-23; Hosea 6:6). In Malachi's day the Israelites thought they could assuage God with gifts their governor would not receive. "... Cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah" (Malachi 1:6-14, A.S.V.). Here is demanded repentance, confession of sins, and prayer before one can stand justified in the presence of God Almighty today!!

How shall Christians go about settling differences that arise between Christians? Jesus has the answer. He said, "... If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee



W. A. HOLLEY

not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matthew 18:15-17, A.S.V.).

In plain, old, Alabama language, what are the guidelines, set forth by Jesus, your Saviour and mine? The sin is to be pointed out to the offender, for the purpose of bringing him to repentance -- not from a desire to humiliate him. The offended must seek the offender (Matthew 18), and the offender is likewise to go to the offended (Matthew 5); neither is to wait for the other. If the problem cannot be solved, one or two witnesses may be called in that they may lend their influence to settling the difficulty, if possible. But, if the problem still continues, and reconciliation cannot be had, the next step is to carry it before the church that all members may have the opportunity of helping with the solution. What happens when the guilty party or parties will not hear the advice of the church? The answer is simple: The one who will not hear the church is to be regarded as a Gentile or a publican -- outcast from the fellowship of the Lord's church. How much unfavorable criticism would be avoided, and how much laudatory compliments would accrue to the church, if this procedure were but put into operation!!

There are other passages in this study which we shall consider. To the church at Rome, the apostle Paul, wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Romans 16:17-18, A.S.V.).

Hence, the church must have some means of protecting itself; otherwise, it would fall prey to any and all doctrines, regardless of how false they may be. Jesus Christ did not tolerate any such foolishness (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13), Paul condemned Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:4-12) in no uncertain terms; and he also delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme (I Timothy 1:19-20). If false teachers are

not to be "marked" and "avoided," why did Jesus warn his disciples, saying, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15-19)?

II Thessalonians 3:6 reads: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." The word "disorderly" comes from the Greek word *ataktos* which is defined by W. E. Vine, to mean: "Disorderly, with slackness (like soldiers not keeping rank)." Hence, it refers to a church member who is out of rank, out of one's place, undisciplined, who behaves disorderly. A part of the problem found in the church at Thessalonica was with those who would not work and had become busybodies (See verse 11).

In this same chapter, Paul continues: "And if any may obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye may have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (II Thessalonians 3:14-15). Those who are spiritual must try to restore those who have been captured by sin (Galatians 6:1). Those who will not be restored must be disciplined. All of which is to be done by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Others who must be subjected to the discipline of the church are those who "teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness . . ." (I Timothy 6:3-5). We may add a section of Scripture from the pen of the apostle John: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (II John 9-11). False teachers and false doctrine are not to be tolerated! Never hesitate to eliminate the problem of false teachers! (More to follow). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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"Why Today?"

VICTOR M. ESKEW

"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). This verse vividly teaches that one should not put off what he knows he should do. There are many who have heard the saving message of the gospel (Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 15:1,2). They know exactly what they have to do in order to become Christians; viz. believe in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24); repent of their sins (Luke 13:3); confess the name of Christ (Matthew 10:32,33); and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Yet, rather than making *today* the accepted time, they continue to put off the most important event in their lives (Matthew 16:26). One question they might ask is, "Why should we do it today?"

There are several responses which one could give to this inquiry. First, one should do it today because God has commanded that one do it now. This we read earlier in II Corinthians 6:2. God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:3,4). Once that knowledge is had, God wants that individual to be saved at that time. Delay is unnecessary. It is only that much more time spent in the devil's service.

Why should one obey today? Because it gives the obedient more service in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). Each passing moment is precious. We are told to buy up the time, for the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). Many, though, because they put off their souls' salvation, are wasting moments which could be used to labour in the vineyard (I Corinthians 15:58).

A third reason one should obey today is because putting off doing right only causes the heart to harden. "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:7,8). The more one hears the truth and puts off the doing of it, the more the heart is hardened. It can become so calloused that obedience will never take place. The soul will be damned in the last day.

Fourth, one should obey the gospel today for he is

Continued On Page 3



Beverage Alcohol

Most Alabama citizens probably know already that the state legislature this year passed (?) legislation which allows any city of 7,000 or more in a "dry" county to have a referendum on the legal sales of alcoholic beverages within its municipality. The legality of this legislation is being challenged. As I understand from the radio, the vote was as follows: the President of the Senate cast the tie-breaking vote of that body, which was quite legal. But the measure passed (?) the house by only one vote — yet the electronic voting machines of three (3) representatives were "voted" illegally, for those three were out of the city when the vote was taken. Since it is illegal for another to vote for an absent member of the legislature, the court is being asked to rule on the legality of this law — under which four cities already have voted "wet," and two remained "dry".



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Jasper, the county seat of Walker County, is scheduled to vote on this issue November 6, as is also Decatur, and possibly other municipalities the same date. This is a moral question. The issue is not 'legal control,' nor 'revenue,' nor 'education;' the ONLY issue is "beverage alcohol." I do not see how anyone who CLAIMS to be a Christian can vote to make available alcoholic beverages.

"Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). Deception is not the only effect of such drinks on the human! Alcohol is not a food, and therefore does not have to pass into the stomach to be digested before it is picked up by the blood and circulated to other parts of the body. Some alcohol is absorbed into the gums, tongue, and linings of the mouth — before it can be swallowed! — and is picked up by blood which already had left the heart when the drink was taken, and is carried to the brain.

The albumen content of the brain is similar to the white of an egg; and if an egg-white is dropped into alcohol, it becomes hardened as if it had been cooked. In the past decade or two the Reader's Digest has carried numerous articles regarding new research and alcoholic beverages. Some doctors say that one's first cocktail may kill as many as ten thousand (10,000) brain cells! Unlike all other parts of the body, the brain never rebuilds or replaces cells which are destroyed. Thus this is a permanent loss of brain cells. Post mortem examinations of long-time alcoholics reveal that whole areas of their brains are dead, killed by beverage alcohol.

Despite popular opinion to the contrary, alcohol is not a "stimulant." Instead it scientifically is classified as a "depressant" drug. Under its influence the faculty of judgment is depressed, or impaired. This is one reason why some who have had only one drink continue to drink to drunkenness: their ability to judge when to stop has been impaired.

An experiment at Auburn University involved some cats — the four-legged variety! Each feline was put into a cage where, in order to get anything to eat, he had to operate a lever which gave him access to his

meals. Each cat learned that the lever would raise the lid to his catfood. Later, making the lever inoperable, an electric motor was installed to open the lid; and each kitty learned to press a switch-button on the cage floor when he got hungry. Still later the task was made even more difficult: the button on the floor was disconnected, and one was placed on the wall so high the cat had to stand on his hind feet to reach the button which gave access to his food. Each mastered these skills.

Then the researchers induced them to drink alcoholic beverages. Not one of them liked the stuff at first — an appetite for it had to be cultivated! If given a choice of PURE milk, or SPIKED milk, all preferred the pure milk. In order to make them take the 'spiked' drink, the other had to be eliminated from the options.

Under the influence of alcohol, what do you suppose those felines forgot first? The last trick they had mastered! The greatest skill they had acquired! Each of them at first remembered the button on the floor, and that the lever once had opened the lid; but these gave no access to food. Making them a little more drunk, the researchers observed that they — each! — forgot next the button on the floor, although all remembered to work the lever for the lid. Upon becoming thoroughly 'stoned,' each cat forgot (last) the lever, and simply "meowed" for his food.

Seeking to sober them up, the researchers offered them whole milk again — but they refused it so long as they had a choice between that and the alcoholic beverage! This attests and demonstrates the addictive nature of strong drink. The strong drink was withdrawn; and upon becoming hungry enough the cats again drank the milk. As they sobered up, each recalled the tricks he had learned in the sequence of his training: first he remembered to work the lever; second, to press the button on the floor; and third, he recalled the button on the wall. But his *greatest skill* was the *last* thing to 'come back to' him.

Those conducting the experiment concluded that alcohol has the same effect on the HUMAN brain, and described the tests in a small tract (entitled, "Of Cats And People," Auburn University Press). In the light of this, who wants to fly with a pilot who has been out drinking the previous night? Who wants his doctor to "get stoned" at a party the night before he must operate on you for a brain tumor? Yet countless thousands drive automobiles on our streets and highways when they have depressed with beverage alcohol their greatest and most-recently acquired skills!

Statistics indicate that for every drunk driver arrested, there are anywhere from 500 to 2,000 drivers under the influence who are NOT stopped by police! Many who drink do not seem to realize that two (2) beers, two (2) glasses of wine, or two (2) 1-ounce drinks of whiskey can decrease one's driving ability by 25% — enough to turn a 'near-miss' into an auto accident. The truth is: the HALF-DRUNK driver is dangerous, too!

Indisputable evidence shows that beverage alcohol damages the brain, liver, heart, and nervous system. Centuries before Christ was born, Solomon described some of the effects of alcohol on man: "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs 23:32). There are two kinds of snakes, and Solomon referred to both of them. The "serpent" kind (as, the Cottonmouth moccasin) "bites" its

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Does Anybody Have Some Goats For Sale?

Civic clubs use various methods to ensure attendance by their members. Sometimes a fine is levied each time one is absent. Sometimes special assignments are given for the absentee.

The most ingenious plan to come to my attention involved a big, old stinking goat. For the member who failed to put in his appearance at the weekly noon meeting, Mr. Goat would be tethered right in the middle of his front lawn where he was to spend the next 7 days. Besides the nuisance of having a noisy, ill-smelling goat tied in the yard, there was a banner which said, "This guy can't be depended on to be present, but instead is a



EDSEL BURLESON

hurt to our effort."

It was reported that soon after the program was begun, the average attendance soared close to the 100% mark.

For the church member who will not be moved by the love, grace, and mercy of God and commands of Jesus Christ to attend the services of the church, it just might be that an old goat would help. Do you know of any old goats for sale?

As long as one regards worship occasions as a drudgery to be avoided when possible, just that long he has no concept of what Christianity is all about. The Master wants us to be servants who enjoy and long for those occasions to praise and honor the Father. He wants us to say as did David: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1).

The surrender which characterized the apostle Paul should ever be the goal of every Christian. He said: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

This is the kind of devotion that would prevent parents the heartache of the following anonymous lines:

My daddy thinks it's nice of me To go to Sunday School--

To hear the helpful lesson, And to learn the Golden Rule.

So I dress up very neatly And travel off alone, While dad hunts up his paper And decides he will stay at home.

And if some Sunday morning Something else I'd like to do

My Dad looks very stern, and says: "Son, I'm surprised at you!"

Now, I've wondered, and wondered Yes, time and time again,

Why Sunday School is good for boys And not for grown up men?

— West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Beverage Alcohol

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victim, 'chewing' or macerating the flesh while injecting its poison. This poison is classified as a neurotoxin, because it attacks the nervous system. The "viper" kind of snakes (including the rattler and coral snakes) strikes its victims, muck like an insect "stings." Since the viper's poison attacks the blood-vessels and/or the blood-stream, it is classified scientifically as a hematoxin. While one kind of snake venom attacks the nerves, and the other the blood, alcohol attacks BOTH! What an accurate description

Solomon gave the world 1,000 years before Christ!

Beverage alcohol is the third leading killer in the nation — right behind heart disease and cancer. But since alcohol contributes to both cancer and heart disease, it may well be the Number One enemy of Americans! God wants man to know that the Christian's body does not belong to one's self, but to God. He said: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are

bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). The same inspired apostle wrote: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). But no man can drink alcoholic beverages "to the glory of God." Therefore drinking such beverages violates God's law. Hence God says: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him" (Habakkuk 2:15).

"Why Today?"

Continued From Page 2

not promised the morrow. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). In Acts 24:25 we read: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The Bible never tells us if that "convenient season" ever came

for Felix. It may not come for you, either.

The fifth reason to obey today is because you, too, will stand before God in the judgment. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). Those who stand before God will either be classed as sheep, or as goats (Matthew 25:31-33). "Tomorrow" may mean one stands

with the goats. "Today" can place you among the sheep.

Dear reader, do not delay. Satan will allow you to think all you wish about obedience. Satan will even allow you to set your date -- in the future! The one thing he does not want you to do is to do it today. — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Speech—Good And Bad

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Ephesians 4:29, ASV).

"Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Peter 2:1-2,



W. A. HOLLEY

ASV).

God wanted human beings to communicate with each other. This is the reason he gave us the remarkable gift of speech, thus setting us apart from the animal world. But there are certain restraints which God has bound upon us regarding limits of speech. Much is said today about "freedom" of speech; but no one has a right to say anything that will hurt others. It is cowardly, ugly and sinful, to gossip and carry on a whispering campaign designed to darken the good name of another (I Timothy 5:13). Recently, I read an anonymous letter that was sent to a young girl, in which certain accusations were made against her -- designed to destroy her good reputation. --But what a cowardly way to treat an innocent human being!!

The book of James contains a wonderful treatise on the proper, and improper, use of the tongue (James

3:1-11). The tongue possesses a great contradiction: it can be used to praise God, and it can be used to condemn men. Hence, if the tongue is used for worthy purposes, it is good; if the tongue is used for unworthy purposes, it is bad! The people of Israel angered Moses "... at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Psalms 106:32-33). "And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell (James 3:6, ASV).

When one hears rumors, before passing them on to others, there are three questions one should ask himself: (1) Is it true? (2) Will it help others? (3) Will it

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Speech - Good And Bad

Continued From Page 3

cause trouble if passed on? (Proverbs 6:16-19). A tiny flame can start a fire that can destroy a mighty forest, a whole city, or an individual!

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6, ASV). Again the same writer says: "In all things showing thyself an example of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us" (Titus 2:7-8, ASV).

Jesus taught his disciples, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). Jesus said words inconsiderately spoken reveal the true nature of the heart (Matthew 12:34-35).

David recognized that he could sin with his tongue. He said, "... I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Psalms

39:1-4). Again David wrote: "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: who whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: that shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them" (Psalms 64:2-5).

Thus evil words are so elusive, once spoken, they cannot be recaptured. Such words are like bullets fired into the air; what they strike or what harm they do, may never be fully known. "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good it is" (Proverbs 15:23). "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary . . ." (Isaiah 50:4). How much better are good words than bad!

Profanity is a great curse of our times. It is heard and seen in magazines, on television, in newspapers,

and on the lips of countless millions of people who should know better. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

It chills my blood to hear the blest Supreme Rudely appealed to on each trifling theme.

Maintain your rank, vulgarity despise.
To swear is neither brave, polite, nor wise.

(William Cowper).

"Profaneness is a brutal vice. He who indulges in it is no gentleman" (E. H. Chapin).

Man's tongue deserves a better and more refined use. "All evil speakings" should be banished from our vocabularies. The proper use of our tongues can keep us out of serious trouble and on the right road toward heaven.

The moving Finger writes; and, having writ
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

---Anonymous.

— P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

What Is Heaven Like?

Heaven is a real place. It is the eternal reward for those who live for God in this life. Every thinking person wants to go to heaven. The only other option is so horrible that only a madman would choose it as his destiny.

Earth's most wonderful and beautiful things are used to describe heaven. This lovely picture is designed to attract us toward this home of the soul.

—It is like a great walled city. This symbolizes protection from all harm (Revelation 21:12).



JOHN WADDEY

—It has many open gates on every side. Thus any who wills may come in (Revelation 21:12-13).

—It is described as the purest gold and precious jewels. It is the grandest, most beautiful place one could imagine (Revelation 21:21).

—Its tremendous size will accommodate all the saved of all the ages (Revelation 21:16).

—It is a beautiful paradisaical garden with the river and tree of life. It is the perfect abode for God's children. This reminds us that all lost in Eden by sin will be regained (Revelation 21:1-5).

—In heaven we will live in God's house. A loving Father will watch over us (Revelation 21:3).

—It is a place of reunion with loved ones and friends (Matthew 8:11).

—There we will not be tempted and led away from God, for Satan will be destroyed (Revelation 20:10) and there will be no more sin (Revelation 21:27).

—Heaven is a place of moral and spiritual purity.

Man will be as he was in the beginning (Revelation 21:27).

—It is a place of renewal for the sick, aged, and afflicted, a place of eternal life—with no fear of death (I Corinthians 15:50-54).

Who Can Go To Heaven?

Jesus said, "Come unto me ALL ye that labor and are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28-31). No matter who you are or what you have done, you can be saved. The question is: Do You Want To Go To Heaven? Will you comply with God's directions? Trust Jesus as your saviour (John 3:36). Repent of your sins (Acts 17:30). Confess your faith in him (Matthew 10:32). Be immersed in water to wash away your sins (Acts 22:16), and to be added to his church (Acts 2:47). Live faithfully and heaven will be your home (Revelation 2:10). Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people! — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

"Easy" Funerals

In his book, *God's Man in Time of Death*, Dr. Rex Kykker tells of a funeral director who used to call him and say, "Rex, we have an easy one this time." What did the funeral director mean? To the experienced preacher, this phrase has much meaning. Perhaps, we all need to know what it means.

In one sense, there are no "easy" funerals. I have never conducted or been to one that was not hard on the family. Even when the deceased was gravely ill, or death was expected, there was still a burden on the loved ones.

The "easy funeral" is one that is easy on the preacher. Although no preacher gets pleasure from



ANCIL JENKINS

this task, there is a real sense of making a contribution to the family and friends.

Funerals are "easier" if the preacher has had contact with the family prior to the funeral. He often can assist them as they go through the process of grief. Most preachers are more than willing to assist in any way. Yet, one does not know to come if he is not called. Often the family does not inform the church office about the one who has passed away. No preacher likes to meet the family for the first time at the funeral home just prior to the service.

A funeral is "easier" when the family has clearly communicated to the funeral director and the preacher their wishes. Too often, the family requests a song just prior to the service. This is often too late if the singers do not know the song. The preacher will usually make a special effort to ascertain the desires of the family. If he doesn't, the family should contact him prior to the service.

A funeral is "easier" when the family and friends are Christians. If this is not the case, so much

of what is done and said will have little meaning. The reading of the Word and prayer do much to comfort the hurting heart of the Christian.

Above all, the one thing that makes a funeral "easier" is for the departed to be a faithful Christian. The preacher cannot "preach them into heaven." Only God is their judge, and no man can be -- since man cannot know the heart. Yet, faith in God and in his merciful grace gives much hope to the sorrowful and makes the funeral "easier."

What will your funeral be like. The one thing you can do to make it "easier" for all -- family, funeral director, and preacher -- is for you to faithfully follow Christ. — 425 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.

**Invite A Friend
To Church Sunday!**



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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NUMBER 45

Should I Join A Fraternity Or Sorority?

PAUL CATES

At this time of year, just before the fall quarter, the fraternities and sororities have "rush," and new students come early to go through the process of choosing and being chosen. Some come having decided that they will definitely join. Others come for the excitement, and to see and decide if they want to join. I write this article to speak to those who are trying to decide whether or not to join.

Over the 13 years I have been Campus Minister in Auburn, I have known many fine Christians who have been in a fraternity or sorority. I have friends who are now in them. But one fact stands out very clearly:--even the best of those organizations compete with the church for one's time. Over the years I have known numerous sorority and fraternity members who had reached their senior year and who had become inactive in their fraternity or sorority and more active in the church. At that point they regretted that they had given so much of their time to that organization and so little to the church. The social fraternities and sororities make great demands on a student's time. They are *social* organizations. From one viewpoint, so is the *church*. As such they compete against the church for your loyalty. The positive things they offer are things the body of Christ offers (cf. I Corinthians 12).

Many studies have been done of fraternities and sororities. They have been much criticized (and defended) within the academic community. Studies have indicated that students tend to join groups with which they have characteristics in common, and that these groups encourage conformity to the group norm, and tend to inhibit individual growth (cf. Feldman and Newcomb, *The Impact Of College On Students*). Studies have shown fraternities and sororities to encourage drinking and cheating (Feldman and Newcomb, pp. 215f). They tend to discourage academic achievement. A recent study by Wilder, Hoyt, Doren, Hauck, and Zettle, "The Impact of Fraternity or Sorority Membership on Values and Attitudes," (*Journal of College Student*

Personnel, 1978), states that:

The findings of this study are consistent with most of the literature. Fraternity or sorority members are more dependent on family and peers, more conservative, less sensitive to moral and social injustice, and less sophisticated in the humanities and arts. These differences persist for the duration of the undergraduate years. Today, as our data document, the fraternity represents internal conformity, political and economic conservatism, and antihumanistic philistinism equally at odds with the faculty. Thus the Greek societies remain one of the faculty's more prominent antagonists.

Scripture warns us that "evil companionships corrupts good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33, A.S.V.). Modern research has confirmed this by demonstrating that when one is associated with a group, he tends to conform to the behavior of that group; and when group behavior diverges from that person's beliefs, he tends to change those beliefs to be consistent with his new conforming behavior.

If you join a fraternity or sorority, you will experience great pressure (internal and external) to conform to the norms of that group. Those norms *will* pull you away from commitment to Christ and his church. I would personally discourage you from joining; but if you must, I would urge you to select carefully a group that is least antithetical to your

Christian faith. Pick a non-drinking group which encourages morality, and which values academic achievement. Find one that encourages individual thinking. Pick a group, if you can, that will respect your primary commitment to the church. Don't join just any group that will have you. If you have doubts, *don't* join.

Whatever group you choose to join will have a strong impact on your life. Better yet, choose to commit your time and energy to the "fraternity" of brothers and sisters in Christ who are actively involved in the work of the church and student center here in Auburn. You will not regret this decision.

--Director of Counseling Services, David Lipscomb College, Nashville, TN 37203-6001.

(Editor's note: At the time this article was written brother Cates was Campus Minister at Auburn, Alabama).

The Disciples Were Within

DEAN FUGGET

(Editor's Note: If you do not attend every service of the church, this should disturb you!)

After his resurrection Jesus appeared unto Mary

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**Invite Some Friends To Church Sunday
And Watch Your Church Grow!**



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 Disciples Were Within

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Magdalene and told her to tell the disciples, "Behold I go before you into Galilee." When Mary told the disciples these things, they doubted. Even while they discussed these things, the Bible says, that they were "within," and the doors were shut. Jesus found his disciples *gathered together*. We don't know where *Thomas* was during the first meeting, but they were *all* there on the second Lord's Day (John 20:26). In Acts 2 the account continues that "They were all with one accord in one place . . ." and, "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship . . ." (Acts 2:42).

What do you suppose Jesus would have found that Sunday night if today's demonstration were transferred to those days? Let me share with you a *fantasy* of what might have been an experience which some of today's disciples indicate:

Andrew was absent because his living was made by fishing. He had to mend his nets. Surely the Lord would understand that he had to do this now, so he could be ready to work the next day, Monday. After all, a man has to provide for his family!

James and John refused to attend because they had their feelings hurt. They had wanted a place at the right and left hand of Jesus and they had been refused -- right in front of the others. Why, Jesus had even refused their *mother's* request. So they refused to meet with the rest of the saints.

Peter was absent because his mother-in-law was sick with a fever again. He knew Jesus would understand since he had already healed her once. Even though Peter's wife could have stayed, Peter felt that the whole family should stay home with her.

Philip and Bartholomew had gotten together and discussed Peter's denial of the Lord. Peter had been a hypocrite. One couldn't deny that! He has said he would be more faithful than any, but he had denied Jesus! So they refused to go where hypocrites went. They wouldn't have anything to do with a hypocrite. Therefore they stayed home.

James the son of Alphaeus and Simon Zelotes refused to attend with the likes of James and John, sons of Zebedee. (Why, they had the gall to ask for a special place!) They refused to attend with James and

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Christian Education

Each baby is born into this world "blank" --with no knowledge. Even Jesus developed after his birth, for he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Note that his development was four-fold: (1) intellectual or mental: "wisdom;" (2) physical: "stature;" (3) spiritual: "in favor with God;" and (4) social: "in favor with . . . man." As the normal child develops physically, learning to use his hands, learning to feed himself, etc., so the normal mind increases in power, accumulating information.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Education is the "discipline of mind or character through study or instruction." It is one's mental or moral cultivation and development. "Christian" education means that such training is in harmony with the principles and doctrine of Christ Jesus.

This type of development should begin to be given each child from babyhood in his home (II Timothy 3:14, A.S.V.); and it should be augmented by the services of the church. Both the public worship, and the private classes, conducted in each congregation, should supplement and complement parental guidance given to the children. Wise indeed are those parents who choose also a Christian school in which their children may learn how to make a living, while also learning how to live in harmony with God's will. Such private schools operated by Christians make indelible impressions on their students, and contribute immeasurably to the growth of the church.

The whole man --inward, as well as outward--needs education. The apostle Paul wrote (II Corinthians 4:16) of our "outward man" (referring to the human body), and our "inward man" (referring to man's spirit or soul). Peter speaks of the soul (or "spirit"), calling it "the hidden man of the heart" (I Peter 3:1-4). God's word is for the soul, for "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalms 19:7). James writes that "the engrafted word is able to save your soul" (James 1:21). What physical food is to the physical man, so the word of God is to the spiritual man; for Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Man filled with information (whether it be true, or false) is powerful. Hence, education is power. But this power, like that of an automobile, or a giant locomotive, must be controlled; otherwise, disaster results. Worldly wisdom is not sufficient to give man direction, for "the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Christians were asked two thousand years ago: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where

is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (I Corinthians 1:20; read verses 18-31). Man needs God's thoughts and God's ways, which may be learned only from his word. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your "There is a way which [that] seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25). He also cautions: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes" (Proverbs 21:2). He warns that even "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (Proverbs 12:15). Each person should "sanctify the Lord God in your heart" (I Peter 3:15), or "set apart in your heart Christ as Lord" (A.S.V.), and let him truly be "Lord" or ruler of our lives. In this we can say with David: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105).

Children need to be educated both at, and away from, home. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). It is the duty of parents to "bring them [the children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). God trusted Abraham, of whom he said: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him . . ." (Genesis 18:19).

No Christian youth should ever discard gospel principles --not even while he is in college; but each should continue in spiritual training while furthering his secular education, even if he does not attend a Christian school. After Timothy became a grown young man, Paul admonished him: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned . . ." (II Timothy 3:14-17). Our Christian schools, from kindergarten through college, help students to "continue" in the faith and hope of the gospel. Relatively few who graduate from such schools ever backslide. Contrast this with the loss of many who study under the secular, materialistic (and often antagonistic) atmosphere of state schools!

On a Christian college campus, the Christian influence of the home is continued to a great degree. This probably is youth's first time to be away from parental supervision and guidance for any prolonged period. The "salt" (Matthew 5:13) of Christian influence is still needed. Youth under such circumstances still needs "light" (Matthew 5:14-16). It makes it easier for a young man or woman to remain faithful and live right if other students are Christians also, and if they are under the guidance of teachers who are Christians. Teachers are a powerful influence over their students, and it makes a world --an ETERNITY in some cases!-- of difference whether the

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Invite A Friend To Church Sunday!

Church Discipline

NO. IV

How should the church go about withdrawing fellowship from an erring brother or sister? What would Scripture and common sense demand? We shall offer a few suggestions.

Church discipline is not something the church should jump into with no thought or preparation. Rash acts hardly ever produce any good fruits. Prayer, earnest and sincere, should cushion all actions of withdrawing fellowship from an erring



W. A. HOLLEY

child of God, because his soul is involved. The person withdrawn from is not an enemy, but an erring child of God (II Thessalonians 3:14-15). Hence, we must be ready to go the second mile that he might be restored to the Cause of Christ (Galatians 6:1). Have we gone to the erring brother? talked with him? shown him the error of his way? do we know for certain that he is a

The Disciples Were Within

Continued from page 2

John because they always wanted things their own way. They were hot tempered also. Why, they had wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans. No telling how they would act, now that Jesus was gone. One thing they knew: they didn't want anything to do with *that* kind.

Thomas wasn't there. You see, Thomas was known as a doubter. He was always confused by the discussions of the apostles. He demanded that everything be cut-and-dried. He doubted that anything good would come out of another assembling of that bunch. And after all, there were only eleven of the original twelve now. They didn't amount to much.

Thaddeus wasn't there because he has searched his manuscripts of scriptures through and through and he couldn't find any scripture that said that one *must* be present at every assembling. No one could show him where it said that one had to be present at every assembling. No one could show him where it said that you HAD to go! -- So, he didn't go.

Matthew Levi wasn't there because the rest of the apostles resented him. Oh, they hadn't said so; they hadn't expressed it, but the feeling was there. He "felt sure" they still resented him for being a tax collector. He didn't have to take their snobbery! And, they all knew that he was richer than most and they would always be expecting him to GIVE to something.

So, Jesus stood in an empty room looking at the nail scars in his hands and feet. The wound in his side, the stripes on his back, and the thorn marks on his forehead all began to smart unusually so. There seemed to be no love to soothe that pain; and the pain in his heart at the faithlessness of his chosen became unbearable. He gathered up his candlesticks and left-- and the world was left in darkness. Outer darkness filled the earth and there began to be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. The church never came to be because people behaved then, just like people behave today-- and there really was no excuse.

Thank you Lord for the statement, "Where two or three are gathered . . ." because if trends continue, we may be closer to that than many realize. — Rt. 2, Harrison, AR 72601.

sinner? are we depending only upon rumor or hearsay?

The elders should take the lead in any action of withdrawal of fellowship from a wayward sinner in the church. But the elders alone cannot withdraw fellowship from any erring child of God; rather, the whole church--the entire faithful membership--is involved (II Thessalonians 3:6,11-15).

Should the elders alone endeavor to exercise discipline against some brother or sister, they are making a grievous mistake, and are unlikely to have the faithful support of the church which they desperately need. In such an instance the withdrawal of fellowship from the guilty party is apt to end in failure. The person withdrawn from may end up having more friends in the church than the elders. The church does not need any member with a "martyr complex."

Any disciplinary action taken against a wayward brother must be a reflection of the love and concern of the church. No efforts toward revenge, or retribution, or retaliation, or reprisal should ever cloud and darken our hearts. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love" (I Corinthians 16:13-14, A.S.V.). "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

When an erring brother/sister has been withdrawn from, all social hospitality must be curtailed. We must not leave the impression that nothing has changed and that all spiritual relationships go on as usual. When a brother has been withdrawn from, from a social point of view, he is to be avoided by all faithful members. Why? Because he needs to be made keenly aware of his sins, and his need of correction. Unless an erring member can be made to realize his need for repentance and the importance of returning to the Lord, the goal of restoration has not been reached. ". . . With such a one no, not to eat," has reference to a common meal, and not to the Lord's supper. The conclusion here drawn is shown to be true, because Christians can associate with men of the world guilty of the same sins mentioned in I Corinthians 5:11; but Christians are forbidden to associate with an erring child of God who claims to be a Christian, and who has now been withdrawn from.

Why should we withdraw fellowship from those members who will not repent of their sins? In the first place, the church was purchased by the precious blood of Christ, and it must be kept pure and holy before God (Acts 20:28; I John 1:6-7). Her members have been baptized into the death of Christ, where they have contacted the cleansing blood of Christ (John 19:33-34; Romans 6:3-4). Her members are required to live lives that are pure, holy, without spot or blemish before God and man (James 1:27; I Peter 1:15-17; II Corinthians 7:1). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27, A.S.V.). What shall be done with those members who bring shame and reproach and disgrace and scandal upon the church of our Lord?? How much better it is to hear the word of God and do it!!

Does church discipline help, or hurt, the Cause of Christ? There are those who argue that it always hurts, but never helps the church. The truth is: When properly administered, it always helps. We shall see what the Scriptures have to say. In I Corinthians 5:4-5, concerning the man who had taken his father's wife, the apostle Paul, says: "In the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such an

one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

According to Paul (II Corinthians 2:9-11), the man who had taken his father's wife, repented and was forgiven, being restored to fellowship in the church. This erring child of God is now a faithful Christian once again! What could be better?

Paul further comments about this same incident: "For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care is wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in this matter" (II Corinthians 7:8-11, A.S.V.). Notice the expression: ". . . Yea what clearing of yourselves . . ." "In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter." What does this mean? It means that when the man who had taken his father's wife repented of his sin, and when the church at Corinth forgave the man of his sin, true fellowship was restored. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

"Rock And Roll Dope"

(Author Unknown)

This is the caption of an article in the *Los Angeles Free Press* (July, 1968). The accompanying picture is too obscene to reprint here. The sub-title says: "The duty of the revolutionary is to make revolution." Further stated:

"The duty of a musician is to make music. But there is an equation that can't be missed. MUSIC IS REVOLUTION (emphasis theirs). Rock and roll music is the most vital revolution force on earth -- it blows people all the way back to their senses and makes them feel good. That's what the revolution is all about -- we have to establish a situation on this planet where all people can feel good all the time. And we will not rest until that situation exists.

"Rock and roll music is a weapon of cultural revolution . . . the economy in this country is controlled by maybe 200 families which are inextricably connected through marriage and other traditional aristocratic tricks . . . There is no way we can get these people to give it up unless we can make them GIVE it to us. We can't buy it back. We can't stick 'em up for all that power-- they'll just have us shot down in the streets. But we CAN get them stoned and make them share it with us. . . .

"Actually we co-opt their media, not vice versa. Just like we co-opt their kids. When the son of an industrialist big-shot starts smoking dope and dropping acid and digging hard-core rock-and-roll music, and taking the money from his father's system and bringing it into our economy, we don't say he's co-opting the free thing -- we have to say that we've co-opted another of their replacements.

"It's the same way when PLAYBOY runs an interview with Eldridge Cleaver or an article on the future age by Alan Watts -- we're using their media to get their message across to their people who are our people all the time but just aren't hip to it. We couldn't buy that space, we couldn't steal it, we couldn't make them give it up; but we did get it by making our thing attractive enough to them on their terms that they would use it for their ends too."

Young people! Parents! Ministers! Let's wake up and refuse to be "DOPES" in the hands of those dedicated to destroying our nation! — Church Bulletin, Danville, Alabama (June, 1982).

It Is Easier To Bark Than Pull

It is so much easier to criticize and complain than it is to put our shoulders to the wheel and push. We usually assume that the complaining is done by those who have not been in the church very long; but, too often, the greater problem comes from those who have been around a long time.

I am reminded of the farmer who had a dog that would chase rabbits, tree squirrels, and bring up the milk-cows. But in his later years he got to where all he would do was



EDSEL BURLESON

chase cars. Then he got so cantankerous that all he would do was lie down in the road and dare the cars to run over him. Naturally, people would stop, blow the horn, and plead with the dog to move. The old dog didn't move unless pleaded with until one day a man came through, determined that the dog was not going to stop him this time. He sounded the warning, blowing the horn, and went roaring through. When the old dog found out that he could not stop the progress of a car, he got out of the way without any hesitation.

There has to be care taken continually to avoid any activity that would violate scriptural instruction. At the same time, care must be taken not to confuse the petty preferences and opinions of someone with that which is authorized by the Lord. When one's complaints are triggered by his selfishness, continual hindrance will be experienced by the church.

One great tragedy characteristic of the com-

plainer is: he (usually) is not productive of any good work. In fact, he often complains just to get out of work.

A lad was given the chore of mowing the lawn. He was using an old push mower and decided it would lighten his load considerably if he would tie his big dog to the mower and have him pull as he pushed. Soon, a passer-by strolled along. The dog stopped and began to bark. The boy said, "Don't mind the dog, Mister. He's just barking to keep from pulling!"

Jesus warned: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

If it is *painful* to criticize, most likely the criticism will be constructive. But, if you take *pleasure* in it, that's the time to hold your tongue. — West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

"I Don't Have Time"

Excuses for not serving God have been made from time immemorial. One of the most frequently-heard excuses of professing Christians for not obeying God and serving him faithfully is: "I don't have time." If God had no more time for them than they have for him, their state would be pathetic. What are some of those things for which they do not have time?

I. "I DON'T HAVE TIME TO STUDY GOD'S WORD." They have time to scan the newspaper and get the news on TV, but not enough time to study God's word. It is plainly



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

taught in the Scriptures that Christians must READ God's word (I Timothy 4:13); that they must STUDY God's word regularly (II Timothy 2:15; II Peter 1:5; John 12:48); and that Christians must MEDITATE on God's word regularly (Deuteronomy 6:6-8; Psalms 1; I Timothy 4:15). Reading, studying, and meditating on God's word are as essential to spiritual life as food to the physical body. Can we afford not to take the time to study God's word?

II. "I DON'T HAVE TIME TO ASSEMBLE WITH THE SAINTS." But some who say this have time for all kinds of secular pursuits and community activities. So it's really a question of what we consider to be of greatest value in life-- the material? or, the spiritual? Assembling with the saints is a command (Hebrews 10:24,25). It is essential to edification (Hebrews 10:24-25). Failure to meet with the saints brings disastrous consequences (Hebrews 10:26-31; Romans 6:23; James 4:17). It is not unreasonable to expect us to assemble three or four times per week.

There are 168 hours in each week. Are four of those hours to assemble with the saints unreasonable? This is a little more than 2½% of our time.

III. "I DON'T HAVE TIME TO HELP THE NEEDY." In both Testaments we are taught to care for the needy (Proverbs 29:7; Psalms 82:3,4; Matthew 25:31-46; Galatians 6:10). Jesus illustrated the need to care for the poor in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). James defined caring for the poor and needy as "pure religion" (James 1:27). Jesus observed that helping the poor will be a perpetual need (Matthew 26:11). Do we not have the time to practice the "Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12)?

IV. "I DON'T HAVE TIME TO SHARE CHRIST WITH THE LOST." If others had not shared Christ with us, where now would we be? Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He has commanded us to follow in his steps (I Peter 2:21; John 14:15). We are to make disciples of ALL the nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16). "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

It is high time to stop salving our consciences with such excuses.

No time for God?

Some day you'll lay aside

This mortal self and make your way to worlds unknown,

And when you meet Him face to face

Will he -- should he -- have time for you? --TROTT.

1613 19th Ave. S.W., Decatur, AL 35560

Don't Be A "Putter-Off"

It is such an easy thing to postpone a task which we should face head-on, by doing a lot of incidentals. Usually, we decide it will be easier to do the job later. Those things that come to the man who waits, seldom turn out to be the things he waited for. As a rule, what one puts off today, he will also put off tomorrow.

Too often, delaying an action will cause one to find much greater difficulty in doing the job later. While a contractor was debating the best landing place for a house he had successfully moved a distance of a half-mile over a small frozen lake in Minnesota, the building sank in six feet of water. The ice, which was ten inches thick, was sufficiently strong to support the structure while it was moving along, but it could not bear up the dead weight when it was brought to a standstill.

Consider the plight of a frontiersman who came to the upper Mississippi River and turned south in search of an easier place to cross. In relating the "Course and Tributaries" of the river, the World



EDSEL BURLESON

Book Encyclopedia gives the following information. "A clear little stream about ten feet wide and less than two feet deep rushes out of the northern end of Lake Itasca in north central Minnesota. This is the source of the river that later in its course stretches about a mile from shore to shore, and digs a bed deeper than a hundred feet in many places."

With each step the task of crossing would become greater. In search of that "convenient" place, he would find stream after stream joining the Mississippi, one of which would be the mighty Missouri, then the Ohio, and before long he would give up in despair.

How typical of so many as they face their responsibilities to God. Felix trembled as he heard Paul reason about "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Yet, he failed to "cross the river" when it would have been so very easy; but he said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). There is no indication that such a season ever came for him.

The main thing that comes to a man who waits, is regret for having waited. How true: "Procrastination is the fertilizer that makes difficulties grow." "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). — West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Christian Education

Continued from page 2

instructors are Christians, or not. Having only the "doctrine of Christ" (II John 9) taught in connection with secular training, and receiving wise counsel (Psalms 1:1-3) in harmony with God's word, make it easier for our young people to remain faithful, and to return home stronger in the faith than when they left for college. Even while in college, students are afforded opportunities to use and develop their talents (Matthew 25:14-30).

Doubtless every Christian endorses -- at least in theory! -- Christian education. Since Christian schools are, at least in the above ways, superior to others, they are definitely worthy of support from all Christians.



Words Of

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(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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The Cherubim

One of the many mysteries of God's book is the cherubim that surround the heavenly throne. These strange creatures are vividly pictured in Ezekiel and the Revelation and slightly mentioned in Isaiah. Unfortunately the King James Translators call them beasts, but the Greek does not suggest that nor do their attributes reflect such an idea. Later translations are uniform in calling them living creatures or beings. The question for this study is just what are these living creatures?



JOHN WADDEY

Their Aspect

"They had the *likeness of a man*" (1:5). That would be their general bodily form.

"*Everyone had four faces . . .*"

1. "They had the face of a man" (1:10). This suggests intelligence like a human being possesses.

2. The face of a lion, which suggests fearless strength and courage.

3. The face of an ox, suggesting service and strength.

4. The face of an eagle. This suggests the keen sight of this bird or its swiftness of flight to reach its objective.

Their Bodily Members

"Everyone of them had *four wings*" 1:6. Wings suggest swiftness and mobility to get a task done. While two wings are normally sufficient, these have four each, twice that which is necessary. They would never be disable or hindered by infirmity.

"Their feet were straight feet and the sole of their feet was like a calf's foot and they sparkled like burnished brass." (1:7). Their feet were hard and tough like a cow's, thus they were able to continually do their task without their feet growing sore and weary. Burnished brass is purified and tempered. A calf's feet are hard but feet like brass would be extra

hard and able to grind any opponent into the dust.

"They had hands like a man" (1:8). That means that they had the dexterity and skill of a man to do their task.

"Their wings were joined together" (1:9). They worked together with perfect unity in serving God, never at odds with one another.

Although they were joined together, "They turned not when they went; they went straight forward" (1:9b). In normal earthly realms such seems impossible but the meaning here is that the creatures were *omnipresent* for they could be at any place at any time and never have to leave the place they occupied. Keep this thought in mind when we seek a conclusion as to who or what they were.

The creatures ran and returned as a flash of lightning (1:14). This demonstrates the swiftness of their movement. As the lightning can streak across the heavens in a moment so could they be anywhere instantly to do God's will.

Their Appearance

"Their appearance was like burning coals of fire" (1:13). Like glowing molten metal (1:4). This reflects their holy majesty. Every impurity would be consumed in their presence. Human eyes would be unable to dwell upon them. The glorified Christ shone as the sun (Matthew 17:2). Deity dwells in light unapproachable (I Timothy 6:16).

As torches give light for men to see by, so these have "the appearance of torches" (1:13). Flashes of lightning danced back and forth upon them and outward from them (1:13-14). No man would dare draw near to such a spectacular demonstration of power lest he be consumed.

Their Mobility

"Behold, one wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures . . ." (1:15). As Ezekiel looked the four wheels pointed in different directions. All seemed to be interlocked as one great system -- a wheel within a wheel (1:16-17). Wheels suggest their mobility.

The four great wheels "had their rims full of eyes

round about." The many eyes suggest that they knew all things, they possessed *omniscience* even as Christ (Revelation 1:6).

"Their work was like unto beryl . . ." or topaz (1:16) which speaks of their infinite beauty.

Their Relationship to the Divine Throne

"Over the head of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, like the terrible crystal . . . stretched over their heads above" (1:22). "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne . . . and upon the . . . throne was that likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above" (1:26). "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah" (1:28). The cherubim then are the *chariot of the throne of God*. When the Lord Jehovah came in judgment on Jerusalem, the glory of Jehovah mounted the throne over the cherubim and they lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth (10:18-19). The noise of their wings was like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a noise of tumult like the noise of a host" (1:24). This implies a fearful roaring sound when the chariot throne lifts up. Such *omnipotent* power would strike terror in any heart that contemplated it. John says they have no rest day or night as they praise the Holy God (Revelation 4:8). This also reflects their total power and strength.

Who or What Are These Creatures?

In 10:20, Ezekiel calls them cherubim. Isaiah called them Seraphim (6:6). In the Revelation they are "living creatures" (4:6).

The reader will remember that the cherubim possessed attributes of *omnipotence*, and *omniscience* and *omnipresence*. Rather than being created servants, I suggest that they symbolize the spiritual forces of the great Jehovah himself who is fully able to accomplish every desire and intent of his heart in the way this visual symbol represents. Only God sees all, knows all, and has all power.

May this brief study help us to appropriate more the God we serve. — 6612 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691 760)

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

— Acts 26:25

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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He Walked With God

The accounts of some individuals in the Bible are not very full. On some occasions we are given merely a name. At other times, we read of only one small event in the person's life. Of other characters, we read about them a verse here and a verse there. This is the case of the man we wish to discuss in this article. The biography of his life is far from complete. But one has rightly stated that which has been revealed: "What a biography!" This man's name is Enoch.



VICTOR M. ESKEW

We are given Enoch's background in Genesis 5. His father's name was Jared (verse 18). Enoch was the seventh in a direct line of descendants from Adam (Jude 14). Enoch was a family man. In Genesis 5:22 we find that he begat "sons and daughters." One of his sons was Methuselah, the oldest man to have lived on the footstool of God (Genesis 5:21,27).

Enoch can be held up as an example to young and old alike. In Hebrews 11:5 we are told that Enoch was a man of faith: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Notice that Enoch did not have "faith alone." His faith caused him to please God. His entire life was devoted to doing those things which were required of him by Jehovah (Romans 10:17). Thus, his life could be characteristic of a walk with God. This is precisely the way Moses described him in Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God: and was not for God took him."

Having his life in harmony with God's teachings, qualified him to be a preacher and prophet of God. In Jude 14 we read that he did hold such an office. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these . . ." One of his messages was of the

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Supporting Christian Education

I closed last week's Editorial with the observation that doubtless every Christian acknowledges the need for, and his tacit endorsement of, Christian education. It is my firm belief that if Christian education deserves our support at all, it deserves the very best which we are capable of giving it.

But a question all of us must face is, How can I support our Christian schools? Many have limited resources: what can we do?

I do not pose as an 'expert' on this subject, but share with you what I have learned by quite a few years of observation and experience, plus recent research for this message.

Perhaps the most important ways we can serve the cause of Christian education is by our prayers for, and our encouragement of, those who operate our schools -- whether they are kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, colleges, or preacher-training facilities. Visits to the campus, or letters or other messages to those involved in the actual teaching, as well as the administrators, assures them of our backing. Participating in events, attending programs, etc., sponsored by the schools give them similar support. These are vital to the institutions and their personnel.

Patronage -- enrolling our own children, and others whom we can influence -- is another means of giving support to our schools. In his book, *A Word Fitly Spoken*, the late brother John D. Cox tells how an elder encouraged him to attend a Christian college for at least one year -- and it turned his life around, changed his mind about a legal career, and he instead preached the gospel for nearly fifty years! Sending them our students announces to all that we endorse the schools, although we recognize that (being operated as they are by human beings) they are not perfect.

Many students and their parents do not seem to know that in at least some of our schools, each student who pays every dollar of all the charges for his tuition, etc., pays only about two-thirds of the actual cost of his schooling -- the balance must be supplied by contributions. This means that monetary gifts are continually essential. This one need in most of our schools is urgent, and is one in which you and I can have at least some part. I suppose gifts of money will always be needed. Those who serve on the Boards of our schools, instead of being paid to serve, actually "pay" for the privilege of serving. Let me illustrate: At Alabama Christian College (on whose Board I am honored to serve) each member of the Board was challenged to give at least ten percent (10%) of his net worth to Alabama Christian within a five-year period. And when this was fulfilled, each of us made another pledge to give another ten percent (10%) over the next ten years. This is in addition to what we already give to the church--and some give



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

20% to 30% every Sunday. Just imagine what would happen to the cause of Christian education if every Christian did this for fifty years!!! When he was 80 years old, my father told Hardeman of his pledge to give Alabama Christian College \$1,000 a year for another five years. The son reminded him that he was then eighty, and might not live to fulfill it. Dad replied in essence: "Well, at 75 I made a similar promise, and God let me live to do what I promised. Who knows but that he may spare me another five years just to fulfill this pledge???" (At age 83, he paid the third installment on that commitment before he was stricken; and the last check he ever wrote was to give the fourth thousand, nearly six months before it was due).

Someone had to give the money to build the original buildings, which also require maintenance and renovation. And it will require huge cash contributions to erect new facilities for present and future needs. The fine persons who operate the schools must be supported, which requires large outlays for salaries.

The United States government gives tax advantages to those who give in certain ways to qualified institutions of learning. Look at this list of some plans for some gifts, recognizing that there are restrictions, limitations, and/or qualifications on some or all of them; know also that some of them are NOT tax-deductible. (I acknowledge grateful appreciation to Dr. Ernest Clevenger, President of Alabama Christian College, for valuable assistance, and for a copy of *Counsellor's Tax Guide to Charitable Contributions*, copyrighted by Conrad Teitell.)

1. Gifts of money.
2. Gifts of securities and real estate held long-term.
3. Gifts of securities and real estate held short-term.
4. Gifts of property, the sale of which would result in ordinary income.
5. Gifts of tangible personal property, such as a preacher's library, antiques, or works of art, held long-term.
6. Gifts of tangible personal property, such as a preacher's library, antiques, or works of art, held short-term.
7. Bargain sales of long-term securities and real estate.
8. Caveat emptor ("let the purchaser beware") -- such as outright gifts of mortgaged property.
9. Partnership gifts.
10. Corporate gifts.
11. Gifts of private foundations (other than operating foundations).
12. Patron's gifts, as: tickets for \$100-a-plate dinner: for taxes, cost of the meal must be deducted from the donation.
13. Gifts of installment obligations, where gain is reported in installments.
14. Depreciable personal property.
15. Depreciable real property.
16. Life insurance gifts irrevocably assigning ownership to the school, and also naming the school as beneficiary. The policy may be (a) fully paid-up, (b) endowment, or (c) one which premiums remain to be

"Watch Thou In All Things"

"Preach the word" was the message of Paul. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:2-4). In order to avoid these false teachers and in order to guard against their heretical teachings, Paul continued with these words to Timothy, "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (verse 5).

His first instruction was to "watch in all things." The word "all" is comprehensive in nature.



VICTOR M. ESKEW

Regardless of what it was, Timothy was to "watch" or be alert concerning it. Paul was not specific, but the Scripture in other places shed light on some things for which we should watch.

One should first watch himself. "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" (I Timothy 4:16). Paul said that he was constantly buffeting his body, lest he should be cast from the presence of the Lord. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). A daily examination of self is needed as we "watch in all things." "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (II Corinthians 13:5).

A second thing for which we must watch is the doctrine of Christ. Again we read in I Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine; continue in them . . ." Sound doctrine is that which will save a man "For in doing this thou shalt save

both thyself, and them that hear thee." There will be many who seek to pervert the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-9). Thus, we must always be watchful, trying the spirits whether they are of God (I John 4:1). We must be so very careful. Transgression of the doctrine of Christ means that one is without God (II John 9-11).

We must also watch for our brethren. Paul tells us to restore the brother who is overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1). James tells us that in doing so we will save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20). In our watch for others, we will use different approaches on different people. On some we will use tender compassion; on others, a tense appeal (Jude 22-23).

Finally, we should watch for the second coming of our Lord. He will come when we least expect it, as a thief in the night (I Thessalonians 5:2). Only the Father knows: when that day will transpire; therefore, we must watch. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father . . . And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:32-37).

Watch for ourselves. Watch for the doctrine. Watch for others. Watch for the second coming. Or, in the words of Paul, "Watch thou in all things." — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

He Walked With God

Continued From Page 2

coming of the Lord to execute judgment upon the ungodly. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14, 15).

Enoch's life as well as his faithfulness in proclaiming the message of the Lord paid off for him. Enoch was the first of two men who were translated, who did not have to taste of the horrors of death

(Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5).

We can learn much from Enoch. We need to possess a faith on the level with this man's faith. We need to walk in harmony with God's law so that we will be pleasing to Him. We need to teach the message which the Lord has given to mankind today as Enoch preached the message needed in his day. And ultimately we will be rewarded. We will not be translated as Enoch was, but we will be assured a place by the Lord's side and a beautiful crown of righteousness (II Thessalonians 1:9,10; II Timothy 4:8). — P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

Supporting Christian Education

paid.

17. Charitable remainder trusts.
18. Pooled income trusts.
19. Charitable gift annuities.
20. Charitable lead trusts.
21. Gifts of future interest in real property with retained life estate.
22. Gifts of future interest in tangible personal property, with retained life estate.
23. Gifts of the use of property.

Some ways are often overlooked which offer definite tax advantages. For example: *Trusts* can be set up which will provide the donor with a guaranteed income for the remainder of his life. Example: Mr. A. gives \$10,000 into an irrevocable trust to his favorite school. The school invests the money at the best interest rate available, but guarantees to pay the donor 10% (in our example this will be \$1,000) a year for the balance of his life. The school has the sum of \$10,000 plus any additional interest it can earn so long as donor lives, plus all the interest after donor dies.

Very attractive to one individual able to make a large contribution is the *charitable remainder trust*. Upon receiving his large donation, the school promises in writing to give back to him each year a certain sum, with a minimum return to him of 5% of his donation each year for life, or for a minimum of 20 years.

A *charitable annuity trust* may be set up for 1, 2, or (in some instances) there may be a third party, under which they give the school funds to set up an annuity to be paid to the donors for life. Upon the death of the last donor, the "corpus" (the amount in the fund) belongs to the school.

A *low-yield asset annuity* may be illustrated as follows: Mr. B. owns a 200-acre farm, worth \$500 an acre, on which he makes \$3,000 a year. He gives the farm to his favorite school, which agrees in writing to give him \$10,000 a year for the rest of his life. The school sells the farm, investing the money, and probably makes more interest annually than they have agreed to pay him. He not only receives \$10,000 a year, but also his gift makes him eligible for a \$100,000 tax deduction, which he may use as follows: 30% the first year, plus a 5-year carry-over till he has used it up.

Another way to "give without hurting" is through a *will*. If one dies without having made a written will, the state in which he lived will impose the will of its LEGISLATURE on his estate! Everybody -- men and women alike-- ought to make a will. Most of our schools will be happy to send a representative to help you draw up your will, without charge if you leave part of your estate to the school.

If our schools are worthy of our support at all, they deserve the very best we can give them!

Forgiveness

"Forgive one another, even as Christ forgave you." (Colossians 3:13).

Forgiveness is a marvelous and transcendent doctrine of divine revelation. There is nothing in this world that is more God-like than forgiveness. It has been called man's deepest need, and his highest achievement. There is nothing that withers the soul so much as being unforgiving. "Malice in the soul crucifies the higher self, strangles the best within



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

us, and eats away the finer elements of life. It crushes friendships, isolates us from humanity, and gives life a loneliness" (Frank L. Cox).

Our text requires us to forgive as Jesus forgave. Never are we more like him than when we forgive; never are we more unlike him than when we fail to forgive. *How did Jesus forgive?*

1. JESUS LOVED MEN EVEN WHEN THEY WERE UNWORTHY OF FORGIVENESS. "For God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus hated sin, but loved the sinner. Forgiveness is impossible without love. It was God's love shown in Christ that enables him to forgive us (Ephesians 4:32). If we have found it difficult to forgive others, it could be because of a lack of love. In Luke 7:36-59, a contrast is made between the love Jesus had for the

sinful woman and that of Simon. *Read it!*

2. JESUS TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO MAKE POSSIBLE FOR FORGIVENESS. Jesus, the innocent party, came to the guilty and died for our forgiveness (Romans 5:8-10). The innocent now should take the initiative -- take the first steps -- to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-18). I once heard of a man who travelled 1,500 miles to ask another's forgiveness and to obtain a reconciliation. *Are we this forgiving?*

3. JESUS PRAYED FOR THOSE WHO

Continued On Page 4

Free Nursery (Infants — 5 yr. olds) Available At All Times



THE FORT WORTH LECTURES

Theme: "MORALS IN AN IMMORAL AGE"

January 13 - 17, 1985

LEADERSHIP DINNER

For all elders, preachers, deacons, Bible School teachers, and their wives — Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. — James O. Baird — speaker.

DISPLAYS

Publishers, authors, dealers, children's homes, Christian schools, homes for aged, etc. located in the meetinghouse.

Sunday, January 13

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Lessons Learned From The Prophecy Preaching"	Eddie Whitten
10:00 a.m.	"Will God Always Bless America?"	David Roper
5:00 p.m.	"Motives to Morality"	Avon Malone
6:00 p.m.	"Morals in Ancient Rome And in Modern America"	Curtis Ramey
7:00 p.m.	"The Bible Doctrine Of Purity"	Hugo McCord

BOOKS & TAPES

Lectures will be put into book form and will be available for purchase during the lectureship. Cassette recordings will be made of each lecture and may be purchased immediately.

MEALS

One meal per day will be served at the meetinghouse at a nominal cost.

Monday, January 14

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"The Works Of The Flesh"	Bill Jackson
10:00 a.m.	"Cross Cultural Morals"	James Willcutt
11:00 a.m.	"Is There An Absolute Standard Of Morality?"	Hugh Fullford
11:00 a.m.	"Godly Women In An Ungodly World"	Iris Ramey
12:00 noon	"The Joy Of Moral Living"	Robert Taylor
1:30 p.m.	"Media And Morality"	Jack Orison
2:30 p.m.	"Building Christians Homes In An Immoral World"	Norman Gipson
3:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Hugo McCord
4:30 p.m.	Evening Break	
6:00 p.m.	Singing	
7:00 p.m.	"The Values Clarification Tragedy In Education"	Tom Warren
8:00 p.m.	"The Cost And Reward Of Moral Purity"	Johnny Ramsey

Tuesday, January 15

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Marks Of The Faith That Saves"	Roger Johnson
10:00 a.m.	"Moral Responsibility In The Business Arena"	Joe Gilmore
11:00 a.m.	"The Whole Armor Of God"	J. Noel Meredith
11:00 a.m.	"Secure The Gates Of The Home!"	Lillian Roper
12:00 noon	"Honor To Whom Honor" Luncheon (E.W. McMillan)	Virgil Bentley
1:30	"Implications and Consequences Of The Social Emphases In The Church"	Winfred Clark
2:30 p.m.	"The Consequences Of Immorality"	H.A. "Buster" Dobbs
3:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Robert Taylor
4:30 p.m.	Evening Break	
5:00 p.m.	"The Need For Moral Excellence In Leadership" (Leadership Dinner)	Furman Kearley
7:00 p.m.	"The Effect Of Situation Ethics On Moral Values"	Bert Thompson
8:00 p.m.	"Moral Aspects Of Modern Medical And Scientific Technology"	Wayne Jackson

SPECIAL CLASSES FOR LADIES

Monday - Thursday, 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, January 16

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"The Morals Of Ephesus"	W. T. Hamilton
10:00 a.m.	"Lessons Learned From David And Bathsheba"	Robert Taylor
11:00 a.m.	"A Call To Commitment"	Rusty Peterman
11:00 a.m.	"Awake, And Escape For Thy Life"	Pai Suba
12:00 noon	"Some Things I Have Learned After 50 Years Of Preaching"	Trine Starnes
1:30 p.m.	"The Changeless Word In A Changing World"	Gary Workman
2:30 p.m.	"The Ethic Of Honesty"	Dub McClish
3:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Hardeman Nichols
4:30 p.m.	Evening Break	
6:00 p.m.	Singing	
7:00 p.m.	"The Challenge Of The Church In Today's Society"	Roy Lanier, Jr.
8:00 p.m.	"The Responsibilities Of Elders Toward Immoral Influence"	

Thursday, January 17

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"The Power Of Prayer In Overcoming Evil"	Tom Gaumer
10:00 a.m.	"A Call To Holy Living"	Frank Dunn
11:00 a.m.	"Materialism: An Open Door To Apostasy"	Andrew Connally
11:00 a.m.	"Trust — Be Not Afraid"	Mary Oler
12:00 noon	"Humorous Things That Have Happened To Me As A Preacher"	
1:30 p.m.	"The Impact Of Secular Humanism Upon Morality"	Deck Szanyo
2:30 p.m.	"Principles Of Moral Decision-Making"	James Meadows
3:30 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Johnny Ramsey
4:30 p.m.	Evening Break	
6:00 p.m.	Singing	
7:00 p.m.	"Remembering God In Youth"	Stafford North
8:00 p.m.	"The Most Immoral Act Of All Time"	Maxie Borer

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Forgiveness

Continued From Page 3

WRONGED HIM (Luke 23:24). He did not pray for the destruction of his executioners, but for their forgiveness. He even pleaded their ignorance as grounds for that forgiveness. Like Jesus, we should pray with a forgiving heart for those who wrong us. How can one hold a grudge against one for whom he is praying? "Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hate. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness" (E. C. McKenzie).

4. JESUS FORGAVE FREELY, COMPLETELY,

AND READILY (John 8:1-9; Luke 7:50; 23:24). Jesus does not put those he forgives under a suspended sentence. He keeps no filing cabinet of wrongs so as to have the goods on the offender later. He forgives us over and over, again and again, and teaches his followers to do the same (Matthew 18:21,22).

CONCLUSION: Do we forgive others AS JESUS DID? Forgiveness is too big for little people, because it is one of the biggest things one can do. "To err is human, to forgive, divine" (Alexander Pope). "He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over

which he himself must pass if he would ever get to heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven" (George Herbert). "Doing an injury puts you below your enemy. Revenging one, makes you even with him. Forgiving it sets you above him" (Benjamin Franklin). Necessity requires that we forgive others because we need it ourselves.

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you" (Matthew 6:15). — 1613 19th Ave. S.W., Decatur, AL 35601.



Words Of Q, 'b

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble F. . . . ak forth
the Words of Truth and sobernes.

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 21

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1984

NUMBER 47

"Who, Then, Will Be Saved?"

The writer of Hebrews said of our Lord: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY HIM" (Hebrews 5:8-9)

If there has been one emphasis that is primary since the inception of the Restoration of the "ancient order" it has been that we must again recognize God as a God who demands obedience.

The Biblical illustrations that underscore this principle are numerous indeed, beginning with the attitude of Jehovah toward our first parents and their rebellion against his will.

With telling effect it has been shown that the slightest infraction, substitution, or alteration was never tolerated by the God who demands strict obedience. To be sure, God was longsuffering, merciful and kind. He "stretched forth his hand" of pleading that men harken to his law. But when man was stubborn and rebellious, electing to adulterate the religion of Jehovah with the gods of the nations, his response was predictable and unchanging: "Therefore heave nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not harkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it" (Jeremiah 6:18-19).

Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they brought a strange fire upon their censers which he commanded them not (Leviticus 10:1-2). Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land because of an infraction of God's law that to us may appear insignificant (Numbers 20:1-12). Such "liberties" taken by man viewed as an affront to Jehovah and his right to "direct our steps" (Jeremiah 10:23; Isaiah 66:2; Proverbs 4:12). God's disapproval was always expressed in strong terms upon those who sought not to serve him "after the due order" (I Chronicles



R. W. GRAY

15:12-14; II Samuel 6:6-8).

It is erroneously presumed by some that God, in a new system of grace, is pleased to overlook matters of the kind he punished "under the law." It is an error to assume, in the first place, that the Jews received no "grace" under the law. It is an error, in the second place, to presume that God will tolerate ignorance of or disobedience to his will under the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:23-32; 12:25-29; 2:1-4; Acts 17:30-31; 5:1-11).

It is sobering to realize that the infractions punished so severely by Jehovah were seldom an out-and-out rejection of him. Some indeed were seemingly desirous of serving the Lord, but failed, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, to understand the seriousness of substituting their own preferences in worship to him.

The Bible still says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (See Galatians 1:6-8). It is still the case that "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . ." (II John 9).

The apostles of the Lord, upon hearing him explain that the judgment of God is to be rigid and exacting, ". . . were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?'" (Mark 10:26).

It is interesting to note that God sent his prophets to warn the people of impending judgments. The judgment was administered, however, by God himself. It was the work of the watchman to warn of the death that awaited the disobedient; it was Jehovah's sphere to extend his mercy and longsuffering, or to visit with his wrath upon a disobedient and gainsaying people (Ezekiel 3:17-21; 18:1-4). God's prophet, Jonah, was sore displeased that the destruction he predicted did not come upon Nineveh (Jonah 3:4-10; 4:1). Jonah had finished his task when he delivered God's word. He attempted to go too far when he presumed to dictate to Jehovah regarding the fatal judgment. Can we not see that he would have been equally guilty had he promised a reprieve to the Ninevites without having received such a message from God?

We are informed that Christ will save the obedient (Hebrews 5:9). We are warned that the disbeliever "shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). We must be true to his word in warning men that they dare not pervert

(alter or change) the revelation of God given by his Spirit (Galatians 1:6-9). This is our assignment. It is not within the sphere of our responsibilities to presume to tell men whom God will, or will not, ultimately save. We would play God if we say, "I am not sure that God will send to hell those who introduce unauthorized innovations into his worship if they do so in sincerity." We are not the judge, and we dare not suggest that we are by such statements. It is shocking to hear gospel preachers make such unwise and unfounded statements. Even the apostles did not suggest, "I can't say for certain what God will do with those who pervert his gospel, if they do so in sincerity." Such uncertain sounds, such presumptions, would have rendered their message null and void. By revelation Paul was instructed to deliver God's warning (Galatians 1:6-11). He was then to leave it as God delivered it.

It is because you are not the judge, my brother, that you dare not hint that "you feel God may show favors" in one instance or another. Let us continue to tell men what God has said; but let us refrain from entering into a realm that does not belong to us. God has said that he is no respecter of persons. We dare not imply that he is "favorable" toward those who do many right things while denying his will in other areas (Romans 2:4-11). — Rt. 3, Box 306, Bremen, Ga. 30110.

"Off The Record"?

GARY STANTON

In the midst of an election year comes some very interesting happenings which in a non-election year, would probably go unnoticed. But politics has a way of bringing out the worst. One such occurrence is when statements are made that are to be considered to be "off the record." A couple of months ago, President Reagan made an "off the record" statement which soon became known by the entire world. It happened one Saturday during a rehearsal for one of his radio broadcasts. On this particular occasion he made a joke that the U.S. was going to bomb the Soviet Union off the face of the earth. When the news about his statement got out, the President passed it off by saying that it was made "off the record." His answer did not satisfy the Russians nor those who opposed

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

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

— Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Howard A. Blazer, Sr., Honored

On August 31, 1984, a group of Christians held a dinner in honor of brother Howard A. Blazer, Sr., at the High School in Athens, Alabama. A native of Huntsville, Alabama, he was born September 9, 1909. He married Paralee Hulsey in 1936, and they have three sons: Howard Jr., Billy, and Franklin. Sister Blazer has been in failing health for several years. Brother Blazer takes wonderful care of her, and she was able to attend the dinner aforementioned.

Baptized by Charles Holder at the age of fifteen, Howard Blazer began preaching in Chattanooga in 1937 and attended Freed-Hardeman College after his marriage. He has lived and preached in Pensacola, and Jay, Florida; in Dunlap, and Crossville, Tennessee; in LaGrange, Georgia; and in Newton, Florence, Cherokee, Killen, Anniston, and Athens, Alabama. His evangelistic efforts have included meetings in HOWARD A. BLAZER, Sr. nearly a dozen states, with more than 1,200 responses to the gospel invitation. He has helped establish at least fifteen congregations. The tracts he has published testify that he believes in the power of the written word; and he has served as Editor of the *Shiloh Sheaf*, the *Sequatchie Valley Christian*, and the *Gospel Defender*; and he was associate Editor of *The Gospel Herald*. Articles by him have also appeared in *Words of Truth*, and other journals as well. He has appeared on Lectureships at various colleges, including Alabama Christian College; and has conducted a special series on "Training Young Men" for the Christian Home & Bible School at Mt. Dora, Florida. Howard Blazer has preached extensively on the radio and television, and has participated in religious debates, especially on the orphan home and church cooperation issues. He also has preached in and directed several personal work campaigns. Wherever he has lived and preached, the churches reap the benefit of sound doctrine, and also the joys of love and peace.



It was my pleasure to attend the dinner in his honor, and I am happy to share here with our readers the remarks made by his son, Bill Blazer, of Jasper.

A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER
BILLY D. BLAZER

I regard it as a great honor to speak in behalf of my Dad tonight! I have had the honor of speaking to large assemblies, even with state and national dignitaries present; but this tonight is the greatest honor of all.

I credit my Dad (and Mother) with the training that I learned from them for the dedication of my life to God's service. His influence and leadership have been the deciding factors in many of the decisions for the better that I have made. I find it a great privilege to pay tribute and honor to this worthy man.

Dad, you have taught me many things in the forty-five years that I have been allowed to live so far on this earth by God's divine providence. I will mention only a few worthwhile past experiences, and some of the life-sustaining factors that you have

taught me. (None of the things which I shall mention would have been possible without my Mother, and with YOU I honor her, too, for her hard work and sacrifices.)

You taught me to rate ABILITY in men, not by what they attempt, but what they finish. By the pattern you set before me, you taught me many abilities, and I give you thanks over and over for your guidance which has helped me thus far through this sinned-cursed earth.

You taught me that there are four steps involved in ACCOMPLISHMENTS, namely: (1) Plan purposefully, (2) Prepare prayerfully, (3) Proceed positively, and (4) Pursue persistently. I have watched these steps lead to success in our family life; and believe me! these steps create a great impact on those who will make them part of their lives.

You taught me that adversity is never pleasant, but that sometimes it is possible to learn lessons from it which cannot be learned any other way. You taught us to do our best with what we had.

I can remember when preachers were not treated as well as they are now, and could tell many things and events in your life that would open the eyes of young preachers (and others) to the hard times which preachers in the past had to endure. Let me recall only a few:

I can remember when you would preach the gospel where the *need* was, instead of where the *money* was. We once moved into an old potato storage house, with a dirt floor in parts of it, in order to have a place to live, because you would not compromise God's word. I recall that some who were weak in preaching against specific sins seemed to fare better in those days than the kind of stalwarts against sin, like you!

I can remember when you got paid with live animals (such as pigs) and household commodities, and in this way we were able to "live of the gospel." I can remember when "coal oil" (kerosene) had to be mixed with something else in order for us to put God first. But I can never remember our missing a meal, nor going hungry!

You taught me that sometimes it is necessary to "moonlight," or do other work along with preaching, in order to 'make ends meet.' While growing up, one of the first things I noticed was that we sometimes did have a problem with finances. When times were hard, there was just too much month left over at the end of the money! But, through God's grace, we made it fine.

Sometimes it was like the preacher who found extra work at the zoo. The main bear had died, and they skinned it, and put a zipper in the skin, and needed someone to put it on and replace the bear until another one could be bought. So, the preacher, desperately needing the money to make ends meet, agreed to play the part of the bear. He put on the bear-skin suit, zipped it up, and entertained the crowds. He turned a "flip" while doing handstands, and accidentally landed in the LION'S cage. This really scared the preacher, as he had noticed the lion the day before— and, just as he feared, a big fight ensued! Finally the BEAR got a hug on the lion and as the preacher was praying frantically, he heard a soft voice say: "Listen, Mister: turn me loose! You are not the only preacher that needs a little extra money!!!" But Dad, you always managed, with God's help. And

"Off The Record"?

Continued from page 1

the President's re-election. It mattered not that is was said "off the record;" the harm had been done.

There is a lesson for Christians in this. Sometimes we say things "off the record," that is, things we do not want repeated. Another name for this is "gossip." And like what happened to the President, our words turn out not to be "off the record." The result is embarrassment for all involved. What we sometimes fail to realize is that our speech is *never* "off the record" with God. There is a record being kept, "and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12). A part of the works which will be written in that book will be the words which we speak. Jesus said "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). The phrase "idle words" signifies "wicked, malicious, injurious, slandering, and impious words" (Gospel Advocate Commentary, *Matthew*, p. 273). Paul said basically the same thing but in a different way. He wrote, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). In other words, if we do not have something good to say about others, we had better not say anything: because one day we will have to answer for it. If we do not want to say it to their face, we should not say it behind their back, or (in other words) "off the record."

President Reagan learned a hard lesson; hopefully we have learned an easier one. — 807 Welton, Pratt, Kansas 67124.

The roots of evil are often very firmly planted.

A 'sharp' person seldom has an axe to grind.

One of the most wonderful things a man ever makes, is a living for his family.

If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it?

Truth needs no crutches! So, if a story limps, it is a lie.

Continued on page 3

Howard A. Blazer, Sr., Honored

Continued from page 2

you are to be commended for your courage to continue in God's service. Your avenues of credit and your clean records of business transactions, show your dependability and honesty.

You taught us that a person who does not get angry at sin or evil, usually lacks enthusiasm also for God.

You taught me that we -- as a family -- had two chances to become wealthy: and they were (1) slim, and (2) none! But I want all these people to know that we as a family shared the "true riches," the real wealth of spiritual enrichment.

You taught me that the really important thing is to share with others, and not that one may still have the first dollar he ever made. You taught me that a man must provide for his own family in order to be pleasing to God.

Dad, you taught us the way to heaven -- and that is the greatest gift one could ever give his sons! So, the Rockefellers and Howard Hughes and all the other multi-millionaires on this earth, can "eat their hearts out:" for, you see: we are richer than they will ever be, because our heavenly Father owns the whole world and everything that is in it. My Dad (and Mother) and I are his HEIRS -- and someday we will share all the wealth that any man could ever expect to receive -- along with the SPIRITUAL blessings that are ours too. You see, Dad, you taught me faith and hope, as Jesus did in John the fourteenth chapter!

You taught me the story of Jonah and the whale, and how Jonah changed, to do God's will. Out of this event, I get the picture that you painted in your own life: that is, that you can't keep a good man down!

You taught us about Christ, the new testament church, and the blood from Calvary.

You taught me that it is an awesome responsibility to own a Bible! The spiritual side of your life is the most meaningful of all. I will never forget our family Bible reading and prayer. We had family devotionals every night, regardless! Oh, what an example you taught by this practice! Just here I want to read from one of your old Bibles: On the fly-leaf you had written:

What a man says and does,
Tells a lot about his character,
And what he really is!

You taught me that worshipping God is the most important thing in the whole world: for we must love God with all our heart.

You taught me that I would reap what I sowed, for Paul said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). You read to us from Galatians 6:4-10 over and over; again and again you reminded us.

You taught us repeatedly, over and over, what the wise man (Solomon) said, in Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy YOUTH . . ."

You taught us that God had given you an awful responsibility, to "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). But you also taught us that a child must "hear" the instruction of his father, as demanded by Solomon: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 1:8). From Solomon you taught us many wonderful lessons, such as this one: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with the spoil: cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: for their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood" (Proverbs 1:10-16). While you taught us from the whole Bible, and all that was there, you as a Father found much to give us from the book of Proverbs.

I recall another text which you taught us, and

stressed to us: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. 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. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Proverbs 3:1-12).

You taught us that sin, and the wrong associates, will always get one into trouble. You were right!

There are many, many other things that I could say in your honor; but time will not permit me to go on and on. It would take several books just to begin to relate the good that you have showed to me.

You taught me that the greatest love that a father can show his children is that he will discipline them according to God's plan. By teaching us to study God's word, you helped prepare us for heaven. Again from Solomon you saw that we learned: "The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein. Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:12-15).

You taught us that God makes many opportunities; but he expects us to find them. You had us to memorize -- and believe with Paul: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Proverbs 4:13). And you left us an example of confident faith in Romans 8:28 -- "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Spiritually, you are a very rich man! This is why you can sing so confidently and well:

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand

And cast a wishful eye

To Canaan's fair and happy land,

Where my possessions lie!

We all know that--

Some day the silver cord will break,

And you no more as now shall sing.

But, oh! the joy when we shall wake

Within the palace of the king!

And we shall tell the same story that you have told, year in, and year out:

Saved by FAITH, Saved by GRACE!

Then, "Farther along we'll know all about" what heaven is all about!

Dad, we love you; and "It's only just begun" -- for there is ETERNITY to come!

--Rt. 6, Box 144, P.O. Box 2608, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

The Elder Brother

(No. 2)

We have seen that the sins of the "Elder Brother in Luke 15:11-31 included (1) cowardice, (2) anger, and (3) stubbornness. Note with me some others.

(4) The Elder Brother also sinned because of self-praise. He said, "Lo, these many years I have served thee." He seems to have forgotten what his father had done for him, but remembers only what he thinks he has done for his father.

It is well to think highly of oneself and his efforts, but it is folly to think more highly than one ought to think (Romans 12:3). Some members of the Lord's church seem to spend their time in telling others what *they* have done for the church. It should be borne in mind that when one has done all the Lord has commanded, he is still an unprofitable servant, because he has done only that which it was his duty to do (Luke 17:10). The Pharisee of Luke 18:9-14 boasted of what he had done for the Lord, but to no avail. What about you?

(5) Furthermore, the Elder Brother, committed the sin of self-righteousness (Vs. 29). "I have never at any time transgressed thy commandments," seems to indicate that he thought he was far more superior to his wandering brother. Israel's trouble in the time of the apostle Paul was self-righteousness: "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



W. A. HOLLEY

their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2-3). When we stand, we should take care lest we fall (I Corinthians 10:12).

(5) Another fault of the Elder Brother was that of self-pity (Vs. 29). Listen to him: ". . . These many years do I serve thee . . . and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." Ah, how sorry he felt for himself! Self-pity is a deep, deep, well which has no bottom. The more one pities himself, the deeper he sinks into his own sorrows or misfortunes. Do you feel sorry for yourself? Do you feel neglected? If the answer is YES, start doing something for others and your self-pity will soon vanish away. One sees his worth through his service to others (Matthew 20:20-29). Read Romans 12:10 and I Peter 5:5-6: what have you learned?

(6) The sin of contempt was one of the Elder Brother's faults. He said, "But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf" (Vs. 30). He said, "This thy son," not "This my brother." Actually, the Elder Brother showed contempt for both his father and his brother! Thus, he had no love, no respect, no reverence, no admiration for his father or his brother. And beside all this, it seems that he may have slandered his brother because he charged that his brother spent thy living on harlots. How did he know? His anger may have prompted him to make a false accusation against his brother.

(7) The sin of envy was another of the Elder Brother's sins. What is envy? It is a "painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage" (*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 8th

Continued On Page 4

Remembering A Christian Home

It was fifteen years ago that my father died and just two years after that we buried my mother. I often think of just how much I owe those two and what great lessons they taught me.

They taught me how to behave in worship. As far back as my memory goes I knew that worship is a place of reverence. With my brother and sisters I knew that when we entered the building we were in a special place. There was no other place where so much was expected of us. We were not



DAN JENKINS

allowed to move about during the time of worship, nor were we allowed to run about the building after services. It wasn't easy for someone with my energy level to sit still! But I knew that when it was time to sing I had to have my book; when it was time to pray my head was to be bowed; and I vividly remember the notebook I used when I could hardly write to take notes from the lesson.

They taught me respect for authority. My respect for authority began before I knew of God, when I was taught that the word "no" really does have a

meaning. This respect for them was easily transferred to respect toward God, toward elderly people, toward school teachers, and others in authority.

They taught me to put the kingdom first. There never was a time when their lives did not show me that the church must be first. We never asked, "Are we going to worship? to Sunday night services? to a gospel meeting? to Vacation Bible School?"

Parents, let us never forget what lessons we are teaching our children! — 125 Dory Road South, N. Palm Beach, FL 33408.

The Elder Brother

Continued from Page 3

edition). He charged his father with not giving him a kid, much less a "fatted calf." I understand the prodigal son has shoes, a robe, and a ring; but the Elder Brother still has *his* inheritance!

The father has done the Elder Brother no wrong.

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, all that is mine is thine. But it was meet (due, right, proper) to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found" (Vs. 31). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

If you don't say anything, you can't be called on to repeat it.

Some folk seem to think "initiative" is doing the opposite of what they are asked to do.

The world "owes" you a living only when you have EARNED it.

Before you give anyone a piece of your mind, be sure you can get by with what you have left.

Like premium gasoline, ENCOURAGEMENT helps take the 'knocks' out of life.

A lazy man aims at nothing -- and usually hits it, too!

The silence of some people is wonderful to 'listen' to!

Your word, when broken, cannot be mended.

Even when he is SILENT, a wise man says more than a fool when HE speaks.

Some live in 'all-electric' homes: everything in them is 'charged.'

Maranatha

DAN JENKINS

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. Maranatha." These closing words of I Corinthians echo the hearts of the early Christians who saw little in this world that was attractive to them. We probably understand that "anathama" means to be cut off from Christ and that the one who fails to love our Lord should be so rejected. But what does "Maranatha" mean?

The expression is from the Aramaic tongue and literally means, "Our Lord, come." How fitting that in an age of great unbelief and persecution the cry of the early church was one that spoke of his return.

They could plead for the Lord's return because they knew of his nature. Unlike an abused child who might cower at the thought of the return of his father, those early Christians knew that because of the nature of Jesus his return would correct all that was wrong in

their lives.

They uttered these words because they believed in prayer. They knew of his promises of answered prayers (Matthew 7:7,8) and fully believed that their petitions to God would make a difference. They believed in his promises. We had departed from the earth, but it was only his body that had left! Though enshrined at the Father's throne, they believed in him!

Beloved, can you say, "Maranatha"? Do you believe that his return will be a blessing for you? Do you believe in the power of such prayers for his return? Do you believe in his promises. May God hasten the day when all of his people will say, "Maranatha!" — 125 Dory Road South, N. Palm Beach, FL 33408.

Giving God Our Best

This subject suggests something most people have never really tried -- giving God our best. Giving God our best requires making service to God primary in our lives. With many of us religion is just a sideline. There is no better example in the Scriptures of one who gave God his best than Abraham (Genesis 22). Abraham demonstrated great faith in God on other occasions; but this was the most severe test of whether he would give God his best. Let us examine this test.



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

I. GOD CALLED FOR ABRAHAM'S BEST. Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac his only son by Sarah, through whom all of God's promises to Abraham were to be fulfilled. There were many difficulties connected with this command. First, God had never before required a human sacrifice, although it was a common practice among heathen

peoples (Psalms 106:37-38). Second, it was opposed to the natural feelings of humanity. It involved not only shedding the blood of a man's son, but that of a favorite son. It had the appearance of being extremely inhumane. Third, it was a violation of the divine law previously set forth (Genesis 9:6). Abraham must have been thinking: "Is God now requiring me to violate his own law?" Fourth, Abraham was not called upon to offer his second best, Ishmael, but his best and his dearest. From the standpoint of human reason, the command violated all of Abraham's paternal and natural feelings.

In spite of the cost, Abraham gave God his best. It cost him his domestic comfort. Think how Sarah, Isaac's mother, may have re-acted to God's command. Consider the conflict of soul that must have characterized Abraham. It caused Abraham to consider his hopes regarding his future posterity as God had promised him. Isaac was the long-promised seed. But there was no hesitation on Abraham's part, no making excuses or alibis. He arose early and entered upon that awful ordeal. But when he gave God his best, he began to receive God's best: God made a greater covenant of blessing with him (Genesis 22:15-18), and he let Abraham live for the whole world through Christ. He received children as numberless as the stars (Galatians 3:29).

II. GOD CALLS FOR OUR BEST. He calls for the best of our love (Matthew 22:35-40). Nothing else is allowed to be first in our affections. God calls for the best of our gifts (Leviticus 22:22; 27:30-33; Malachi 1:7-14). He will not accept the crumbs and leftovers following the gratification of every selfish lust possible. God calls for the best of our labors -- seeking his kingdom and his righteousness must have priority in our lives (Matthew 6:33; 10:37,38; John 6:27). He also calls for the best of our loyalty (Luke 9:23-26, 57-62). Our allegiance to him must take precedence over everything else.

CONCLUSION: When we give God our best, we will receive God's best, also. He gave his best to redeem us (John 3:16). Most professing Christians have never received God's best, because they never have given God their best. If we place all on God's altar, God will give us his best -- the blood of Christ, remission of sins, receive us as his children, all spiritual blessings, and finally, heaven! Our obedience must be as prompt, deliberate, and persevering as was Abraham's. But we will not give our best until we give ourselves (II Corinthians 8:5; Romans 12:1).

ARE YOU GIVING GOD YOUR BEST? — 1613 19th Ave., S.W., Decatur, AL 35601.



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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A Man Who Can't Find God

Here we shall review a letter which was sent to Ann Landers asking for her help and suggestions. This man says of himself, "I am an agnostic who is frank to admit that I am deeply envious of the true believers who view God as a personal friend. I have searched for such a relationship for many years and never found it."

The writer of the letter under review continues: "I am a middle-aged male and very ill. From the time I was old enough to reason, I hoped I would find God before I needed him. It didn't happen. I sometimes wonder if this void in my life is really the biblical hell. The alienation and aloneness I feel are indescribable. So, dear Ann, please keep plugging God in your column. If you can help someone find Him, you will have done a beautiful thing" -- D.A.C. (Quoted from the Birmingham Post-Herald, August 31, 1984).

We are deeply sympathetic toward the man who wrote the letter under review. We sincerely trust that we can help him, and others who may have his same problem. He says, "I am an agnostic who is frank to admit that I am deeply envious of the true believers who view God as a personal friend. . . ." What is an "agnostic?" An "agnostic" is "one who holds the view that any ultimate reality (as God) is unknown and probably unknowable." (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 8th edition).

Thus, the word "agnostic" means "unknown -- unknowable." But, is God, as revealed in the Bible, unknown and unknowable? We think not. How does any living person today know that George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln, or Napoleon Bonaparte ever lived? Is it not from historical evidence -- historical evidence that has stood the test of time, being from reliable sources? If one can only "know" what he learns from his five senses, his knowledge will be extremely limited. Is it possible for one to "know" about the atom, one of the minute indivisible



W. A. HOLLEY

particles of which the universe is said to be composed?

The author of the letter continues: "I have searched for a relationship for many years and never found it. I am a middle-aged male and very ill. From the time I was old enough to reason, I hoped I would find God before I needed him. It didn't happen. . . ." An ill man or a well man needs to know God and his holy word. In this manner one can have hope both in life and in death (I Corinthians 15:12-20; I Timothy 4:8; Titus 1:2). We can understand why his "alienation and aloneness are indescribable." A man without the true knowledge of God is like a ship in the midst of a mighty storm without an anchor. God and his word represent the only reasonable explanation for man and the universe in which he lives.

If one thinks that God is a piece of wood, or a chunk of stone, or a lump of metal, or flesh and blood, one can never find him. God is Spirit (John 4:24). One cannot see one's *conscience*; but it is there nevertheless. Who can measure *faith* or *love*, giving their weight, size, and all other dimensions? Some years ago a Russian returning from outer space was asked if he had seen God? His answer was "NO." Who can believe the physical eye can see a spiritual Being? It is altogether possible for one to *see* or *look* at things which *cannot be seen* with the natural eye (II Corinthians 4:16-18).

The apostle Paul, far superior to the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, declared THE UNKNOWN GOD to the city of ancient Athens. Listen to him: "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all the nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. . . ." (Acts 17:24-31).

Thus, an honest and good man can seek him and find him, if he is willing to give up human reasoning and come to the Holy Bible -- the source of

all spiritual understanding. The true evidence of a supreme Being in the universe has been rationally understood by mankind since the creation of the world. If we will but look, we will see God's existence revealed in nature (Acts 14:14-17; Psalms 8:1-9; 19:1-11; Romans 1:20-23). The character and will of God is revealed in the Holy Bible (Hebrews 10:5-10; II Timothy 3:15-17). Thus, God has two "books" which citizens of earth should recognize: (1) The "book" of nature which declares his existence, and (2) the Holy Bible, the book of revealed truth that tells responsible people what to do so that they may please him.


How can these things be perceived by men and women? It is by faith. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of the things which appear" (Hebrews 11:3, A.S.V.). This Scripture saith, "By faith we understand. . . ." How does this faith come? Again, we turn to the Holy Scriptures for the answer: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Paul (II Corinthians 5:7), says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Thus, if one wants to believe there is a God who made the worlds and who extends grace and hope to suffering humanity, go to the Holy Scriptures!

The man whose letter we are reviewing, says: "I hoped I would find God before I needed him," but, what a strange statement! There is never a time when man does *not* need God, whether sick or well, poor or wealthy. This man seems to live in hopeless despair. He says, "I sometimes wonder if this void in my life is really the biblical hell." If he wants that void filled, let God reside there! It may be true that men sometimes "create" their own *hell* by their foolish and rash acts: but such is not that "hell" where the damned and the doomed shall spend eternity (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8).

Honest reader, believe and obey the truth as revealed in the Bible. Heaven can be yours.

— P.O. Box 274, Parrish, Ala. 35580.

The most important thing a father can do for his children, is to love their mother.



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-- Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

A Congregation's Membership List

For many reasons a "Membership List" or a "Church Directory" is a very useful tool. Here at Sixth Avenue we are in the process of preparing a new one. For it I drafted the following letter to our members, in which I set forth some uses it may serve, and some other matters. Because it expresses some truths often overlooked, I share it with the readers of *Words Of Truth*.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is in the best interest of the church, for its fellowship and for its growth, that the members know one another. The Holy Spirit directs Christians in one city to "Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, in honor preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). In order to carry out these duties, we must know one another. May this DIRECTORY of the church at Sixth Avenue help the membership here (1) to become better acquainted, (2) to keep in closer touch, (3) to be mutually helpful, and (4) to promote closer unity.

God ordained that each local congregation shall be overseen by bishops or elders (Acts 20:28), and be served by deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-12). The list of elders and deacons (page 1) should help new members to learn the leaders in the congregation, and should be a useful reference list for all.

The list of other congregations (page 12) indicates

that a pleasant fellowship prevails among the churches of Christ in this area. We want it understood, however, that we do NOT expect their members to miss *their* services -- any of them-- to attend *ours*; neither do they expect us to worship with them when we have services at the same time. Every member should, when possible, worship regularly with his home church. Hence, each member of this congregation should be HERE for all OUR services, when feasible; but we do encourage you to visit other congregations when there is no service at Sixth Avenue.

This list of members does not necessarily coincide with the one in "The Lamb's Book Of Life" (Revelation 21:27). Perhaps some on this list should be restored by repentance, confession, and prayer (Acts 8:22-24; James 5:16); or else, should be withdrawn from for negligence or other disobedience (II Thessalonians 3:6)! No one should feel spiritually secure simply because his name appears herein.

Let each of us be a faithful Christian --otherwise, Christ will blot our name out of his book (Revelation 3:5). "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

Yours in Christian service,
Flavil H. Nichols, Minister

Life's Greatest Joy

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 136:6). These words provide great comfort for each of us as we seek to win the lost to our Maker.

As we go forth we must be able to weep. The person who seeks to lead others to the Lord must be compassionate. We are to give answers, but it must be "with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). The tears Jesus wept over his enemies in Jerusalem must be mirrored in *our* hearts. There will be no joy of reaping unless it is preceded by weeping over a lost world.

As we go we must bear precious seed. Our seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11), and our task is to sow it in every heart we meet. It is foolish to think that we can hide his truths from men and still win them. Others may sow the "tares" that bring personal popularity, but ours is to take the seed in its purest form to the lost.

We will return bringing his sheaves. Note it carefully. We "shall doubtless return with rejoicing . . ." What comfort these words provide! The power is not in us but in his seed, and his seed will bring forth fruit! Without doubt, we shall reap!

Beloved, read the words of this Psalm again and then resolve that you will renew your efforts to seek the lost. With such assurance of success how can we do anything less? It is his will and we are his people!
-- 125 Dory Road South, N. Palm Beach, FL 33408



DAN JENKINS

Religious Hibernation

TIM STAFFORD

Louis Cassels of the United Press International conducted a survey some years ago among college students. He found that most students "spend their college years in religious hibernation and just don't think about God" (as quoted in "Let Us Save Our Own, Too" by Bob Wear in the Gospel Advocate, April 17, 1980, p. 243).

How sad, but true, this is in many cases! However, not only young people, but older Christians as well, may go through periods of "religious hibernation." This is tragic for several reasons:

1. Hibernators Don't Grow. When animals hibernate, all body energy is used to operate circulatory and respiratory systems. Tissues can't grow. Indeed, a loss is sustained. Similarly, a religious hibernator's spiritual growth is stunted, although God requires even the young Christian to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may GROW thereby" (II Peter 2:2). After years of such inactivity, a person may be no closer to God, nor have any better knowledge of the scriptures, than when he started this 'hibernation.' For example, many Christians enter college, and in four years not only do not mature, but actually retrogress! We are taught to "be no more children . . . but . . . grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). God commands Christians to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

2. Hibernators Don't Work. They are just snoring, dead weight! Jesus himself said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day" (John 9:4). Saints are taught to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). The

Bible clearly teaches what the Lord will do with dead weight (John 15:1-6).

3. Hibernators Are Easy Prey. Animals caught asleep are quickly eaten. The Christian who is not constantly vigilant, sober, and alert to the "wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11), will easily fall victim thereto. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Satan never sleeps.

4. Hibernators Are Out Of The Action. A sleeping bear just lets the world go by -- and he is content to do so. Hibernating Christians don't realize that there is a great battle for men's souls going on about them, while they sleep. Each Christian is a volunteer in the Lord's army, and is expected to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12). Hibernators leave gaps in the firing line! So far as they are concerned, the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17) is left sheathed in its scabbard, or their armour lies rusting, unused. Reader, the battle is raging! It is fraught with peril, yes; but the trophy -- "a crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:7-8) -- is great! Won't you take your rightful place on the Lord's side in this battle?

5. Hibernators Are Unprepared. Paul talks about people having the "spirit of slumber" (Romans 11:8). Jesus repeated the prophecy of Isaiah: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed . . ." (Matthew 13:14-15). He described people who could not, or who would not, receive his words, saying: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the

The Holiness Of God

In order for us to understand the nature of sin, and our need to separate ourselves from it to the best of our ability, we need to understand the holiness of God.



JOE E. GALLOWAY

To speak of God's holiness is to emphasize that God is separate in goodness from all else. We are to be good, but in the absolute sense "there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). We are to be holy, as God is holy (I Peter 1:15-16).

That God considers his people to be holy (separate ones) is shown in the designation "saints" (e.g. Romans 1:7) which simply means "holy people."

God is Absolutely Holy

Only God is absolutely holy. In speaking of the "Lord God Almighty," the "King of saints," those victorious in heaven said, "for thou *only* art holy" (Revelation 15:3,4 - all emphasis in the quotations added, JEG). Hannah correctly prayed, "There is none holy as the Lord" (I Samuel 2:2). It is interesting to notice that both the Old and New Testaments relate that heavenly beings proclaim God's holiness as being three-fold. The seraphims said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). The four living creatures around his throne said, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty" (Revelation 4:8). Such triplets are evidently pronounced in prophetic writings to show the certainty, the absoluteness, and the irreversibility of what is being said. (For examples notice the triple usage of "overturn" in Ezekiel 21:27 and "woe" in Revelation 8:13). So it is certain, absolute, and irreversibly true that God is holy! Holiness being so absolutely a part of God's nature, we can better understand why God has "sworn by his holiness" (Psalms 89:35; Amos 4:2). God's holiness is as much a part of his nature as his power, his wisdom, and his being eternal.

Since God is absolutely holy he can neither sin, nor tempt others to sin (James 1:13-17). He cannot sin through ignorance, for he has all knowledge! He cannot sin through weakness for he is all-powerful! He cannot sin through desire or intention, for he is completely holy and good!

Being absolutely holy, God can no more approve of sin than he can commit it. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold

the upright" (Psalms 11:7). He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habucak 1:13). God has no pleasure in wickedness, nor those who do iniquity (Psalms 5:4,5). Yet, he has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11) since he loves all people (John 3:16) and wants all to come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

God hates sin (Zechariah 9:17; Jeremiah 44:4)! He hates it *universally*, so he no more tolerates it in his people than in his enemies. "Thou hatest *all* workers of iniquity" (Psalms 5:5). This shows the absurdity of the current claim of some that God's grace will cause him to overlook some wrongdoing or false teaching on the part of "those under the covenant of grace." True, God's grace provides forgiveness, but such is conditioned on our learning and following "the word of his grace," the New Testament. God also hates sin *perpetually*. Just as "the goodness of God endureth continually" (Psalms

52:1), "God is angry with the wicked *every day*" (Psalms 7:11). There is never a time, situation, or a people where God will accept false teaching or

wrong doing!

God's Laws Are Holy

As God is holy, so are his laws. God asked Israel, "what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deuteronomy 4:8). Psalms 19:7-8 speaks of God's law as being *perfect*, his testimony *sure*, his statutes *right*, his commandment *pure*, and his judgments *true* and *righteous* altogether. Paul wrote, "wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12).

Being holy, God's laws have always required the good, while forbidding the bad. This is true in both Testaments, and can be shown by the morals of God legislated for man, by the judgments he brought on the wicked, and by the sacrifices he has required. It also shows the reason Christ had to die in our stead (Isaiah 53:5,6; Romans 3:25,26). When men reject God's will they also reject God's holiness. (In a following article we plan to consider "How Men Reject God's Holiness.")

— 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.

Christ's Prayer For Unity Is Being Answered Today

In the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John we find the record of our Lord's prayer for unity. With the cross before him Jesus prayed for those of us who are living today. It is humbling to know that at that hour he was speaking to God the Father of *our* spiritual need. As we consider a portion of this passage let us resolve that we will not only seek the goal for which Christ prayed (unity); let us also employ the means given by God for obtaining it.

For Whom Did Christ Pray?

Jesus did not pray for the unity of all religious people. He did not request that the Father bring about a federation of sects. He simply prayed for the unity of those who would later believe on him (Christ) *through the apostle's words*. The Holy Spirit led the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). The things bound and loosed by the apostles were things bound and loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). They were not arbitrary pronouncements of the human mind (I Corinthians 2:9-16). It is a humble thing for us to recognize our common reliance upon this divine revelation (I Corinthians 4:4).

How Does Unity Come?

Unity results when men and women believe in Christ together by means of the inspired word of God. To "believe" in Christ is to have more than mere credence. Biblical belief involves active obedience. Any other kind of faith is dead (James 2:26). We are to remain or abide in this inspired teaching (II John 9). We are to contend for it (Jude 3). When a brother departs from it in what he teaches or practices we are commanded by God to attempt

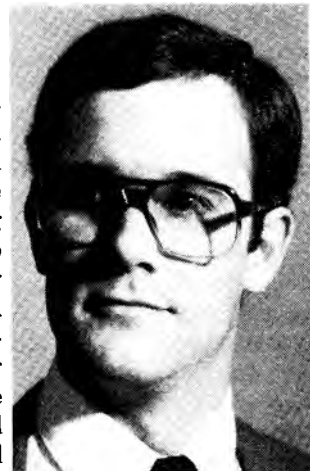
to direct him back to the truth (Romans 16:17; James 5:19,20; Galatians 6:1). This does not constitute a haughty demand that others "goose step to our tune" as some have accused. It is humble acceptance of the fact that we *all* need divine guidance (Jeremiah 10:23). It is meek compliance with God's directive to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). Some teach that unity requires mutual obedience *plus* love. They have set up a false dichotomy. "Love the brotherhood" is a command to be obeyed. Love (agape) is not a mushy emotion but a firm resolve.

What is the Origin of Disunity?

Disunity results when men and women fail to remain with revealed truth in what they teach and practice (I Corinthians 4:6; II John 9). Pride is, therefore, out of place among those who, together, submit to the revelation given by God and received by man. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Corinthians 4:7). It is sinful to depart from those who are holding to divinely sent truth by speculating and going beyond what is written. It is equally sinful to selectively teach and obey and thus take away from the guidebook from God (Acts 20:27; Revelation 22:18,19).

Conclusion

Those who continue to submit to the headship of Christ by obeying his word unmingled with human opinion are united. They are not united with those who will *not* abide in the doctrine of Christ. Our Lord does not desire such unity. He did not pray for it. When an individual in the church or a large segment of the church leaves the doctrine of Christ disunity will result if some remain faithful. But it is still the case that those who believe in Christ through the *word* will remain united. Unity is very much to be desired among all and can be regained when those who leave repent and return to believing in Christ through the Word of God. — Route 1, Box 211, Burlington, West Virginia 26710.



TIM NICHOLS

Religious Hibernation

Continued From Page 2

same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Hibernating Christians are not ready to meet the Lord --all they can do is drowsily 'hope' he does not come today?

"Awake, thou that sleepest . . .!" (Ephesians 5:14). "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:35-36).

— 1117 Glenn Avenue, Florence, Alabama 35630.

(Editor's note: Brother Stafford is director of the Christian Student Center on the campus of the University of North Alabama, at Florence; and this is the first article he has submitted to *Words of Truth*. We expect to hear from him again and again.)

Adding Sin To Sin

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!" (Isaiah 30:1,2).



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

Sin is cumulative! -- That is, one sin generally leads to another. From the context of our text we learn how Israel had done this: (1) They distrusted God (verse 2); (2) They deserted God (verse 1); (3) They relied on Egypt instead of God for help against the Syrians (verse 2). God described what they were doing as "adding sin unto sin." They committed one sin by forsaking the counsel of God and added to that the sin of trusting in the help of Egypt. We need to learn the peril of adding sin to sin.

Sin is rarely single, because one sin drops the seeds

for another sin. There is also a strange tendency to man to do a second time what he has done once successfully. On this basis many criminals are caught. The progressive nature of sin is depicted several ways in the Scriptures. Through Jeremiah God said Israel had committed two sins -- forsaking him, and hewing them out cisterns that could hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13). In Psalms 1, the writer describes the progressive nature of sin in three steps: (1) One WALKS in the counsel of the wicked; (2) Then he STANDS in the way of sinners; (3) At last he SITS in the seat of the scoundful. James pictures this progressive nature of sin under the figure of a conception and a birth (James 1:15).

I. SOME BIBLE EXAMPLES: Cain's substitution as the result of a lack of faith was rejected by God, which made him angry and jealous of his brother, which led to the murder of Abel. When called upon by God to account, he lied (Genesis 4). Joseph's brethren hated him (the first sin); were jealous of him, which motivated them to conspire against him to slay him and cast him into a pit. By Reuben's intercession he was instead sold into slavery in Egypt. They later deceived and lied to their father to try to cover their former sins (Genesis 37). David in idleness (the first sin) lusted to the extent of committing fornication with another man's wife. This led to treachery in conspiring to have the man killed so David could take his wife (II Samuel 11). Sins have

a fearfully attractive and cumulative power.

II. MODERN EXAMPLES. Many young people take their first drink for a thrill. That first drink leads to drinking enough to "feel" it, which is intoxication. But those drinks lead to other drinks until one becomes an alcoholic. It all started with taking a drink for a thrill; but terminated in addiction. This also applies to other drugs. If one never takes the first drink or never experiments with other drugs, it is certain that he will never be an addict.

A nominal Christian who can't have his way (the first sin) becomes offended, grows slack in his attendance, lies about it, nurses a grudge, and eventually quits the church altogether. Truly, sin is added to sin!

III. RESULTS OF ADDING SIN TO SIN: (1) *Fruitless Expenditure*. Jehovah told Israel that after going to all their trouble and expense it would not save them from the Syrians (verse 5). (2) *Bitter Disappointment*. Isaiah said Egypt helped in vain and to no purpose (verse 7; see also II Kings 18:21); (3) *Shame and confusion* (verse 3).

CONCLUSION: So sin follows sin. First, men lose their faith in God; then, they neglect to seek and obey him; then, they turn to mere human helpers.

"Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive" (Sir Walter Scott).

— 1613 18th Ave., S.W., Decatur, AL 35601.

A Picture of the Gospel

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-12

EGYPT	BAPTISM	WILDERNESS	JORDAN	CANAAN
SIN	BAPTISM	CHURCH	DEATH	HEAVEN
Bondage in Egypt. (Ex. 1 to 14) Bondage in Sin. (Rom. 6:16-18; Jno. 8:31,32) Mission of Moses. (Ex. 3:9,10) Mission of Christ. (Jno.3:16,17; Acts 3:22,23) Moses gave up Palace. (Heb.11:24-28) Christ, Heaven. (2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2: 5-11) Miracles of Moses. (Ex. 4:1-31) Miracles of Christ. (Jno. 20:30,31; Mk. 16:20) Believe God sent Moses. (Ex. 4:31) Believe in Christ. (Jno. 8:24) Turn—Follow Moses. (Ex. 12:37-42) Repent, Follow Christ. (Lk. 13:3; Matt.16:24) Saved after Baptism. (Heb. 11:29; Ex.. 14:29,30) Saved after Baptism. (Mk. 16:16; Rom.6:16-18)		Wandered in Wilderness. (Num. 14) Experiences in church. (Acts 2:47) Forgot God. (Psa. 106:21; 9:17) We could forgive. (2 Pet. 1:5-11) Lost Faith. (Deut. 1:32; Psa. 106:12,24) Danger now. (Lk. 8:13; Heb.3:12,19) Displeased God. (1 Cor. 10:5,6) Our Examples. (1 Cor. 10:1-12) Rejected Moses. (Psa. 106:16-18) Sin to Murmur. (1 Cor. 10:10; Ex. 16:2) Failed to Enter. (Heb. 3:12-19) Possible for Us. (Heb. 4:1,11) God opened Jordan. (Joshua 3) River of Death. (Jno. 5:28; Heb.9:27)		Canaan—Good Land. (Ex. 3:8) Heaven, A Better Country. (Heb. 11: 13-16) Golden City. (Rev. 21:18) Mansions. (Jno. 14:1-3) Tree of Life. (Rev. 2:14) Never Die. (Rev. 21:4) Fulness of Joy. (Jno. 14:1-3; Psa.16:11)

—By Gus Nichols
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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 Shameless Life

There is no doubt that every one of us has done things that now we are really ashamed of. Even the very best of men, who are trying to live above reproach, and are striving to be the most godly, will admit that they, too, have events in their lives that they wish they could erase. On the other hand, there are some who, though righteous, live in constant misery because they simply have not been willing to accept the forgiveness that God has provided for us. The Christian needs to realize that he lives a life that is shameless; that is, there is no shame in being a Christian.



JERRI MANASCO

When we affirm that the Christian life is a *shameless* life, it is certain that we do not mean that the WORLD will think it so!! Jesus made it abundantly clear to his disciples that they would be treated with scorn and their name would be cast out from their associates (Matthew 10:34-36; Luke 6:22, 26). The early Christians were reminded that they would suffer persecution as though their lives were evil (I Peter 2:12; 3:16). So adamant would the world be against the saints that the persecutors would even think that they were serving God (and doing society a favor!) by killing God's people (John 16:2)!! All who live godly in Christ Jesus must expect some negative results to be shown toward them (II Timothy 3:12). Yes, there is a reproach that we must carry (Hebrews 13:13; 11:26). But the reproach is not really on the part of some flaw in the Christian's life; rather, the reproach rests in the attitude that the world has toward those who wear Christ's name. Peter encourages the saint not to be ashamed of this, but rather use it as a means of glorifying God (I Peter 4:16). The apostles felt that way, and gave thanks that God used them for suffering (Acts 5:41-42). There is no shame in being a Christian.

There can be no shame in learning and doing God's word Through the changing ages of time and the in-

creased (?) sophistication of man, the word of God still remains the only real stability for all generations. The Bible stands as an undefeated evidence of God's very being. Surely there can be no shame in adhering to a Book that will not fail in its purpose (Isaiah 55:11). The folly of reprobate teachers and preachers is constantly being exposed by the matchless power of the word of God (II Timothy 3:6-8). No wonder the Lord said, "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Let the infidelic hordes revel in their evolutionary superstitions! Let the unbelieving scribe waste reams of paper in his attack upon the wonderful Book of God! Let the modern-day social revisers cast out the Bible and speak disdainfully of those who believe it! We shall continue to agree with the psalmist who wrote, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (Psalms 119:6).

There can be no shame in doing good. The purpose of the Christian's life is to do good (Galatians 6:9,10; Ephesians 2:10). Seeing to the welfare of his fellows is one of the great joys of the Christian. He returns good for evil and gives love in the face of hatred (Romans 12:19-21; I Peter 3:8,9; Luke 6:27-35). Going about doing good is the description of the life of those who imitate their great Leader (Acts 10:38). The ones who ought to feel ashamed are those in our world who are selfishly seeking to satisfy their own wants, excluding others from their lives. It seems to be a bit inconsistent for one who is full of selfishness to look down upon one whose life is devoted to making this world a better place! Why be ashamed of a life that does good?

Certainly there can be no shame in exerting a good influence among men. In our present war-torn, war-threatening world, there is a need everywhere for men and women to wield a good influence. Who in his right mind would argue with that statement? It is sad that this world is apparently run by the principle that he who has the greatest might has the greatest potential for survival. The only influence that can have any effect whatsoever in restraining evil is the Christian's influence. Christians are lights in darkness (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16). "Sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Shame is the garb of sin. The Christian leads a shameless life, because his life-style will not be an inducement to encourage any others to sin. Thus a Christian does not contribute to a nation's shame!!

There can be no shame in keeping our bodies pure. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations, teenage immorality, increasing sexual perversions, and such like, are evidence that this world is not practicing temperance (self-control) and bodily purity. All of these practices are justified (?) by those who engage in them on the ground that they are simply doing what is "natural," and that they can't help being what they are and doing what they do. Yet note the mental and emotional scars, the rage of jealous husbands and boyfriends, so so-called "love" suicides and homicides, the diseases that are rampant as a result of unrestrained passions, the broken homes resulting from immoral wives and husbands. It requires little intelligence to see the shame that is the fruit of such behavior. The Christian is again vindicated: for his is a shameless life. Let the world accuse him of being "self-righteous" and goody-goody; but the fact remains that he (or she) has nothing to hide and nothing to explain away. The Christian is living testimony to the "more abundant" life Jesus came to bestow (John 10:10).

Finally, who can find shame in obeying him who died for our sins? (John 3:16,17; I Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 2:9). Such obedience leads to eternal life (Hebrews 5:8,9) and a crown of life (Revelation 2:10; II Timothy 4:7-8). There is no shame in following the steps of the unchanging Christ. He has opened the Way of Salvation for us, being for us the forerunner into the heavenly realm (Hebrews 6:19-20; John 14:1-4). Consider, however, the shame of those who refuse to follow Jesus when they hear those dreadful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Obeys the Lord today, and live in the shameless life (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Philippians 2:12; 3:13-17; Titus 2:11-15).



Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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“What Lack I Yet...?”

Do you possess a sense of failure as a Christian? Do you see yourself not doing what you want to do to be more spiritual? Is there an empty feeling even after you have done what you feel is your duty? There was a person Jesus encountered who felt the same way.

“ . . . What lack I yet?” said the young man who came to Jesus (Matthew 18:19). When questioned about his relationship to the law, he claimed to be perfect. Yet this rigid keeping of the commandments had not brought him to a feeling of assurance, a feeling that life eternal was his.

In dealing with this man's spiritual problem Jesus came to the heart of what is needed by us also. There is more to following him and having eternal life than ‘rule-keeping.’ Freedom from law-keeping does not free us from obedience to Christ.

Jesus calls us to *be* something before *doing* anything. Before this young man could follow Jesus, he was called to a whole-hearted dedication to Jesus. Likewise he calls us to a similar dedication. No amount of commandment-keeping can replace a commitment to Jesus as our Lord.

What did the young man lack? He had everything to live with, and nothing to live for. His love for riches kept him from totally giving his life to Jesus. He lacked faith enough to give up everything he had to receive everything Jesus had to give.

Jesus calls us to a similar dedication and commitment. Whatever keeps us from him must be sacrificed. Only then can we possess not, but have everything. — 425 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.



ANCIL JENKINS



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Sin Alienates Man From God

Man is not born away from God. To the wicked king of Tyrus, the Holy Spirit said, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezekiel 28:15). This is descriptive of every baby that has ever been born. Just as God created man “good” and “very good” (Genesis 1:25, 31), so every new-born baby is born into this world sinless and pure before God.

Calvinism is false in all five of its major tenets, the first of which is that man inherits a totally-depraved nature. Man's soul or spirit comes, not from his natural parents, but from God. It is “the Lord, which . . . formeth the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1). Therefore he is called “the Father of spirits” (Hebrews 12:9). At the death of man's body, his “spirit shall return to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). For this reason God declared: “All souls are mine” (Ezekiel 18:4).

If (?) man inherited a corrupt or depraved soul, of necessity it would have come from God. But who can believe that from a pure and holy God, man could inherit a *totally-depraved nature*? Such is inconsistent with God's very holiness and purity.

That babies are innocent from birth is clearly shown, not only by the above passages of holy scripture, but also by Jesus' own words: “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). He also said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). No, Friends: the Bible does not teach that little babies are born “totally depraved” --not depraved in body, mind, and soul, as Calvinism avers-- nor in any one of these aspects.

Since each one is born innocent and “perfect” (Ezekiel 28:15), how, then, does one become a sinner, and become lost? Just like Adam did! Adam was made “very good” (Genesis 1:31). God did not create Adam a sinner. How then did *he* become alienated from God? Sin separated him from God!



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

His own personal sin did this --and sin is not something that can be “inherited.” Read with me: “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Note, please, that it was not ADAM'S iniquities, nor your PARENT'S sins-- but YOUR iniquities, and YOUR sins, which separated you from God.

Long before Christ came to earth God 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” (Ezekiel 18:20). [Using the figure of speech called METONOMY, the word “soul” here refers to the individual --a part is named for the whole. This passage simply means that the person who sins shall “die.”]

With these truths in mind, read with me: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:1-3). This text, often perverted by Calvinists, actually teaches that only those who “walk” according to the course of this world, are “dead” in trespasses and sins. We are not born dead in sin. The apostle Paul affirmed that he (like all other people) was “alive” before he “died” (Romans 7:9). He was not born “dead,” and then made “alive” --but was first “alive;” then by his own transgression he “died.”

The false doctrine of “The Immaculate Conception” [of Mary] was invented to dodge or get around the imagined consequences of the [false] doctrine of “Hereditary Total Depravity.” To keep Jesus from inheriting (?) from Mary the imaginary Adamic (depraved) nature, Roman Catholics devised the doctrine that God prepared Mary as a vessel through whom he could send Jesus into the world. --It is true that *she* did NOT inherit sin from *her* forbears --but neither does *any other child* that is ever born!

We live in an age of GUIDED missiles, but MISGUIDED men.

If a joke is doubtful, it's dirty.

When you bury the hatchet, don't bury it in the other fellow's back.

Shakespeare said, “all the world's a stage.” -- But most of us are under-rehearsed!

Watch out for temptation: the more you see of it the better it looks.

When one imagines that liquor will bring happiness, he is already ‘drunk’ on something else.

You do not have to choose between two evils, nor, look up a third one; do right!

If you want to kill time, try working it to death.

Jesus - Our Great Example

At the outset of this treatise it is suggested that I Peter 2:21-25 be read. It sets forth Jesus as earth's greatest example. All who lived before him pale into insignificance when measured by his life and death and resurrection.

Jesus Christ is man's perfect pattern. He lived a perfect life (II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15); he never deceived anyone (John 18:20); he taught the greatest moral standard of conduct ever propounded by any one (Matthew 7:12); when mistreated, he never retaliated (Luke 22:47-53); he trusted God completely (Mark 14:36); he gave his life for others (Matthew 20:28). Thus God not only told us (through his word) what to do, he also gave us the best possible example.

Our text says, "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:21-24, A.S.V.).

We shall now point out a few likenesses wherein we need to imitate some of Jesus' examples:

(1) Jesus Christ suffered throughout his earthly sojourn here; and so must we. We read, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

With regard to Christian suffering, the Bible says, ". . . If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:16).

(2) Jesus denied himself; and so must his followers deny themselves. Inspiration says of him, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). Read also Matthew 8:20.

Jesus taught his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Those disciples who love the world, their parents, etc., more than they love the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be his disciples (Matthew 10:37-38; Luke 14:26-27).

(3) Jesus was very courageous; and so must his followers be. Jesus was both a Lamb and a Lion (Revelation 5:5; John 1:29,36). Jesus showed great physical courage in the time of his betrayal (John 18:4-6). With great courage Jesus condemned false teachers (Matthew 15:1ff; 23:1ff).

Christian soldiers are commanded: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (I Corinthians 16:13-14).

(4) The life of Jesus was filled with prayer and service. It is written "that Jesus began both to do and teach" and that "he went about doing good" (Acts 1:1; 10:38). On one occasion Jesus spent the night in prayer to God (Matthew 14:23; Luke 6:12). He prayed for the unity of all believers (John 17:20-23). Jesus recommended a secret place of prayer for his disciples (Matthew 6:6). Hence, we should follow Jesus' example.



W. A. HOLLEY

(5) Jesus was a busy worker throughout his personal ministry. Of himself, 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).

To his hearers, Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest: behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:34-35).

Christian workers should "be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

(6) Jesus was void of all evil; his life was not mixed with good and bad. He was "holy" and "harmless," pure, sincere, seeing what was good and discerning what was evil (Hebrews 7:26).

Paul encouraged the early Christians, saying: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that

ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life . . ." (Philippians 2:14-16). Do we follow Jesus' example in this matter??

(7) Jesus allowed nothing to hinder him in accomplishing his divine mission. He finished what he came to do (John 17:4; 19:30). Thus, in spite of strong opposition from the Pharisees and Sadducees, in spite of Peter's denials, in spite of Judas' betrayal, Jesus "finished" his mission. Poverty, desires of temptation, and fear of death did not stop him (Matthew 4:1-11; 8:20; Philippians 2:5-10).

Dear reader, are you a Christian? Would you like to be one? Here is the truth stated very simply: Hear the truth, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of your sins, confess Jesus' name before men, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:37; Romans 6:3-4). — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Preacher Must Meet People Well

In his *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* classes at David Lipscomb College Batsell Barrett Baxter gave students who were seeking to improve themselves as gospel preachers much sound advice. The counsel he gave was based on many years of preaching experience. There can be no doubt that his suggestions have helped many men become more effective in their personal ministries.



JIMMY EDWARDS

Brother Baxter stressed the qualifications of the preacher perhaps more than any other aspect dealing with preaching. In this area of qualification requirements he emphasized character, sincerity, enthusiasm, knowledge, courage, imagination, originality, health, hard work, speaking well, and vision. He gave special attention to the ability of the preacher to meet people well.

It is extremely important that the local preacher be able to meet people well. The wise preacher will use every legitimate opportunity to make friends, including those outside the church. He should make it a point to know the leaders in the community: bankers, businessmen, newspaper editors, school principals, radio people, etc. Not only should the local preacher know these people, he should render a service whenever he has opportunity.

Meeting people well needs to be accentuated because so many preachers have, in some instances, developed negative attitudes toward people. Some, in fact, have "drawn their skirts around them." They have become so independent of others they have isolated themselves. Many have become "hermit preachers." They "retire" from society by living in the solitude of an office.

Jesus met people well. He certainly was not a recluse. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give no indication whatsoever that Jesus withdrew himself

from society. The Son of God did not lead a secluded, solitary life. Of course he did drift away for periods of devotional time with God (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). Even the Son of God needed time to be alone. But, always, after receiving spiritual strength through time with his Father, Jesus went back to be with people. He mixed with them, talked with them, ate meals with them, and opened his heart to them.

The apostle Paul never was a practicing ascetic. If he had been, his ministry of evangelism and edification would have never taken place. A casual glance at the book of Acts reveals how active he was in going to various places and meeting people. Paul was interested in knowing people so he could share with them his knowledge of Christ.

Obviously each gospel preacher has different personality traits and characteristics. Some preachers are shy, bashful, reserved and timid. Others are more outgoing, friendly and responsive. This is good because churches, too, are diverse in their traits and characteristics. Preachers tend to work better with congregations whose personalities are more similar to their own. It would be a dull brotherhood if every preacher and church in the brotherhood were exactly the same! However, regardless of the preacher's personality, he must find a technique that best suits him, and go out and meet people!

Preachers must infiltrate their communities. They must get out of their offices and go where the people are. The Bible says, "These twelve Jesus sent forth" (Matthew 10:5). Sent forth where? Out into the cities, towns, villages, homes -- where the people were.

Lost people are simply not coming to our buildings today; so the church must go after them. The local gospel preacher must take the lead. If preachers just sit in their comfortable offices and never go out and meet people, the work of evangelism will never get done!

The church needs preachers who will get out into the world where the people are. When he meets his community he can share with them face to face the gospel of Christ. — 512 Gardendale Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110.

Our Duty To False Teachers

W. TERRY VARNER

Shortly after I became a Christian, I was eating in the home of a deacon following Sunday morning worship. His wife asked if the man (visiting preacher) had been corrected? The deacon replied, "The elders have talked with him. I don't know; but I know this: if he doesn't correct it he will not be back." Inquiring of what they were speaking, I was instructed that the preacher had taught some matters that were false. I was then instructed that "sound preaching," not "false teaching," is to be expected from our pulpits and classrooms. Since that conversation in the 1950's, I have been concerned with pure teaching within the church. I have challenged and, the Lord sparing my life, I will continue to challenge, false teaching -- regardless who teaches it and where it is taught. As a consequence, some of my brethren (who ought to know better) reason that I, and others who are concerned, ought to mind my (our) business. The result is that we have been labeled as "watchdogs," "legalists," "policemen," and etc. The question is: *Does the Bible teach WHO is to be concerned? and, WHAT is our duty to the false teacher?*

First, the *PREACHER is to be concerned*. He is under the solemn charge from heaven to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). WHY? Because "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4). Earlier Paul has stated, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). We are told that we need to love more and to be quiet about the teaching of others. But, true love will not allow us to be quiet, but rather it will cause us to rebuke false doctrine. Preachers are to speak "the truth in Christ" (I Timothy 2:7), "in love" (Ephesians 4:15), and "boldly" (Ephesians 6:20).

Second, the *ELDERS of the church are to be concerned*. A brief examination of the qualification of elders shows what they should do concerning false teachers and false teaching. They are to be "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9) and to "rebuke them sharply" (Titus 1:13). WHY? Paul says that the false teachers' "mouths must be stopped . . . teaching things they ought not" (Titus 1:11). While the elders are to oversee the flock, part of that responsibility involves the convicting of the false teacher or gain-

sayer. But to do so, the elders must be men of the Bible! They must know it! They are to hold "fast the faithful word" and know "sound doctrine" (Titus 1:9). This implies they are to know false teaching when they see or hear it. True, the preacher has the responsibility to be on the firing line; but let the elders take their rightful place *beside* the preacher and stand in opposition to the much false teaching that is apparent. Let the elders "rebuke them sharply" (Titus 1:13) when they teach what they ought not!

Third, the *CHURCH is to be concerned*. Paul instructed the church at Rome to "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). False teachers generally are of "smooth and fair speech" by which they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. The congregation is to (1) mark and (2) avoid them! True, the preacher and the elders have a responsibility towards false teachers; but so does the congregation. Congregations who support their preachers and elders when they oppose false teachers are handling and fulfilling their responsibility in this area. — P.O. Box 104, Marietta, Ohio 45750.

When Our Prayers Aren't Answered "Yes"

PEGGY N. CHAMPION

As a Christian — a child of God — I pray for all the good things in life, and always get what I *need*-- although that is not always what I prayed for. In some instances I get just the opposite of what I asked for; and at those times ask, "Why me, Lord? Why me?" When thinking about my "trials," I realize that when I receive my many BLESSINGS, I don't ask "Why me?" So, why question those things that are not as I ask? It is as when I was growing up and would ask permission to go somewhere: when permission was denied, I would plead for my parents to change their minds. At times my father would look at me and say, "If I had said 'Yes,' you would not ask me to change my mind; so don't ask me to change my mind when I've said, 'No'."

My husband and I have just gone through the last of six miscarriages. These babies were conceived through our love and we had wanted so much to provide life, love, and happiness for them. This last miscarriage necessitated my having a hysterectomy, ending our chances of ever having a child born to us. At first I wondered, again: "Why me?" But I feel now that with God's strength we can become better parents to the beautiful, adopted daughter we now have, and continue to seek to adopt another "special" child that God can provide for us.

I used to think that each thing that happens to us is for the best; then I realized I was misquoting that Scripture. We are told in Romans 8:28 ". . . that all things *work together* for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." This does not mean that what happened to us *was* good, but that God will make it "work together" for our good.

We are very saddened at the loss of our baby boy, but realize that God can make even this loss beneficial to us and others around us-- maybe by our helping others who have suffered similar losses. The grief that we have experienced in knowing that I cannot carry a baby is lessened by knowing that God will take care of us and that he is the provider of good. He did not cause our baby to die; he did not cause me to have a hysterectomy; but he did allow nature to take its

course and to provide for my care after the surgery. We can also accept this "final" decision more easily because of the emotional toll of six miscarriages on each of us individually and together.

We now have been given "permission" to stop trying to create another life and accept our loving Father's answer to our prayers, even though it is not precisely what we prayed for. Who knows, maybe there is already another little "special" baby out there who needs love and care instead of need for another to be created. Motherhood and fatherhood

are not the state of *generating life* or of *giving birth*, but of *nurturing* and *training* the child.

This reminds me of the beautiful sampler in our daughter's room:

Not flesh of my flesh
Nor bone of my bone;
But still miraculously my very own.
Don't forget for a single minute;
You didn't grow *under* my heart, but *in* it.
—3905 Battlefield Drive, Huntsville, Alabama
35810.

Keith A. Mosher Accepts Faculty Appointment

BY CURTIS A. CATES

Brother Keith A. Mosher, Sr., has accepted a full-time teaching position with the Memphis School of Preaching, beginning December 1, 1984. Keith and his wife, Dorothy, will continue to serve the church in Southaven, Mississippi, where they have labored for more than three years.

Brother Mosher was encouraged by a faithful wife not only to obey the gospel but also to preach the Word. She obeyed the gospel in 1965 during a campaign in Erie, Pennsylvania, and has been a great encouragement to her husband during his nearly nineteen years of preaching, twelve years full-time, including tenures at Lake Forest, Mississippi, and Gragg Avenue, Memphis. Keith and Dorothy have three children.

Not only is Keith well qualified by virtue of experience, also, he is highly qualified academically.



KEITH A. MOSHER

Having been graduated from the strong program in the Memphis School of Preaching, he has received the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from the Alabama Christian School of Religion, he is completing the Master of Arts in Religion at Harding Graduate School of Religion, and he is writing the thesis for the Master of Arts of Theology degree in the Alabama Christian School of Religion.

Brother Mosher is sound in the faith, and he is diligent in carrying the gospel to the lost. He is a staff writer for the *Bible Light*, and he publishes "Consider This" in Southaven for outreach to five thousand homes monthly. He also writes for various other brotherhood papers. His meetings, approximately four per year, have taken him to fourteen states plus to Sydney, Australia, and he has appeared on various brotherhood lectureships, including the *Spiritual Sword*, and the *Memphis School of Preaching*.

Brother Mosher is a "man of the Book," a man of kindred spirit with the aims and stance of the Memphis School of Preaching, a man of scholarly ability, and a man of courage and conviction.

— Memphis School of Preaching, 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118-9990.



Words Of 'h

(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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What About Joining Churches?

Throughout our nation many preachers are shouting, "Join the church of your choice!" "Get saved, and join the church of your choice," is a very popular doctrine of our day; but is there scriptural authority for it? One searches in vain for the Book, Chapter and Verse that teaches it!!

"But, preacher, I have heard my pastor say, 'Get saved and join the church of your choice,' many times." Yes, thousands of denominational churches offer such opportunities; but, isn't it strange that God's holy word says nothing about "joining the church of one's choice?"

We understand that Saul of Tarsus, after his conversion to Christ Jesus, tried "to join himself to the disciples;" but he was not seeking to "join the church." Rather, he wanted to associate himself with the local church in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29; Cf. Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). When Saul heard and obeyed the gospel, the Lord added him to his church (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47). Saul was not added to some denominational church, since denominationalism was non-existent in apostolic times.

We suggest that our readers consider prayerfully the following lines:

All up and down this troubled land
confusion reigns today,
As honest folk on every hand,
in doubt are heard to say:
'I can't tell which church to join, there are so many.'
To whom we offer this advice -- you never should join
any!
from sin, Then take no chances, neighbor; this race
Beware of a church you cannot find,
within the sacred pages;
Be safe, dear sinner, rest your soul
upon the Rock of Ages.
Be added to his blood-bought church;



W. A. HOLLEY

drink salvation's cup;
For every plant God planted not, it shall be rooted up.
No mourners' bench on Pentecost, the inspired Peter fitted,
But said, "Repent and be baptized," that sins may be remitted.
The Lord who saved and added those who did that day his will,
Is sure to do the same for you; for he is adding still.
Let not false teachers lead you wrong, nor close your eyes in slumber,
When Jesus said he'd build his church, 'twas not a plural number.
No "choice" of churches, friends, is found beneath the sun;
Though men have ten thousand, our Lord has but one!

---Anon.

(1) In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, ". . . Upon this rock I will build my church" (not churches); "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (not them). In apostolic times, all local churches were "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). Not once does one read of a denominational church, such as the Baptist church, the Methodist church, or any other denominational church, in all the Bible. According to the Holy Bible no one has ever "joined" the Lord's church!!

(2) In Acts 2:47, the Bible ---your Bible--- says, "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Dear reader, if you love truth, you love what this verse says. What did the Pentecostians do to be saved? Just read Acts 2:36-38, and you will see. Thus, having obeyed the Lord's commands, they were added to his church. There is not a word about "joining the church of one's choice" in all the New Testament. (If you think there is, ask your preacher to find it for you).

(3) Have you read Acts 2:36-38 lately? There is a most important question and its answer found therein. The question is: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The inspired answer is: "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." If you were to ask your preacher this same question, would he answer it in the same language used by the apostle Peter? If not, why not?? Peter said nothing about an altar of prayer! As important as prayer is, it cannot be substituted for any other command of God (Proverbs 28:9). Prayer is a grace which belongs to the child of God ---prayer is not a condition of salvation for the alien sinner (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 6:3-4).

(4) In Ephesians 4:3-6, there are seven "ones" mentioned: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. This is God's formula for that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed (John 17:20-23). This unity can be realized only in Christ (John 16:33). Religious division sows the seeds of infidelity. Spiritual unity can be had only upon the basis of the Holy Scriptures when men recognize the absolute authority thereof.

Since (1) there is but "one body," and (2) that "one body" is the church of the Lord (I Corinthians 12:13, 20, 27; Ephesians 1:22-23), then IF (3) a person joins the church of his choice, why should he not select the Lord of his choice? or the Spirit of his choice? or the God of his choice?-- It would made just as much sense! — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.


Why I Don't Teach "Universalism"

JOHN HARRIS, or
(JOHN THE EVANGELIST)

Friends, *Universalism* is the false doctrine, that everybody will be saved. I don't teach this doctrine because of the many passages of scripture that teach to the contrary. As the great brother Gus Nichols used to say, "let us take a look at a few passages." For example, in Luke 16:23 we are told that the rich man died and "in hell he lifted up his eyes."

In Revelation 21:8 the Bible tells us that sinners, including "all liars shall have their part in the lake

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

Flavil H. Nichols

Reconciled To God

We saw in last week's Editorial that no baby is born "hereditarily totally depraved," but that one's own sins alienate him from God. Each person is born 'pure as the angels' (as it were), and upon reaching the *ability to give account* of his actions ("accountability"), his own sins separate him from God (Isaiah 59:2). Once he is *able to make a response* to righteousness or sin, truth or error, good or evil, he is thenceforth responsible for the choices and decisions he makes. Our word **RESPONSIBILITY** is defined as "answerable; able to respond or answer for one's conduct and obligations," and as "having the character of a free moral agent."



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

"Age Of Accountability"

The synonyms, **RESPONSIBLE** and **ACCOUNTABLE**, are distinguished as follows: They both "mean subject to an authority which may exact redress in case of default. **RESPONSIBLE** implies such a relation between one who performs a task or duty, executes a trust, or the like, and the person or body imposing that task, duty, etc.;" while "**ACCOUNTABLE**" refers to the relation "between someone entrusted with something valuable and the person or being to whom he must account for its use." God has imposed certain duties or obligations upon accountable beings (e.g., to believe, repent, and be baptized; or to be a faithful Christian). Upon reaching that stage of development where one is answerable for his decisions, God may exact "redress" if man does not obey (e.g., he warns: "He that believeth not shall be damned" --Mark 16:16). In the Bible there is no certain age specified when one is thus capable of obeying the gospel commands.

Read Bible To Children

The congregation which heard Ezra read the book of the law of God was comprised "both of men and women, and all that could hear *with understanding*" (Nehemiah 8:2). Even "children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord" (Deuteronomy 31:13) from the reading of his word. However, this does not prove that very young children are amenable to the gospel's commands. Since a young child is not a sinner, he cannot repent of sins, and needs no remission of sins.

All Have Sinned

The Bible does clearly teach, however, that all *accountable* men and women are guilty of sin, and stand condemned before God for transgressing God's law. "There is no man that sinneth not" (I Kings 8:46). "There is not a just man upon the earth, and doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). "We have proved before, both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Saved By Blood

Guilty mankind cannot atone for his own sins. Each accountable person comes under just condemnation for his own transgressions. His first sin alienates man from God, and "without shedding of blood

is no remission" of sins (Hebrews 9:22). However, the sacrifices of the Old Testament will not --cannot-- suffice, because "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). For this cause "Jesus our Lord . . . was delivered for our offenses" (Romans 4:24-25). "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For . . . God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us For . . . when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:6, 8, 10).

The apostle Peter wrote about our Lord's death on our behalf: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). The apostle Paul wrote that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3).

Died For All

The apostle John wrote of Jesus: "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). Thus Jesus died for the sins of the whole world." Paul, another apostle, wrote that "He gave himself a ransom for all" (I Timothy 2:6). The writer of Hebrews stated this same truth in these words: "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

Not All Will Be Saved

Although Christ shed his blood for every lost man and woman on earth, not all sinners will be saved. This is true because salvation is conditional also upon the *sinner's* part. Sinful man must "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" in order to "be saved" (Acts 16:30-31) --and some will not believe. Jesus left no room for doubt, saying: "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Earlier he had declared: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24), and warned that if you "die in your sins, whither I go ye cannot come" (verse 21). To "believe" on Jesus is to have a "conviction, full of joyful trust that Jesus is the Messiah, . . . conjoined with obedience" (Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon*). The further "obedience" which he requires of alien sinners includes repentance and baptism in Jesus' name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who refuse to repent, will not be saved --for Jesus said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). And those today who refuse to be baptized are like those who refused to be immersed under John's baptism --"they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized . . ." (Luke 7:29-30). Of such, hear Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

It is thus abundantly clear that those who do not obey the gospel remain in an unsaved state or condition. Peter wrote, "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:17). To this question the answer is supplied by the Holy Spirit, who guided Paul to write that at his second coming Christ will take "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 Thessalonians

Continued on page 4

Preaching Without Illustration

In an interview with a prominent author, Rebecca Manley Pippert, one sentence is unforgettable: "One problem with evangelism is that when the teaching of Christ is heard, no illustration of Christ is seen; therefore the impact is superficial."



ANCIL JENKINS

We know this when it comes to preaching. It is so much easier to listen to a sermon with a few good illustrations than one that is without them. Often, we remember an illustration long after the sermon is over.

This is quite evident in the preaching of Jesus. So often he would use an object or event to illustrate what he was teaching. To hear mentioned "the lilies of the field," or "the sower going forth to sow," is to be reminded of the teaching of Jesus.

How do WE illustrate the gospel? Our lives should show what Christ has done with us. No greater means of illustration is possible. Paul spoke of himself as "the chief of sinners" who had obtained mercy. He called his conversion as an example or pattern for all men (I Timothy 1:15-16).

This is the reason the gospel will never be adequately spread by the media. Radio, TV, and the printed page can attract attention, but lack the impact of a life that can be seen. The media, without the illustration of a godly life can have little impact. The world sees a credibility gap between what the Bible teaches and what the members of the church do.

- "I'd rather see a sermon,
than hear one any day.
- I'd rather one would walk with me
than merely tell the way.
- For the eye is a better pupil
and more willing than the ear.
- Fine counsel is confusing,
but example is always clear.

Edgar A. Guest
425 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.

Why I Don't Teach "Universalism"

Continued from page 1

that burneth with fire and brimstone." In James 3:14 James says, "lie not against the truth."

In Psalms 9:17 David lets us know that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all nations that forget God." Matthew 27:5 says that "Judas went out and hanged himself;" in other words he committed suicide. Beside Samson, there are several other cases of suicide in the Old Testament: King Saul and his armor-bearer (I Samuel 31:4-6); Ahithophel (II Samuel 17:23); and Zimri (I Kings 16:18).

All who die unbelievers, die lost (John 8:21; Revelation 21:8). "Hearers only" die lost (James 1:22; Matthew 7:21, 24-26; Luke 6:46).

You may not know it, Friends, but the devil has "children" (I John 3:10). Such children of the devil are not "children of God" (Romans 9:8).

The ungodly and unrighteous die lost, for Romans 1:18 tells us that God is "against" all ungodliness

and unrighteousness of men. I John 5:17 says that "all unrighteousness is sin." I Corinthians 6:9 says that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Psalms 1:5 tells us that "the ungodly shall not stand in the day of judgment." Revelation 6:17 asks: "Who shall be able to stand?"

Users of the commandments and doctrines of men will not be saved (Colossians 2:22; Matthew 15:9). Followers of blind leaders are lost (Matthew 15:14). The person who adds to God's word dies lost (Proverbs 30:6). Unbelievers are "condemned already" (John 3:18; Mark 16:16). All the disobedient are lost (Hebrews 2:2; Ephesians 2:2). All who die out of Christ are lost (Revelation 14:13). They are without hope (Ephesians 2:12).

The man who has not the spirit of Christ is lost (Romans 8:9). The person who dies believing a lie dies lost (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). II Thessalonians

2:13 says to be saved, we must "believe" the truth. The person who knows to do good and does it not, dies a lost soul (James 4:17). Luke 12:47 tells us that he will be beaten with many stripes. He who dies unprepared and unready, dies lost (Amos 4:12; Matthew 25:10). The person who dies without obeying the gospel, dies lost (II Thessalonians 1:8-9). II Corinthians 4:3 says that "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

Romans 10:6 tells us that "they have not all obeyed the gospel." Friends, no man can obey the gospel until he hears and believes it (Acts 15:7); until he repents of his sins, confesses Christ, and is buried in baptism for the remission of sins, according to Acts 2:38. When he does this, the Lord will add him to the church that he was speaking about in Matthew 16:18, which he called, "my church." — Huntsville, AL 35810.

Giving God Our Best

This subject suggests something most people have never really tried -- giving God our best. Giving God our best requires making service to God primary in our lives. With many of us religion is just a sideline. There is no better example in the Scriptures of one who gave God his best than Abraham (Genesis 22). Abraham demonstrated great faith in God on other occasions; but this was the most severe test of whether he would give God his best. Let us examine this test.



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

I. GOD CALLED FOR ABRAHAM'S BEST. Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac his only son by Sarah, through whom all of God's promises to Abraham were to be fulfilled. There were many difficulties connected with this command. First, God had never before required a human sacrifice, although it was a common practice among heathen peoples (Psalms 106:37,38). Second, it was opposed to the natural feelings of humanity. It involved not only shedding the blood of a man's son, but that of a favorite son. It had the appearance of being extremely inhumane. Third, it was a violation of the divine law previously set forth (Genesis 9:6). Abraham must have been thinking: "Is God now requiring me to violate his own law?" Fourth, Abraham was not called upon to offer his second best, Ishmael, but his best and his dearest. From the standpoint of human reason, the command violated all of Abraham's paternal and natural feelings.

In spite of the cost, Abraham gave God his best. It cost him his domestic comfort. Think how Sarah, Isaac's mother, may have reacted to God's command. Consider the conflict of soul that must have characterized Abraham. It caused Abraham to consider his hopes regarding his future posterity as God had promised him. Isaac was the long-promised seed. But there was no hesitation on Abraham's part, no making excuses or alibis. He arose early and entered upon that awful ordeal. But when he gave God his best, he began to receive God's best: God made a greater covenant of blessing with him (Genesis 22:15-18), and he let Abraham live for the whole world through Christ. He received children as numberless as the stars (Galatians 3:29).

II. GOD CALLS FOR OUR BEST. He calls for the

best of our love (Matthew 22:35-40). Nothing else is allowed to be first in our affections. God calls for the best of our gifts (Leviticus 22:22; 27:30-33; Malachi 1:7-14). He will not accept the crumbs and leftovers following the gratification of every selfish lust possible. God calls for the best of our labors -- seeking his kingdom and his righteousness must have priority in our lives (Matthew 6:33; 10:37, 38; John 6:27). He also calls for the best of our loyalty (Luke 9:23-26, 57-62). Our allegiance to him must take precedence over everything else.

CONCLUSION: When we give God our best, we

will receive God's best, also. He gave his best to redeem us (John 3:16). Most professing Christians have never received God's best, because they never have given God their best. If we place all on God's altar, God will give us his best -- the blood of Christ, remission of sins, receive us as his children, all spiritual blessings, and finally, heaven! Our obedience must be as prompt, deliberate, and persevering as was Abraham's. But we will not give our best until we give ourselves (II Corinthians 8:5; Romans 12:1).

ARE YOU GIVING GOD YOUR BEST?

—1613 19th Ave. S.W., Decatur, AL 35601.

Do You Speak The Language Of The Bible?

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Peter 4:11).

We know that the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek; but in this article, we have no reference to those languages. Actually, most of our readers who see these pages cannot read Hebrew or Greek. What we have reference to is your Bible -- the Bible you now have in your home -- the Bible that you now reverence and respect.

A safe rule says we should call Bible things by Bible names, and do Bible things in Bible ways. Do you not agree that this would be a safe rule to follow? (See Philippians 3:15-16).

Those who teach doctrines that differ from what is taught in the Holy Bible are false teachers. Will you please pay close attention the following quotation: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (I Timothy 6:3-5). Have these

words made a favorable impression on your heart?

Another passage which deserves your most careful consideration is: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

Again, in the light of these above quoted scriptures, in matters of religion, "Do you speak the language of the Bible?" when you describe your religious actions? Do you use the following quotations?--

(1) "The sinner must get religion in order to be saved." Just where is the passage that so teaches? Have you ever read such a passage? If your answer is "yes," please cite book, chapter and verse. And, besides, Biblical religion is not a religion that one "gets," but a religion that one *does*. James gives us the correct definition of true religion: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). There are two aspects of "Pure and undefiled religion" mentioned here: (1) One's duty toward widows and orphans, and (2) one's duty to "keep himself unspotted from the world." These duties one must *do* -- not *get*.

(2) "One need not be baptized, because baptism is a non-essential command." Is the foregoing quotation found in your Bible? Thousands of preachers



W. A. HOLLEY

Continued on page 4

How Men Reject God's Holiness

Only God is holy in the absolute sense (Revelation 15:4), yet God wants us to be like him to the fullest of our ability: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (or 'living,' ASV); because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16). This is the new life we begin as a child of God. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). We are to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).



JOE E. GALLOWAY

All sin is against the very nature of God! Some, such as our secret sin, denies his *omniscience*. Sometimes we deny God's *providence* by lack of faith and trust. We may oppose his *wisdom* by neglecting or censuring God's instructions in his word. We may sin against his *power* by trusting our own thinking and strength more than God's way, or by fearing what men may think, say, or do so much that we fail to trust God's power by obeying him. We sin against God's *truth* by distrusting his promises and ways we may sin against others of his attributes. Still, every sin we commit is also against God's holiness!

1. God's holiness is rejected in idolatry. Malachi (2:11) accuses Judah of committing abomination by marrying "the daughter of a strange god," and he says: "Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord" (Emphasis to scriptures added, J.E.G.). An idolater refuses to accept God as he is, absolutely good and holy; so he creates a god as he wishes him to be. Thus, pagan idolatry ascribed to their idols their own sensual vices. Today we may place material things ahead of God in our lives, while still claiming to faithfully serve the one true God. However, in deciding that God approves of this course of action we have done the same in principle as the pagan idolater -- in our minds we have made God over to our preferences. So, the Bible also labels this "idolatry" (see Ephesians 5:4).

2. We violate God's holiness when we blame our sins on God. Adam did this when he said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12). Although David later repented (Psalms 51:4), he at first explained away his murder of Uriah by saying, "The sword devoureth one as well as another" (II Samuel 11:25), implying that the natural order of things as God's creation functioned had brought this about. Some today justify (?) such sins as fornication, uncontrolled temper, and unbridled lust by saying, "I can't help it; God made me this way."

3. We oppose God's holiness by misusing his word to justify sin. How many have tried to justify lying by referring to Rahab's lying in Joshua 2:4, 5? or have tried to justify adultery by citing David's illicit affair with Bathsheba? --implying in both instances that God approved these sins? Think how Christ's absolute goodness and holiness is blasphemed when some today accuse him of turning loose 100-200 gallons of intoxicating wine at Cana's wedding feast (John 2), or of being a drunkard (on their twisted explanation of Matthew 11:19). Some in Paul's day argued for continuing in sin to cause God's grace to abound (Romans 6:1)! Some among us today have been known to justify (?) false doctrine and actions because "we are under the covenant of grace;" but Paul said "God forbid"

to this idea as well (Romans 6:15). May we never accuse God of sanctioning wrong doing or false teaching in any manner!

4. Men deny God's holiness when they pray for that which is wicked, or that which is not of real value. One could hardly imagine a thief's praying for success in a planned robbery! But are we possibly guilty of the same violation of the holy use of prayer if we pray for material wealth? or pray to win in some ball game? Christ's model prayer begins with the reminder, "Hallowed (or 'be made holy,' J.E.G.) be thy name" and later says "thy will be done" (Matthew 6:9, 10). God's holiness and will should govern all that we ask in prayer.

5. God's holiness is opposed when men despise or scoff at goodness and holiness in God's people. We have all heard such statements as: "He's such a prude that you'd better not tell that dirty joke to him" or, "Don't tell her" (some "juicy" gossip). She wouldn't appreciate your talking about them" or, "All he thinks about is sound doctrine!" If we make fun of those who are doing their best to stand firm for God's truth or to live as God would have

them live, are we not actually making fun of God's holiness?

6. We reject God's holiness if we charge his law with too much rigidity. Some do this by saying the Bible is too narrow in teaching one church, one way of salvation, or one kind of music in worship. We may do the same thing by complaining that God's word is too strict on its instruction regarding morals, attendance, giving, or church discipline.

7. We despise God's holiness by despising his holy things. He told Israel, "Thou hast despised my holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths" (Ezekiel 22:8) and said, "Her priests . . . have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane" (Ezekiel 22:26). We need today to recognize and honor the vast difference between the Bible and human thought; between the Lord's church and human organizations; between what is right and good versus that which is sinful.

"The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

— 204 Creek Trail, Columbia, TN 38401.

Reconciled To God

Continued from page 2

1:7-9).

Sad indeed it is that, although Christ died for all mankind, some will not be saved. We read, "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15). Notice these truths: (1) Christ died for him. (2) But he could be "destroyed." These same facts stand out in I Corinthians 8:11: "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died." It is clear (1) that Christ died for him; but (2) he can "perish."

Reconciled "In" Christ

All sinners can be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. But this reconciliation of man to God is "IN" --not out of-- Jesus Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the

ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:17-20).

The New Testament reveals one, and only one, way to get "into" Christ. Penitent believers are "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3). Again we read, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). Since God is "in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:19), only those who are "baptized into Jesus Christ" are thus reconciled to God.

Do You Speak The Language Of The Bible?

Continued from page 3

have deceived millions of hearts, causing them to think that one need not be baptized to be saved. How did Jesus state the matter? We quote: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). How did Peter, a Spirit-filled preacher, state the matter? "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:37-38). Now, dear reader, would you conclude from these verses that baptism is a non-essential command? Be honest!

(3) "You should join the church of your choice," is suggested by some. Such language is never found upon the pages of Holy Writ. It is possible to read where the Lord added those who should be saved to his church (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47). Thus, according to the teaching of your Bible no one ever joined any church. The truth is: There is but one true church (Ephesians 4:4-6). Just as there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit; there is but one body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; I Corinthians 12:13, 20, 27).

(4) "Once in grace, always in grace," is a very popular doctrine; but it is false. Such language and such teaching is never found in the Holy Bible. One can read of those who "believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away;" of those who were to "take heed lest ye fall;" and of Paul who said that he kept his body under subjection lest he should be "a castaway" (Luke 8:13; I Corinthians 10:12; 9:27).

(5) "Salvation is by faith only," is an assertion

often made by many religious leaders; but does your Bible teach this doctrine? The answer is: No! We are saved by grace through faith, but not by "faith only" (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:24). "What? Why, I have heard my preacher quote this Scripture many times!" Yes, I know, but just ask him to show it to you, and then read it for yourself. The sinner is saved by faith when he hears and obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8-9).

(6) "A person can be saved out of the church just as well as he can be saved in it." Have you ever used such language? Does the Bible use it? Remember, we are to "speak as the oracles of God." We challenge you to ask your preacher where such a verse is found. Don't be surprised when he can't find it! Acts 2:36-38, 47 teaches that the Lord adds the saved to the church. In apostolic times there were no saved out of the church!

(7) "The miracle of conversion" is a very popular doctrine today. Almost all denominational preachers use it! Billy Graham uses it! But conversion is not a miracle, unless God is a respecter of persons. John 3:3,5 tells of a birth of "water and the Spirit," but when is one born again? The answer is simple: When one hears, believes, repents and is baptized in Jesus' name for remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4). Verily, if God worked a miracle to save one sinner, he would be under obligation to save all sinners (Acts 10:34-35). Wait not for a miracle; believe and obey the truth. — P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



WORDS OF TRUTH

(USPS 691-760)

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

— Acts 26:25

"My Kingdom Is Not Of This World"

(NO. 1)

Security is not found in material things. Social security is very important in our society. We strive toward the permanence of things. However, we must realize all could change before the day has past.

Trust in material things hinders spirituality. Accumulation of wealth many times causes one to think only in terms of this life. In the parable of the rich man, we see the folly of trusting in riches. That self-centered individual used the personal pronoun



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

"I" six times and another pronoun in the first person ("my") five times in three verses! He wanted to tear down his barns and build greater ones to store his bumper crop. He wanted to say to his soul, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry. 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?" (Luke 12:16-20). Some things which threaten our social security are depressions, sickness, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.

The Christian uses material things to serve spiritual purposes. His physical body is to be used to serve God. Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). The church uses a material building in which to worship (Acts 20:9).

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world . . ." (John 18:36). We shall see the kingdom of Jesus is a spiritual kingdom. Before Pilate, the Jews sought to change the charge against Jesus from blasphemy (of which they accused him before the court of the Jews) to treason against the Roman Caesar before the Roman court. But the kingdom of Jesus was not an effort against the Roman government.

The word "world" is used in at least three senses in the Bible. (1) The word "world" often refers to the habitable earth. Moses wrote: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the WORLD, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psalms 90:1-2).

(2) Another use of the word "world" speaks of the evil of the universe: John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:15-17). Though the Lord's kingdom consists of people on the earth, it is

not of the evil world. This is what the Lord was speaking, when he said "My kingdom is not of this world."

(3) John made another use of the word "world" when he said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Here the word "world" includes all humanity. Jesus Christ gave his life's blood so all mankind may have the opportunity to be saved.

He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

(To be continued)

—501 Pine St., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

The Source Of Discontent

YARBROUGH LEIGH

We live in a world of discontented persons. Most do not even expect things to turn out favorably. This pessimism is expressed in unconscious ways. For instance: when was the last time someone gave you directions to some site a bit farther down the road by telling you that "it will be on your right just past the fifth GREEN light?" Without fail, they will say "red" light --or, at best, "stop" light! Most agree with that nebulous 'Murphy's Law' which states that, "If anything can go wrong, it will; and at the most inconvenient time." I love the one that goes: "Traffic always moves faster in the other lane, and changing lanes does not change the law."

There are a proverbial 'trillion things' that can bring on discontent and make us unhappy. It can be an imagined slight or discourtesy from a friend or loved one, a flat tire or a dead battery, a fender-bender, a traffic ticket, a dull or uninteresting job, an unpleasant working environment, a severe disappointment in almost any area of life, illness (either in our own person or in that of a friend or loved one), the death of someone close to us, the severe threat of a great loss (whether of economic or emotional nature), loneliness, a feeling of diminished personal

worth or esteem, a sense of failure -- of being a 'loser,' boredom, and on-and-on the list might be extended.

But, are such things the real source of discontentment? Beyond question, such things are always unwelcome; but, are they of such nature as to justify the discontentment we feel, usually, when they do come upon us?

Gentle Reader, I give it as my considered opinion that such things as these are NOT all the real source of most discontentment that we human beings experience. And how thankful we should be that this is the case. If human discontentment were dependent upon favorable circumstances, few of us could ever be truly contented; and further, such contentment as we might attain from time to time would be short-lived, indeed.

Discontentment does not stem from unfavorable circumstances, or events that come upon us from the outside of our own being. Not the events that come upon us, nor the circumstances that surround us, but rather, our inward reaction to these things is



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 Source Of Discontent

Continued from page 1

the source of discontentment! In most instances, I am totally unable to control the things that may come upon me --even the external circumstances of my life; but I can control my inward spirit and my reaction to these things!

The child of God has a dual weapon with which to "quench [these] fiery darts of Satan," namely: the double weapon of THE THANKSGIVING OF FAITH! Do I have a job? If so, let me thank God rather than complain that it isn't the job I prefer --and let me glorify God in the job I have. Let me "count my blessings" daily, and thank God, rather than complain of the things in my life which are not according to my preferences.

No person can be both *thankful* and *discontent* at the same time. No person can make the best of his or her situation with THANKSGIVING, and be discontented at the same time. Let me "rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make my requests known unto God," and God's peace will follow!

—Shades Mountain Church of Christ, 959 Alford Avenue, P.O. Box 26156, Birmingham, AL 35226.

ALABAMA CHRISTIAN FULLY ACCREDITED

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Word was received December 11 that on that date the Southern Association of Colleges awarded Alabama Christian College full accreditation at Level II --which means as a Senior College. Her accreditation at Level I (as a Junior College) was reaffirmed, which applies to the extensions conducted in Huntsville, Florence, Birmingham, and Mobile areas. Including those satellites, Alabama Christian's enrollment this fall is 1,516 --which is up 12.1 percent above last year. Some of our Christian schools show a decline this year, some as much as 17.2 percent and 29.2 percent decreases. Only two exceeded ACC's rate of increase: Great Lakes Christian (Beamsville, Ontario) with +18.4 percent, and Lubbock (Texas) Christian with +12.4 percent increases. Why not encourage your youth to attend Alabama Christian College?

—Editor

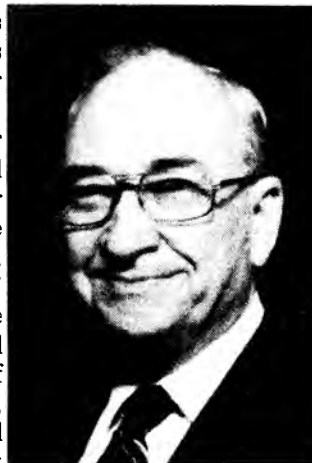


The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Fellowship In Christ

Our recent editorials have shown that one's own sins alienate or separate him from God. Isaiah wrote: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), Jesus Christ died for all men. If this were not true, the command for "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30) would be meaningless.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Salvation Is Conditional

However, not all men will be saved, despite the fact that "he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). This is true because man's salvation is conditional on the human side, as well as on the divine. God imposed certain stipulated terms upon which he offers salvation: and some will not meet God's terms. He demands faith in Christ (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6), and some will not believe. Of such Jesus said: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Jesus saves only those who "obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). He inquired, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Gospel preachers, and our brethren in general, concede that through God's GRACE, the blood of Jesus Christ saves those who by faith will repent and be baptized (upon a confession of Christ) for (unto) the remission of sins (Ephesians 2:8-10; I John 2:2; Acts 16:30-31; 8:36-39; 2:38; 22:16). No man on earth has any Bible authority to promise salvation to one on fewer terms than these. Nor has any man on earth any right to add to God's word, requiring more than the Bible demands one to do.

Some Will Not Be Saved

Admittedly, some who believed on Jesus while he was here on earth would not confess him (John 12:43). Some who heard John the immerser, "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30). And some who say they now "believe" on Jesus Christ refuse to be baptized "in his name," or by his authority (Acts 2:38; 10:47-48). The "faith" professed by some leaves them unwilling to repent at his command (Acts 2:38), and therefore leaves them unsaved (Luke 13:3). Also, we sadly admit there are some who begin to obey Christ, but then cease to *hear* and *follow* him as their shepherd (John 10:27-28) and thus forfeit the promise of eternal life.

Salvation and Church Membership

Upon one's obedience to the gospel of Christ, "The

Lord add[s] to the church daily such as should be saved," just as he did on Pentecost day (Acts 2:47). To deny this would represent the Lord as a "respector of persons" --which he is not (Acts 10:34). Since "there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11), we can be sure that the very day one is saved, he is added to the same church to which the Pentecostians were added. The exact same process by which one is saved, is the same process by which he becomes a member of the church. In being baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16), he also is simultaneously "baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13) --the church of our Lord.

The idea that one can be saved without being a member of the New Testament church reveals an unscriptural concept of what the Lord's church is. The Bible church is that body of baptized believers in Christ, over whom Christ reigns as head, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells. From the Greek word EKKLESSIA, the word "church" means "called out." By the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:14) man is called out of sin, to follow Christ. God wants him to come out of the "sinning business" --and stay out of it! These only are saved; and these also constitute what Christ called "my church" (Matthew 16:18).

Fellowship

Such also are privileged to have "fellowship" both with Deity and with one another. "Fellowship" (from the Greek KOINONIA) means joint participation, communion, association, or partnership. Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon* further defines the word: "2. intercourse, fellowship, intimacy . . . the fellowship which unites Christians . . . the fellowship of Christians with God and Christ . . . consists in the fact that Christians are partakers in common of the same mind as God and Christ, and of the blessings arising therefrom . . ." This Greek word is sometimes translated "collection" when it refers to a contribution.

The beloved apostle John wrote: ". . . and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). We share the mind of God and of Christ (Philippians 2:5). To Christians the apostle Paul wrote: ". . . ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Corinthians 1:9). Our wonderful Savior promised: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Being "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4), we are said to have also the "communion of the Holy Ghost" (II Corinthians 13:14); and saints were urged to "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

In the words of the old song, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," we sing:
What a fellowship! What a joy divine!
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
What a blessedness! What a peace is mine!
Leaning on the everlasting arms!

SEASON'S GREETINGS

We wish for each of our readers a joyous holiday. May you have all the righteous pleasures your hearts can contain, and a New Year full of health, happiness, and good success.

— Flavil H. Nichols and all who are connected with WORDS OF TRUTH.



Powerless Preaching

People were amazed at Jesus' preaching, "for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29). Paul's preaching was "of power and love and discipline" (II Timothy 1:7). While his speech and "preaching were not in persuasive words of (human) wisdom," there was a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Corinthians 2:3-4). So



JOHN WADDEY

powerful was the preaching of the apostles that the foundations of Judaism were shaken (Acts 4:16-18). Gentiles protested that they had "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

What Was the Source of Their Power?

The power of their preaching did not rest on large numbers, social standing, worldly education, material wealth, or political clout. In fact they were deficient in all of these. In the eyes of their contemporaries "they were unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). They were viewed as "a sect" "everywhere . . . spoken against" (Acts 28:22). The fact is, they were weak in all the areas the worldly mind would see as essential to success. Yet God's power was "made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9).

The source of their great power was in the gospel they preached. "It is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Paul "determined not to know anything (in his preaching) save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). With the gospel, they had the power of truth to oppose error (John 8:32). They had the sharp two-edged sword of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). The all-powerful Jesus was with them as they preached his gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). Like a mighty tidal wave they were invincible; nothing could stop them.

Powerful Preaching of Our Predecessors

Our forefathers in the move to restore original Christianity found this power, and harnessed it in their preaching. Satan was defeated on every hand. Sinners surrendered to their Lord. False teachers gave way before the assault. Multitudes were saved, churches were planted, the cause grew and prospered.

A New Approach

In our day a generation has arisen that went to a different school. They have imbibed a different spirit. A new way has been found to preach to modern sinners. We hear them on the radio, presenting a beautifully-worded message with *no gospel*. They quote no scripture, they make no mention of God's will for man. Christ and his shed blood are omitted as are his church and his plan of salvation.

Their Faulty Assumptions

- 1) They assume that the old Jerusalem gospel will not attract modern man.
- 2) They assume that words from the Bible will not be heard, understood and accepted.
- 3) They assume that sinners would rather hear the speaker's ideas or quotes of some notable theologian or philosopher than God's word.
- 4) They assume that they can be faithful preachers of God even though they omit most, sometimes all, of God's own message.
- 5) They assume that converts they make will automatically learn and accept the Lord's true doctrine and church once they are recruited by their own non-Biblical approach.

Tragically, these "non-gospel" preachers are wrong on all counts. It is tragic for the lost souls who desperately need to hear the gospel (Mark 16:15-16); tragic for the preachers who have failed to speak his

word faithfully (Jeremiah 23:68); tragic for the church that supports such preaching and gets little or nothing in return for it.

Is it too much to expect gospel preachers to preach the *gospel*? Is it unreasonable that the church of the New Testament present the message of the New Testament to a lost world?

Observant brethren know that liberal denominational churches have generally deleted God's word from their message over the last 40 years. Their faith is dead, their numbers are shrinking. Their missionary forces are drying up, their seminaries are closing. Why should we follow them down the

broad road that leads to destruction?

May all who would speak for Christ "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). May every elder insist that those who occupy the pulpit of their congregation be "men of the Book" who are not ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16) and who preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

When God's word is exalted, Christ is glorified, souls are saved, the church is edified and increased. To leave Scripture out of our message is to preach a powerless gospel! Satan is not threatened by such a message. — 6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921.

The Secret Things

The quest for knowledge, truth, and understanding in any field of inquiry is a noble venture when pursued with the right purpose and motive, and with a solemn recognition that there are limits and bounds beyond which we cannot reach. Astounding progress is being made in many fields. Facts and knowledge are being accumulated at rates far exceeding the average person's ability to ingest, digest, and utilize in his daily life. Almost on a daily basis we are caused to marvel at the great accomplishments in science and technology; and that which seemed impossible in time past has now become the norm. What an exciting day and time for the inquisitive mind. Many of life's secrets and mysteries are now being made known, and who but God can know what the future holds in store?



ROY FULLER

Yet, with all of mankind's total combined progress, past, present, and future, we will never exceed God's appointed bounds. There are limits; and we will never approach the knowledge of the omniscient God who is the ultimate source of all that exists. The Bible says: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). There are some important principles of spiritual application which we need to consider in these words of scripture.

First: There are things made known and things held "secret" by our God. We would do well to concentrate on that which is revealed, and be content to leave the secret things with God.

Second: That which is revealed is for us and our descendants and should be passed on from generation to generation. This is our solemn obligation.

Third: That which is revealed in the New Testament is God's will for mankind today, and is to be obeyed in its fullness by every person of every nation until the appearing of our Lord and Savior (Matthew 28:18-20).

Fourth: We need to understand that God's revelation is complete, both for this life, and to prepare us for the eternal life to come. Peter said: "According as his divine power hath given unto us ALL things that pertain unto live and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter

1:3-4)'.
Finally. Let us leave the secret things, seek that which is revealed, obey it in full submission, and be content with the blessings and promises of God for those who trust and obey. In the words of Solomon: "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). AMEN. — Rt. 4 Box 479, Elba, AL 36323.

IMMEDIATE OPENING FOR ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Due to the resignation of brother Russ Crosswhite, we are looking for another minister to work with Flavil Nichols and us at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501. A resume' and a tape recording of a sermon should be mailed to the above address by anyone interested.

—The Elders.

Tapes On Humanism Available

VICTOR M. ESKEW

A recent lectureship was conducted on the Itawamba Junior College campus in Fulton, Mississippi. The subject which was examined was "Humanism." The following is a list of the speakers and topics which were discussed: James Boyd, "Humanism, What Is It?"; Robert R. Taylor, Jr., "Humanism, Its Effects On Our Homes;" J. Noel Merideth, "Humanism, Its Effects On Our Schools;" Russel Artist, "Humanism and Evolution Are Counterparts;" Bobby Duncan, "Humanism Seeks Our Young People;" and Curtis Cates, "Humanism, Its Threat To Christianity."

Each night two speakers presented their lessons. There was also a question and answer session following each night's presentations. This was recorded on a separate tape. Thus, there is a total of four tapes on this topic. These tapes may be purchased from the Fulton church of Christ. *The entire set is \$4.00.* Please send all orders to: Fulton church of Christ, P.O. Box 251, Fulton, MS 38843.

We (Watchmen Unto Israel) Are Concerned

"You don't care about souls; you just want to win arguments." "You're more concerned about doctrine than people. *Jesus* wasn't that way." "You are so unloving! Why are you always bringing up controversy, rather than comforting people as you should?" "Why don't you just 'preach Jesus' and let the Lord take care of the rest?" "I don't think we need 'brotherhood watchdogs.'"



PHIL DAVIS

These are only samples of unrealistic assessments and expectations often born of emotions overriding reason and good sense. While Jesus truly was a "people person" he was also a "man of the book" who never allowed some pseudo-sympathy to overrule his knowledge that only *truth* taught, believed, and obeyed can make men free from that which enslaves them (John 8:32; Hebrews 5:8f). Certainly, those people who are arguing for argument's sake need to correct their motives and repent of their sinful attitudes (Philippians 1:15ff; I Corinthians 13:1-6). But emphasis upon fidelity to the *truth* is not a sign of an uncaring spirit.

It disturbs me to be accused of being unconcerned. Christians *must* be concerned, as this is the very essence of godly love (*agape*). We must learn to let our concern manifest itself in life. James writes that we are to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). John reminds us of the hollowness of loving in word and tongue rather than in deed and truth (I John 3:18). Our love for one another is to grow out of our recognition of the concern God has for us, and the reciprocal feelings such engenders (I John 4:11). Final judgment of our lives will include consideration of our attitudes and motivation, in addition to the actions we perform.

This concern "in deed and in truth" finds expression in the sort of preaching we undertake to communicate to any possible hearers. Our concern is not singularly directed toward the one who sits as auditor, but for the *truth* as well. A man's attitude toward the truth and his treatment of it are crucial to the entire undertaking. There is the motivation; but there is also the consequence.

Scriptural preaching properly balances among the factors Paul described to Timothy (II Timothy 4:1-4). There is *reproof*, a presentation or reiteration of a pertinent truth; *rebuke*, the correction of some error by the standard of truth; and *exhortation*, an encouragement to think and to act in holiness and faithfulness (in accordance with truth) as befits a citizen of the holy kingdom (Hebrews 12:14; Ephesians 4:1). Letting any of these factors become disproportionate to the prescribed "balanced diet" can result in the "spiritual malnutrition" of those who are trying to gain nourishment thereby.

There is an eminently important and proper place for the warning of people regarding matters vital to their well-being. And it does not belie, but rather proclaims *our concern* when we so speak. Paul preached in such a way that his listeners would be "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." (Ephesians 4:14). His message was no mild aphorism or homily which merely calmed jangled nerves, but an exposition of the goal of the Christian and of the barriers to one's reaching that target. God's spokesman is to be a "watchman unto Israel" (Ezekiel 33:1-9). Whether of good or bad tidings, his charge is to report faithfully that which is needed-- the word of God. The eternal destinies of both his listeners and himself could be

determined by his efforts. Though some may deny his true concern, he must speak the words of the Lord (Galatians 4:16).

Those who try by dogged efforts to be a "watchman unto Israel" (Ezekiel 33:1-9), are frequently charged with "hatefulness" or "unconcern" by those who do not have a taste for the healing waters of *truth*, undiluted with some pollution. Still our love and interest are shown in what we preach. Consider the following concerns.

We are concerned that billions of people are unaware of Christ and ignorant of his word, or reject it to their own destruction. It is right to state the words of Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Whether that man be an unbeliever due to his Buddhism, his Hinduism, his denominationalism or his stubborn self-will, the words of the apostle still state that "the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now *commandeth all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30). We must be concerned to stress and to press the essentiality of a right relationship to God, in whatever God-authorized way works.

We are concerned that interest is so hard to arouse in those audiences which "listen" but never "hear," or even in those who will not give a hearing. It seems that most are pleased to live their lives in an inferior fashion, disinterested in spiritual values of any profound nature (Romans 8:5-8). Sometimes our eagerness to awaken church and world may "oversell" our message; but this is *not* due to a lack of solicitude (II Corinthians 5:11). If we are to be faulted, let it be for *trying too hard* to "save a soul" from the "error of his way" (James 5:20).

We are concerned that some want *comfort* at the expense of awareness. Much like the fabled ostrich, head in the sand, they say: "I don't keep up with issues or controversy. I'm too busy doing the Lord's work." However much we may wish it not to be so, to ignore a problem is certain to make one prey to its death trap. Concern demands that we try to correct

the vision of the intentional myopic.

We are concerned that militant Islam, Hinduism, communism, denominationalism, Catholicism, cultism, and hedonism (the list could well go on) are dominating and subduing so much of humankind. Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Iran, Iraq, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, the United States, and more are deluged with the cacophony [discord] of heterodoxy and contradiction, of tyranny and subversion, of promised freedom and delivered death.

The Lord's people now collide face to face with challenges and dangers unequalled since the days of Imperial Rome. If the actuality is not yet apparent, the stage of potentiality is set for the lifting of the curtain. There well may come a time when we will wish that we had advanced the Savior's cause in a masterful offensive, rather than to have walked in stocking feet, hoping not to awaken what we *think* to be our sleeping foe. The attempted avoidance of the conflict is the assurance of defeat (II Timothy 3:1ff; 4:1-8). The evidence is all around that "detente with the devil" does not work. Gambling, lotteries, liquor, tobacco, drugs, crime, atheistic take-overs of education, of government, of religion; illegitimate demands by sexual perverts and deviants, and advocates of purported "rights" (which are no rights, and are not right) can not be waved aside with the dismissing hand as mere incidentals in an otherwise "pretty good" world. We can and do "love" the sinners; but we must fight and unalterably oppose their evil with whatever power we have, for the sakes of our God, our families, ourselves and self-respect, and for our future.

We are concerned that errorists are permitted and believed. The moral fiber of the world, and sadly enough, of the church (or some therein) is hardly higher than had Christ's advent never been. It is true that cultures which have been touched by even the corrupted forms of Christianity have taken on a greater civility; but "civilized" sin often shows itself to be treachery of the bitterest sort.

—3800 S. Woodward, Oklahoma City, OK 73119.

Dying Like A Fool

"Should Abner die as a fool dies?" (II Samuel 3:33).

These are the words of David for a respected adversary. Abner was tricked and cruelly murdered by Joab. Such teachery and lack of honor was almost more than David could take. To die under these circumstances was to die like a fool.

What does it mean today to die like a fool? It can mean to live and die without seeing the end will come. Some blissfully go through life never realizing they will die. It has often been said, "The old *will* die, the young *may* die." Only a fool will not look around and see that death comes to all (Hebrews 9:27).

The fool thinks satisfaction can be found in material things. How many are deluded into thinking that if one gains enough goods, or enough money, or the one object that carries the right trademark, he will be "satisfied?" Jesus told of a man who thought he had enough to live on for the rest of his life. He anticipated enjoying all the things he had laid up. Yet God called the man a "fool," and the Greek construction means God *repeatedly* called him a fool



ANCIL JENKINS

(Luke 12:20).

A fool is one who waits to make preparation. Knowing death is coming, he wants to be prepared; but puts it off. Many insurance salesmen can tell of clients who promised to buy more insurance, postponed it, and died without sufficient insurance. This is foolish; but not as foolish as one who puts off *spiritual* preparation. Now is the time to prepare. There is no time or place in the grave (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

A king once gave his scepter to his jester, directing him to give it to the biggest fool he could find. The jester traveled over the kingdom. Upon returning, he found the king on his deathbed. He asked the king, "Have you prepared for death?" The king said, "No." The jester said, "Here is the scepter; you are the biggest fool of all." — 425 27th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33125.

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Acts 26:25

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"My Kingdom Is Not Of This World"

(No. 2)

The nature of man requires that he worship. Man has been found worshiping animals, inanimate or dead objects, his fellowman, or according to the direction of the creeds of men. It is distressing when people worship their pleasure, power, youth, beauty, popularity, or their intelligence. All of these vanish with time. Jesus said concerning the Jews of his days upon the earth, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).



W. EDWIN KEARLEY

What is worship? The Greek word *proskun* found in Matthew 4:10 and John 4:24 means "to kiss (the hand) toward" (Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, by Robert Young). W. E. Vine defines *proskuneo* to mean "to make obeisance, do reverence to (from *pros*, towards, and *kuneo*, to kiss). This is the word most frequently rendered "worship" in the New Testament. It is used of an act of homage or reverence" (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine).

What are the correct objects of worship? People have always had a tendency to worship the wrong thing. When Paul went to Athens, he found a very religious people. They had a diverse worship. Paul said, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, to the unknown God . . . whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23).

Jehovah God, the originator of all things, must be worshiped (John 4:24). Jesus rebuked Satan and said, ". . . thou shalt worship the Lord thy God . . ." (Matthew 4:10). The wise men from the East worshiped Jesus: "And when they were come into the house, and fell down, and worshiped him . . ." (Matthew 2:11). Since "Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:8) and as Christians we are "reconciled to God by the death of his son" (Romans 5:10), we have created a reason to worship Jesus Christ

the Son of God. Since the Holy Spirit is a part of the Godhead, he is to be worshiped also.

How should we worship? Jesus said, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). This passage states two conditions of acceptable worship: (1) In Spirit. (2) In Truth.

We must worship with the correct attitude toward God. Also, our worship must be as God directs us in his word. There are five items of worship found in the New Testament church. They are: the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), study and teach the apostles' teaching, prayers, fellowship, giving (Acts 2:42), and singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

With what kind of spirit must we worship? It must be done as follows:

1. With a spirit of humility and contrition because God is holy (I John 2:20).
2. In the spirit of gladness and gratitude because God is a benevolent spirit (James 1:17).
3. In the spirit of fear and reverential awe (Reve-

lation 1:12, 18).

4. With all the faculties of mind because God is an intelligent spirit (Matthew 22:37).
5. In the spirit of love -- love for God and man (Matthew 5:23-24; I John 4:8).
6. With a forgiving spirit because God is a forgiving spirit (Matthew 6:14-15).
7. In the spirit of faith -- of implicit trust in his word because God is invisible (Exodus 20:45; I Corinthians 5:7).
8. In the spirit of a child because God is a fatherly spirit (Matthew 6:9).

Worship is a great opportunity and responsibility. May we never forget these two facts. Gratitude and love should draw us to the time and place of zealous worship. David wrote, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1).

(To be continued)

—501 Pine Street, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Living Lessons From The Prophets

JOHN WADDEY

The eleventh annual lectureship of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions will be held March 31 — April 3, 1985. The theme selected for the series and for the book to be published is *Living Lessons from the Prophets*. Each of the Old Testament prophets -- his life, work, and message -- will be discussed. Additional lectures will cover special areas relating to the prophets, such as historical backgrounds, principles for interpreting the prophets, and great themes of the prophets. Lectures will cover both the oral and the writing prophets. This collection of materials on the prophets will provide a valuable addition to the brotherhood's literature on the Old

Testament.

Speakers have been invited who have special skills in Old Testament exegesis: Dr. Rex Turner of Alabama Christian School of Religion, Dr. Jack P. Lewis of Harding Graduate School, Dr. Clyde Wood of Freed-Hardeman College, Dr. Hugo McCord, Johnny Ramsey, Franklin Camp, Robert Taylor and a host of other great teachers.

A large attendance is expected. Those who want more information should write or call the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931 (Phone: 615-691-7411).



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— Acts 26:25

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The Price Of A Lie

GARRY STANTON

A very interesting article in the *Hutchinson (Kansas) News* (November 11, 1984) told a special story commemorating the 25th anniversary of the famous Clutter murders. Herb Clutter and his wife and their 15-year-old son and 16-year-old daughter were brutally murdered November 15, 1959, in the heartland of our great nation. Their death is still called the worst crime in the history of the state of Kansas. The two who actually committed this hideous crime were eventually hanged by the state of Kansas.

One of the facts of the case which caught my eye was the reason that the whole horrible thing occurred. The underlying motive was robbery; this was the reason that Hickock and Smith went there in the first place. Hickock had been told by a fellow prisoner, while serving time in the penitentiary, that Mr. Clutter kept at least \$10,000 cash in a safe at the farmhouse. Based on that cellmate's information, Hickock contacted Smith and they began to plan to steal that money. The problem with the information about the money was, *It Was A Lie!* One man's desire to "look big," led to the deaths of four innocent people. Had the convict not bragged about money which did not exist, then Hickock and Smith would not have gone to the Clutter's farm and would not have become murderers. What was the "price" of this one lie?? *Six people lost their lives!*

This really should not surprise us, if we have studied our Bibles! For it has told us the price of a lie long before the tragedy of November 15, 1959. Jesus warned us that Satan "is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). James tells us that "the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things," it is "a fire, a world of iniquity" (James 3:5,6). A lie can begin as a little fire but can easily and dreadfully turn into an out-of-control raging fire, as the Clutter case vividly demonstrates. So-called "little white lies" can cause as much destruction as any bold, brazen lie Satan could tell. Therefore, let us carefully consider the words of inspiration: "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8).

— 807 Welton, Pratt, Ks. 67124.



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

God Has Limited His Fellowship - And Ours

We have noted in recent editorials that Christians have fellowship with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Deity, or the divine nature, is such that three personages of the Godhead have no fellowship with anything that is evil. Of the Corinthians the apostle Paul inquired: "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [A.S.V.: "unbeliever"]? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (II Corinthians 6:14-16) The holiness and purity of God preclude any fellowship with "the unfruitful works of darkness."



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Similarly, God forbids his children to have fellowship with the Devil's children. The apostle John wrote: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The only ones who have scriptural "fellowship" with each other are those who mutually respect the divine authority of the New Testament; for such "fellowship" is predicated upon our walking "in the light" --and Paul tells us that the "light" is the "glorious gospel of Christ" (II Corinthians 4:3). Each person who will "walk in the light" has partnership [fellowship] with all others who also will "walk" in the light, and with none others.

John said, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us" (I John 1:3). This necessarily implies that without such declaration of the truth (the doctrine of Christ) we could have no fellowship with John and the other apostles. He says we declare this gospel unto you so "that ye also may have fellowship with us."

The apostles, with power to "bind" and "loose" on earth what is bound and loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19), are "able ministers of the new testament" (II Corinthians 3:6). To them Jesus said, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). This is precisely why we must hear them. "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 way to ascertain which prophet [or "spirit"] is true, and which is "false," then follows: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: . . . They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (I John 4:2-6). No man can have fellowship with the apostles while denying the truth taught by

the apostles, nor while teaching that which is advocated by those labeled by the apostles as "the spirit of error."

Paul referred to himself and the other apostles as having received from Christ the "ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:18). Only in accordance with "the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) or teaching can any man be "reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:19). Thereby --and only thereby-- can one have fellowship with the apostles, whose fellowship is with the Father and with Jesus Christ (I John 1:3).

In the process of conversion one must have "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Romans 6:17-18) in order to be saved, or to be "made free from sin." This cleansing from sin is accomplished by the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:7), for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Bear in mind, however, that Jesus was "dead already" before his blood was shed (John 19:31-34). He was declared "dead" in verse 33, before his blood was shed in order to reach the BLOOD of Jesus, one must come to his DEATH --for that is where his blood was shed. The only way the Bible says one gets "INTO" Christ's death is by BAPTISM: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Only those who have been "baptized into his death," have contacted the cleansing blood of Jesus which was shed in his death. Only "so many of us" as have done this --no more!

However, that same baptism --for there is but "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5)-- also puts one "INTO JESUS CHRIST" (Romans 6:3-4). Since "salvation . . . is IN CHRIST JESUS" (II Timothy 2:10), those only who "have been baptized into Christ" can claim the promise of salvation. All who (1) by faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, have (2) repented of their sins, (3) have confessed before men that Jesus Christ is Lord, and (4) have been baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), are saved by the blood of Christ, which "wash[es] away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). The same process by which they are saved also makes them members of the church: for "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). In their being saved, the Lord added them to the church; and since he is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), we must conclude that today he likewise adds to the same church all who now do exactly what they did. By their walking in the "light" of divine revelation, they had "fellowship one with another" (I John 1:7). And by our walking in the light of that same truth, we likewise have "fellowship" in Christ. Such only as are "cleansed" by the blood of Christ are said to have "fellowship one with another" (I John 1:7).

Just as God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit have no fellowship with Satan and his forces, so it is not scriptural for God's children to have, nor to seek, fellowship with the Devil's children. God has limited, or restricted, our fellowship. His word demands that we "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

“Who, Then, Will Be Saved?”

The writer of Hebrews observes of our Lord: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY HIM” (Hebrews 5:8-9).



R. W. GRAY

If there has been one emphasis that is primary since the inception of the Restoration of the “ancient order,” it has been that we must again recognize God as a God who demands obedience. The Biblical illustrations that underscore this principle are numerous indeed, beginning with the attitude of Jehovah toward our first parents and their rebellion against his will.

With telling effect it has been shown that the slightest infraction, substitution, or alteration was never tolerated by the God who demands strict obedience. To be sure, God was longsuffering, merciful and kind. He “stretched forth his hand” of pleading that men harken to his law. But when man was stubborn and rebellious, electing to adulterate the religion of Jehovah with the gods of the nations, his response was predictable and unchanging: “Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it” (Jeremiah 6:18-19).

Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they brought a strange fire upon their censers which he commanded them not (Leviticus 10:1-2). Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land because of an infraction of God’s law that to us may appear insignificant (Numbers 20:1-12). Such “liberties” taken by man are viewed as an affront to Jehovah and his right to “direct our steps” (Jeremiah 10:23; Isaiah 66:2; Proverbs 14:12). God’s disapproval was always expressed in strong terms upon those who sought not to serve him “after the due order” (I Chronicles 15:12-14; II Samuel 6:6-8).

It is erroneously presumed by some that God, in a new system of grace, is pleased to overlook matters of the kind he punished “under the law.” It is an error to assume, in the first place, that the Jews received no “grace” under the law. It is an error, in the second place, to presume that God will tolerate ignorance of or disobedience to his will under the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:23-32; 12:25-29; 2:1-4; Acts 17:30-31; 5:1-11).

It is sobering to realize that the infractions punished so severely by Jehovah were seldom an out-and-out rejection of him. Some indeed were seemingly desirous of serving the Lord, but failed, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, to understand the seriousness of substituting their own preferences in worship to him.

The Bible still says, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (See Galatians 1:6-8). It is still the case that “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . .” (II John 9).

The apostles of the Lord, upon hearing him explain that the judgment of God is to be rigid and exacting, “. . . were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, ‘Who then can be saved?’” (Mark 10:26).

It is interesting to note that God sent his prophets to warn the people of impending judgments. The judgment was administered, however, by God

himself. It was the work of the watchman to warn of the death that awaited the disobedient; it was Jehovah’s sphere to extend his mercy and long-suffering, or to visit with his wrath upon a disobedient and gainsaying people (Ezekiel 3:17-21; 18:1-4). God’s prophet, Jonah, was sore displeased that the destruction he predicted did not come upon Nineveh (Jonah 3:4-10; 4:1). Jonah had finished his task when he delivered God’s word. He attempted to go too far when he presumed to dictate to Jehovah regarding the fatal judgment. Can we not see that he would have been equally guilty had he promised a reprieve to the Ninevites without having received such a message from God?

We are informed that Christ will save the obedient (Hebrews 5:9). We are warned that the disbeliever “shall be damned” (Mark 16:16.) We must be true to his word in warning men that they dare not pervert (alter or change) the revelation of God given by his Spirit (Galatians 1:6-9). This is our assignment. It is not within the sphere of our responsibilities to presume to tell men whom God will, or will not, ultimately save. We would play God if we say, “I am not sure that God will send to hell those who introduce

unauthorized innovations into his worship if they do so in sincerity.” We are not the judge, and we dare not suggest that we are by such statements. It is shocking to hear gospel preachers make such unwise and unfounded statements. Even the apostles did not suggest, “I can’t say for certain what God will do with those who pervert his gospel, if they do so in sincerity.” Such uncertain sounds, such presumptions, would have rendered their message null and void. By revelation Paul was instructed to deliver God’s warning (Galatians 1:6-11). He was then to leave it as God delivered it.

It is because you are not the judge, my brother, that you dare not hint that “you feel God may show favors” in one instance or another. Let us continue to tell men what God has said; but let us refrain from entering into a realm that does not belong to us. God has said that he is no respecter of persons. We dare not imply that he is “favorable” toward those who do many right things while denying his will in other areas (Romans 2:4-11).

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“What Do Ye More Than Others?”

This question was raised by our Lord in his sermon on the Mount. He was teaching the high standard of loving our enemies in contrast with what the law of Moses allowed (Matthew 5:38-45). Some have thought it impossible to love an enemy; but Jesus enjoined such love to the extent of praying for and blessing our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Even the despised publicans lived by the standard of returning good for good,



W. DOUGLASS HARRIS

of loving those who loved them, and saluting their own brethren only (Matthew 5:46, 47). Being satisfied to be average is going to cause many to be lost eternally. If this is not true, why did Jesus propound this question? Jesus asked, “What do ye more than others?” (Matthew 5:47).

I. **HOW MUCH MORE DO WE THAN DENOMINATIONALISTS?** Is it not true that many members of the church do not *give* any more, *attend* any more, *study* any more, nor *work* any more than many denominationalists? If Catholics can meet at 7:00 A.M. to worship in error, we can meet earlier, if there be a need, to worship in truth. If Mormons can give 10 percent to support error, we can give more to support truth. If Jehovah’s Witnesses can circulate much literature to spread error, we can circulate more to spread truth. If not, “WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?”

II. **THIS QUESTION PROVES THAT CHRISTIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LIVE BETTER AND DO MORE THAN SINNERS.** Jesus teaches by this question that our religion is worth little, if it does not make us better than the “average.” Christians are in constant danger of being satisfied with the average. “Thou shalt not kill” meets the demands of the average; but Jesus demands more (I John 3:15). “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” is average law; but Jesus demands more (Matthew 5:39). Defrauding within the law is called “good business” and average; but Jesus gave a higher standard (Mark 10:19). The

average standard is based on selfishness, but God views it differently (Philippians 2:4). All of these examples are sufficient to prove that Christ requires that we surpass the average.

III. **IF THE CHURCH HELPS “SAINTS ONLY” OUT OF ITS TREASURY, WHAT DOES IT DO MORE THAN OTHERS?** All denominational bodies will do this. In fact, Jesus said, “If you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?” It may be said that this is individual actions; but we (the church) are to do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10; 1:2). Caring for widows and orphans is practicing pure religion (James 1:27). **CAN THE CHURCH PRACTICE PURE RELIGION?** If it cannot, what do ye more than others? Any doctrine that does not permit such practice, lowers its standard to the level of the ancient Pharisees, and is condemned by Jesus (Matthew 5:20).

CONCLUSION: Refusing to do more than others is measuring ourselves by others and is not wise (II Corinthians 10:12). It is foolish to measure ourselves by other members; it is much worse to measure ourselves by non-members. Christ, instead of man, is the Christian’s standard (I Peter 2:21).

(NOTE: Some of the thoughts in this article were gleaned from Leroy Brownlow.)

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Carl Sagan Mystifies Me

MARTEL PACE

There is no question that Dr. Carl Sagan is one of the most popular astronomers in our time. He is frequently called on, since the production of the “Cosmos” TV series, to speak out on other subjects. His most recent article in *Parade Magazine* (December 2, 1984), makes some amazing admissions for one who so adamantly refuses to acknowledge any activity by God in the Universe.

Sagan claims that we are close to creating real life by human activity. But he quickly disavows that it has been done:

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Name-Calling

Paul wrote to Timothy: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:2-4). The plea to "preach the word" is



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needed today, for the kingdom has some who cannot endure sound doctrine. But when the word is preached we can be sure that insults will be shouted by those who have turned their ears from the truth. Those who preach the word are labelled as "watchdogs," "narrow-minded," "ignorant," "trouble-makers," "right-wingers," "knuckle-heads," and "madmen." The purpose of this article is to show that such terms are incorrect. We will also see what God calls those who continue to regard the truth as that which is dear and divine.

First, those who are called "watchdogs" by some are termed "watchmen" by God: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3:17). The purpose of the watchman is to blow the trumpet when the enemy is present. He alerts those of the camp to the danger which is approaching (Ezekiel 33:1-7). Thank God for faithful watchmen!

Second, we hear men label others as being "narrow-minded." But rather than narrow-minded, the Bible calls them "sound-minded:" "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). And only those of a sound mind are able to complete the command given by Paul to Titus: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 1:2).

"Ignorant" is another name used to ridicule the upholder of truth. Wasn't this the same accusation brought upon the apostles, Peter and John, by the unbelieving Jews (Acts 4:13)? "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (I Corinthians 1:18,19).

A fourth name given to those who contend for the faith is "trouble-makers." This charge, however, should be placed on the other foot. When Ahab questioned Elijah in this same regard, notice Elijah's response: "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim" (I Kings 18:17, 18). The troublers are never those who wield the sword of the Spirit, but, contrary to popular opinion, are those who forsake the way of Jehovah.

"Right-wingers" would be more appropriately be the "right-way" followers. Jesus clearly pointed out that one of two ways can be walked (Matthew 7:13,14). One is the right way; one is the wrong way. The ideas of compromise, liberty in matters of obligation, false doctrine, disrespect for the authority of the Scriptures, and laxity in morals are all on the wrong way. The so-called "right-wingers" are doing none of the above things. Instead, they follow the right way.

The name "knuckle-head" seems to be a common

word these days. In reality "needed-heads" is more appropriate. Some of the Jews probably thought of the apostle Paul as a knuckle-head, but to God he was a "needed-head," in order that his will might be made known to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). But to those who would avoid the truth and despise the word, those who are much needed to promote truth, become "knuckle-heads."

"Madmen" is what many call those who defend truth against error. But to those who would use such a label, we address the words of Paul found in Acts 26:24,25: "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." What appears at

times to be the words of "madmen" may be "words of soberness and truth" (emphasis mine).

Hence, we have seen the titles which some would use to label the sound gospel preacher are either incorrect or were used against men of God of old time. Yet, those who cannot defend their teachings by the Scriptures will continue their name-calling. We need only recall the words of the Master, though, when we find such labels pinned on us: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11,12; emphasis mine).

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Baby Fae And Animal Life

Due to the extensive news coverage about it, many of us followed with interest and concern the case of Baby Fae a few weeks ago. She lived some three weeks with an implanted baboon's heart. Without it she probably would not have lived that long. Yet, it was pretty well understood that it would be rejected, so her chances of living very long at all with the animal heart were extremely slim.



JOE E. GALLOWAY

Much has been said and written in the media about whether this implant should have taken place. We do not feel ourselves qualified to answer this question, although we can see some possible benefit from it for future work in this field. One thing we did notice, though, was that some who publically opposed this the most, did so on grounds that it required the death of a baboon! How mixed up has today's godless society become when it can accept killing one-and-a-half million unborn humans each year in these United States without batting an eye, and then become extremely vocal over killing an animal to help save a human life?

When God made man he gave him dominion over all animal life (Genesis 1:26, 28; 9:2). God expected men to properly care for animals (e.g. Deuteronomy 25:4); but it is evident throughout the Bible that animals were made for man's use and benefit. Men are not prohibited from killing animals as they are from killing humans, for the obvious reason that men are superior beings to animals. Man is made in the likeness of God (Genesis 1:27); animals are not. Man is a responsible being, possessing a spirit which shall never die (Ecclesiastes 12:7); animals are wholly temporal.

Two groups have tried to place animals on a par with man, and both have rejected God and the Bible: 1) Those teaching reincarnation (e.g., the Hindu religion) believe that animals may contain the reincarnated spirits of humans, so they fear killing any kind of animal. This is the reason cattle roam freely in India, contributing little if anything to the society, while millions go hungry. 2) Evolutionists believe that we are simply more advanced forms of animal life, so many of them oppose killing animals -- especially those they consider to be nearer to our form of life. This explains the great concern shown for the baboon that died to provide a heart for Baby Fae.

Christians need to understand the vast difference between the emphasis the world gives to animal life,

versus what the Bible teaches. Otherwise we may find ourselves, unwittingly, joining in with unbelievers in promoting an entirely unscriptural value system. While we should not condone cruelty, even to animals, we need to recognize that God made them for the good of mankind. Using them for food, work, medical research, and other such uses is just as good and right as using some as pets. Even when keeping animals as pets let us never let our feelings carry us away from Bible truth by causing us to think of animals in ways intended only for humans.

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Carl Sagan Mystifies Me

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There is still much to do. No one has performed such an experiment and, at the end, discovered a creature, however simple, crawling out of the testtube. Many mysteries remain. We don't know how early nucleic acids "instructed" the formation of early proteins (a problem called the origin of the genetic code). We don't understand the origin of the first cell -- a much more complex event, probably, than the origin of life.

Please keep all these admissions in mind: scientists don't really know anything for certain yet about the origin of physical life on this globe! We only wish they would take a few moments to read Genesis 1. Of course, even there God doesn't tell us *how* he did it. One can learn the source of life, however, from that text.

Dr. Sagan admits that the genetic code must "instruct" all cells in their development. I am becoming convinced that genetic studies will ultimately be the means of overthrowing the popularity of General Evolution. How Sagan can admit these things and still deny that a Supermind must have made the genetic code with all its amazing "instructions," mystifies me. I don't get very upset by the new discoveries and theories of scientists, for I have every confidence that their discoveries are taking us nearer to the source of all life -- God.

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