



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of T

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1986

NUMBER 1

"... Hunger and Thirst After Righteousness"

Gus Nichols (1892-1975)
(From a sermon preached about 1949)

"Blessed are they which do hunger & thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

Jesus knows what it is to be hungry! He knows what a man will do when he gets hungry! He experienced it after he was baptized. Old Satan came to tempt him at a time when Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, and "afterward was an hungered" (Matthew 4:1-10).

I do not know, but that *may* account for the fact that Jesus did not stand up to preach that Sermon on the Mount (in the next chapter)! It may be that he was not *able* to stand! Matthew (5:1-2) tells us that "He went up into a mountain, and when ye was set" (A.S.V.: "had sat down"), "his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying . . ." Jesus may have lost forty pounds during that forty-days fast. His body may have been emaciated, and hunger may have been gnawing at the very vitals of his being! He could control his appetite; very few can! --But he knew hunger! And he uses HUNGER to illustrate a strong, overwhelming desire to be good: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Yes, ". . . shall be filled!" I do not believe there are any exceptions to this rule, either.

When a man truly *yearns* for something, he can do it. I believe that any man can quit "cusin'" if he *wants* to quit it. I believe one can quit drinking, if he *wants* to. I believe one can quit lying if he *wants* to quit it! One can quit being dishonest if he *wants* to! And you can



GUS NICHOLS

learn the Bible if you *want* to!

One of the reasons why people do not know the Bible is, they read *volumes* and *volumes* of something else, but just read *verses* in the Bible. They spend hours and hours and hours reading *man's* writings; then spend only minutes with the Bible! Some will say, "Well, when I was young, a mule kicked me;" or, "I had the fever," --or something else; and, "I just can't learn the Bible!" They won't tell you out and out that they are *morons*, but will intimate it! -- and will use that as an excuse for their ignorance of the Bible, and for their failure to study God's word! The reason they know the other books is because they WANTED to learn the other books; and the reason they do not know the Bible is because they *did not want* to learn the Bible!

If all us were "hungering and thirsting" for the knowledge of this book, we could have it on the tip of our tongues in twenty-five years! Who is it that could not learn the Bible in twenty-five years? Well, we ought to be on our way toward learning it! You can get it if you WANT to; but if you don't WANT to learn it, you can't! --because you will not study it!

If you do not WANT to go to church services, you *can't* go!-- You may live within a block of the meeting house, but there will be excuses! And if you don't have any excuses, you will make (manufacture) some, out of lies! Hambone said, "A 'scuse ain't nuthin' but a lie dressed up!" That is about what they *usually* are -- lies, dressed up, and made to look nice(?). Actually, as a rule, they are untruths! So then, you CAN attend the services if you WANT to!

Brother G. C. Brewer reported years ago a case where two physicians were in the same congregation. One of them was a very prominent physician, a talented and learned man, skilled in many respects. He had a great patronage, with his waiting room even overflowing much of the time. He worked hard, and long hours. But he was always at church

on Sunday mornings, and taught a Bible class! He was always there on Sunday evenings. And he was always there on Wednesday nights! If the church had a business meeting of the men, he was there. But in the same congregation, there was a 'little' doctor: he was 'little' in the sense that he did not know much and was not much in demand. But that fellow was always so "busy" that he couldn't come to church! You couldn't get him out more than one or two Sundays a month (at best) --and that for Lord's Day worship only! He was never present for Bible classes, and never came on Sunday nights -- he was always too busy! or too tired! And, on Wednesday nights, he just *could not* come! Yet he didn't have much to do! The first doctor, with perhaps ten times as much work, *appropriated* time to be present, and *made* time in his schedule to study the Bible so he could teach the Bible class! Why? Because he WANTED to! Likewise, *you* can, if you want to! But if you don't WANT TO, you can't!

You can't LIVE RIGHT if you don't want to! "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." If a man gets hungry enough, he will get something to eat! Whenever you WANT to know the truth, and whenever you WANT to live the truth, YOU CAN LIVE IT!

In my boyhood days a merchant in a nearby town became a drunkard in his older days. He had been a very fine man, and was very important in that vicinity; but he was going broke. His family and friends tried to get him to quit drinking before he went into bankruptcy; but he paid no attention to them, saying, "I can't quit drinking." His neighbors and friends urged him to go take a cure -- the Keeley treatment -- for alcoholics, but he said he could not afford it. Finally they made up a purse of several hundred dollars, and one of them brought it to him, saying, "Your friends

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Words Of Truth

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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"...Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness"

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have given this for you to take the treatment; we need you like you used to be in our community, and we want you to take the treatment."

That touched his heart! He said, "You mean my friends have done this for me?"

"Yes."

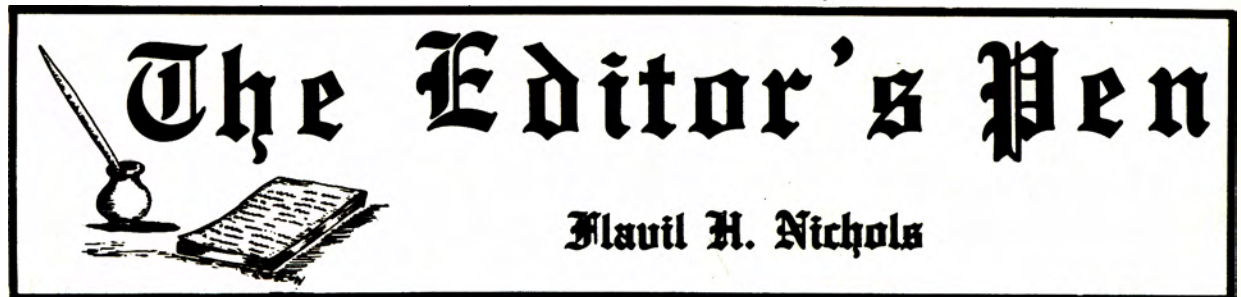
"Then, just take this money back to them, and tell them that I have QUIT! I'll never taste liquor again!" -- And he never did. Suddenly that old "sot" was a sober man! He never touched another drop as long as he lived! He began to gain back his customers, and his business began to grow, so that he saved it, as well as his character. But he did not quit drinking until he WANTED TO!!! No man ever does! My friend, YOU can be a Christian, if you WANT TO! But you must "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Another principle about **RIGHTEOUSNESS** is, that you must "seek" after it! Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). So, we must "SEEK" God's righteousness! And, we must "seek" it where it is! Even if we "seek," and *diligently* "seek," we cannot find anything where it is not! We must find it where it is!

Well, where is righteousness? It is **IN CHRIST**. Paul wanted to "be found **IN HIM**, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9). So, Paul wanted to be found "**IN HIM**" having that righteousness. Righteousness is "**IN**" Christ -- and you need not "seek" it **OUT** of Christ! You can't find oil where there is none. You may "seek" ever so diligently, but you can't find any unless it is there! You can't find water where there is no water, nor coal where there is no coal. You can't find gold where there is no gold. You may "seek" *diligently* -- but you can't find it if it is not there! And you can't find **RIGHTEOUSNESS** *out of Christ!*

You must therefore obey the Gospel, and come into Christ. In Romans 10:10 the apostle

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Flavil H. Nichols

Early Disciples Understood SINGING Is Authorized In Corporate Worship

We have seen that the New Testament clearly authorizes SINGING in the public worship of the church. This is made clear from I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; and Hebrews 2:12. I do not understand how anyone can fail to comprehend this fact, and do not believe it can be successfully refuted.



Flavil H. Nichols

But how did the early disciples understand these scriptures? Did they suppose that these passages pertain to private devotions only? Or, did they understand them to authorize SINGING in congregational assemblies? For the answer, we must turn to secular history. [Remember, however, that we already have seen from the Bible what God's will is in this matter: he authorizes SINGING in the corporate worship of the church]. Now let us note the following from McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, (Vol. VI, pp. 756-758):

Among all nations music has always formed a part of public worship. . . . Among the pagan nations of antiquity the singing of songs constituted indeed a great part of the religious worship. In all their religious festivals and in their temples they sang to the praise of their idol gods. . . . Yet no nation of antiquity made such extensive use of music in their worship as did the Hebrews. . . , especially in the time of their prosperity. . . . Not only in the Temple, but in their synagogues and in their dwellings the Jews celebrated God with sacred hymns.

. . . Says Coleman, 'The singing of spiritual songs constituted from the beginning an interesting and important part of religious worship in the primitive Church.' . . .

I. Early Christian Usages. -- Grotius insists that we have in Acts iv, 24-30 an epitome of an early Christian hymn; and it would appear from a close examination of other N.-T. Scripture passages that even Christ himself, in his final interview with his disciples before his crucifixion, sung [sic] with them the customary paschal songs at the institution of the sacrament, and by his example sanctified the use of sacred songs in the Christian Church (Matt. xxvi, 30). . . . There are also many other N.-T. passages which clearly indicate the use of religious songs in the worship of God. Paul and Silas, lacerated by the cruel scourging which they had received, and in close confinement in the inner prison, prayed and sang praises to God at midnight (Acts xvi, 25). The use of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs is moreover directly enjoined upon the churches by the apostle as an essential part of religious devotions (Col. iii, 16; Eph. v, 19; James v. 13). The latter epistle was a circular letter to the Gentile churches of Asia, and therefore in connection with that to the Church at Colosse is explicit authority for the use of song in the religious worship of the apostolic churches. . . .

As the Hebrews worshipped God in their homes by sacred song, so the N.-T. people also did not restrict these acts of devotion to their public places of worship. In their social circles and around their domestic altars they worshipped God in sacred song; and in their daily occupations they were wont to relieve their toil and refresh their spirits by renewing their favorite songs of Zion. Persecuted and afflicted -- in solitary cells of the prison, in the more dismal abodes of the mines to which they were doomed, or as wandering exiles in foreign countries -- they forgot not to

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says, “With the heart man believeth unto **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.” Now, wait a minute: that righteousness is “**IN CHRIST**.” “Unto” means “toward;” so we believe “**UNTO** or “toward” the “righteousness” which is “in Christ.” But notice also: we repent unto righteousness: “God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world **IN RIGHTEOUSNESS** . . .” (Acts 17:30-31). So we are to repent in view of the fact that the judgment is going to have to do with “righteousness.” Then we are to confess Christ, and be baptized to get “into Christ” -- where that righteousness is!

Paul said, speaking of Christ: “That ye might be made the righteousness of God **IN HIM**” (II Corinthians 5:21). So, we are made righteous “**IN**” Christ; But listen: “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized **INTO JESUS CHRIST** were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). So, we are “baptized **INTO** Jesus Christ;” and it is “**IN**” him -- thus, after baptism -- that we are made the “righteousness of God **IN HIM**.”

In speaking of Christ again, Paul said, “Who is made of God unto us sanctification, redemption, and **RIGHTEOUSNESS**” (I Corinthians 1:31). So, we must put on Christ in order to have on “righteousness.” But Paul said, “For as many of you have been baptized into Christ **HAVE PUT ON CHRIST**” (Galatians 3:26-27). What do we put on when we “put on Christ” in baptism? We put on **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, for that is what he is “made unto us” (I Corinthians 1:31). And then we “should live soberly, **RIGHTEOUSLY**, and Godly in this present world” (Titus 2:14).

If we fail to do this we will be condemned forever-- unless we are converted, brought back, and are faithful again. God said, “When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his **RIGHTEOUSNESS** which he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die” (Ezekiel 18:24). Although he once was a “righteous” man, he shall not live! He shall “Die.” When he stands before God in judgment, God will *never mention* a single thing that he ever did that was right! He will get no praise for having **ONCE** been a Christian!

I went to preach the funeral of a man who died a backslider. He was the sort of man we have just read about, who “turned away from his righteousness,” and was doing according to what the wicked had done. His wife asked me at the door not to forget to mention in the funeral sermon that he is a member of the church, and once was a faithful Christian. I said, “Sister, why should I mention it? What good would it do? God is not going to mention it! You know he was a backslider. You worried about him, and at your request I have done my best to convert him back to Christ; you know he was lost! Why should I mention that he once was faithful? That might deceive the audience -- leave the impression that I think he has gone to heaven -- when you and I both know that according to the Bible he died in sin. That won't save him -- that would not change his destiny. But it may change the destiny of the living, if I tell them the truth!”

I want to tell you that when you have become righteous, and then get tired of doing right,

and you turn away from your righteousness, and do according to the way the wicked do, then God says all your righteousness “shall *not be mentioned!*” And that you will “die” -- you shall *not live!* You will go to perdition! That's all there is to it! But, the apostle John says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS!**” (I John 1:10).

If you have backslidden, don't let death catch you in your backsliding! You'll be lost, world without end, if you do -- this Bible being God's word! But, as an erring child of God, you repent, and confess your sins, and pray, and he will be “faithful and just to forgive” your sins, and “to cleanse” you “from all *unrighteousness*.” You may have been unrighteous for ten years -- or fifteen -- or twenty -- a backslider all of that time! --But he will

cleanse you, and make you as white as snow, if you will come back!

Finally, we read that the robes the saints will wear forever in heaven are garments of “righteousness”: “For the fine linen is the *righteousness of the saints*” (Revelation 19:8; the A.S.V. says, “. . . the righteous acts of the saints”). So, we will be clothed in garments of “righteousness” for heaven and immortal glory.

Don't you want to be righteous? Aren't you ready to “seek” righteousness “**IN CHRIST**” --where it is? Come by faith in Christ, who “love righteousness, and hated iniquity” (Hebrews 1:9).

(Editor's note: My father, the late Gus Nichols, was the founding editor of this paper, and was minister of the Sixth Avenue church from 1933 until his death in 1975).

Early Disciples Understood **SINGING** Is Authorized In Corporate Worship

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sing the Lord's song in the prison or the mine or the strange lands to which they were driven. In connection with the passage from Ephesians, the apostle warns those whom he addresses against the use of wine and the excesses to which it leads, with reference to those abuses which dishonored their sacramental supper and love-feasts. In opposition to the vain songs which, in such excesses, they might be disposed to sing, they are urged to the sober, religious use of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The phraseology indicates, too, that they were not restricted to the use of the psalms of David, as in the Jewish worship, but were at liberty to employ others of appropriate religious character in their devotions. . .

The earliest authentic record on this subject is the celebrated letter from Pliny to Trajan, just at the close of the apostolic age (A.D. 103, 104). In the investigations which he instituted against the Christians of his period, he discovered, among other things, that they were accustomed to meet before day to offer praise to Christ (Epist. x, 97). The expression used is somewhat equivocal, and might refer to the ascription of praise in prayer or in song. But it appears that these Christians rehearsed their 'carmen invicem' alternately, as if in responsive songs, according to the ancient custom of singing in the Jewish worship. Tertullian, only a century later, evidently

understood the passage to be descriptive of this mode of worshipping God and Christ, for he says that Pliny intended to express nothing else than assemblies before the dawn of the morning for singing praise to Christ and to God (Apolog. c. 2). Eusebius also gives the passage a similar interpretation, saying that Pliny could find nothing against them save that, arising at the dawn of the morning, they sang hymns to Christ as God (Hist. Ecclesiast. iii, 32). Viewed in this light, in which it is now generally viewed, it becomes evidence of the use of song in Christian worship immediately subsequent to the age of the apostles. . . . Tertullian himself also distinctly testifies to the use of songs to the praise of God by the primitive Christians. Everyone, he says, was invited in their public worship to sing unto God, according to his ability, either from the Scriptures or de proprio ingenio, 'one indited by himself,' according to the interpretation of Munter. Whatever may be the meaning of this phrase, the passage clearly asserts the use of Christian psalmody in their religious worship. Again, he speaks of singing in connection with the reading of the Scriptures, exhortations, and prayer (De Anima, c. 9). Justin Martyr also, who lived within half a century of the apostles, and is himself credited with being the author of a work on Christian

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Psalmody, mentions the songs and hymns of the Ephesian Christians: 'We manifest our gratitude to him by worshipping him in spiritual songs and hymns, praising him for our birth, for our health, for the vicissitudes of the seasons, and for the hopes of immortality' (Apol. v. 28). Eusebius, moreover, furnishes this important testimony of an ancient historian at the close of the 2d century: 'Who knows not the writings of Irenaeus, Melito, and others, which exhibit Christ as God and man? And how many songs and odes of the brethren there are, written from the beginning . . . by believers, which offer praise to Christ as the Word of God, ascribing divinity to him!' (Eccles. Hist. v, 28). Here we have not only testimony to the use of spiritual songs in the Christian Church from the remotest antiquity, but also that there were hymn writers in the apostolic Church, and that their songs were collected for use at a very early date of the Christian Church. . . . These spiritual songs of the primitive Christians were almost exclusively of a doctrinal character. 'In fact,' says Augusti, 'almost all the prayers, doxologies, and hymns of the ancient Church are nothing else than prayers and supplications to the triune God or to Jesus Christ. They were generally altogether doctrinal. The prayers and psalms, of merely a moral character, which the modern Church has in great abundance, in the ancient were altogether unknown'

Sacred music must, in the primitive Church, have consisted only of a few simple airs which could easily be learned, and which, by frequent repetition, became familiar to all. . . . In their songs of Zion, both old and young, men and women, bore a part. Their psalmody was the joint act of the whole assembly in unison. Such is the testimony of Hilary, A.D. 355. . . . Ambrose remarks that the injunction of the apostle, forbidding women to speak in public, relates not to singing, 'for this is delightful in every age and suited to every sex' The authority of Chrysostom is also to the same effect. 'It was the ancient custom, as it is still with us, for all to come together, and unitedly to join in singing. The young and the old,

rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, all join in one song All worldly distinctions here cease, and the whole congregation form one general chorus.' . . . Each member was invited, at pleasure and according to his ability, to lead their devotions in a sacred song indited by himself. Such was the custom in the Corinthian Church. Such was still the custom in the age of Tertullian, to which reference has already been made. Augustine also refers to the same usage, and ascribes to divine inspiration the talent which was manifested in this extemporaneous psalmody.

Such was the character of the psalmody of the early Church, consisting in part of the psalms of David, and in part of hymns composed for the purpose of worship, and expressive of love and praise to God and to Christ. . . . Few in number, and sung to rude and simple airs, they yet had wonderful power over those primitive saints. The sacred song inspired their devotions both in the public and private worship of God. At their family board it quickened their gratitude to God, who gave them their daily bread. It enlivened their domestic and social intercourse; it relieved the weariness of their daily labor; it cheered them in solitude, comforted them in affliction, and supported them under persecution. 'Go where you will,' says Jerome, 'the ploughman at his plough sings his joyful hallelujahs, the busy mower regales himself with his

psalms, and the vine-dresser is singing one of the songs of David. Such are our songs --our love-songs, as they are called--the solace of the shepherd in his solitude and of the husbandman in his toil.' . . .

II. Innovations. -- From the 4th century onward the Christian Church greatly modified the mode of performing this part of public worship.

1. The first innovation occurred in the Syrian churches, where responsive singing was introduced, probably very early in the 4th century. Soon after it became the practice of the Eastern churches generally, and finally was transferred to the West also by St. Ambrose of Milan (A.D. 370), and was called there the Ambrosian style of music. Some critics believe responsive singing to have been practiced at a very early date. Thus it would seem from the epistle of Pliny that the Christians of whom he speaks sang alternately in responses. The ancient hymn from Clement, too, above mentioned, seems to be constructed with reference to this method of singing. . . ."

McClintock is a standard, highly-respected work. I have quoted so fully in order that all may see nothing was taken out of context. Now, who can reasonably doubt that the early disciples understood exactly what the Lord's will is --that SINGING is indeed authorized in corporate (congregational) worship?

The Question Is, "Where Could He Go?"

Bill Jackson

We certainly would not want to glamorize the church of an earlier generation, assigning to the congregations then a perfection that really wasn't there. The tendency is to view much of the past with an eye critical of the present, and the past looks absolutely perfect. The church in all generations has had her problems; but, it must be said, there were fewer brotherhood-wide problems in some earlier times.

In the period of the 40's, and before the anti-cooperation movement began, there was, indeed, a unity among the saints that we certainly could use today. We will illustrate: In that time, suppose a member moved into the community, and he had earlier been exposed to some false teaching in regard to the marriage question, or law and grace, or

church organizations, etc. Hearing the truth of God in his new location might displease him, but the question is, "Where could he go?" If he went down the road to a neighboring congregation, and if he visited every one of them within any reasonable driving distance, HE'D HEAR THE SAME THING, BASED ON THE SAME VERSES! He had nowhere to go, and thus he remained; and often the truth dispelled those false notions.

That unity -- all speaking the same thing (I Corinthians 1:10) -- is urgently needed today! The problem is that one in ignorance or in rebellion can now journey just a little distance and find just what he wants to hear!
--Southwest Church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX 78748.



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(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 1986

NUMBER 2

Preaching: Invitation and Response

Our fundamental purpose in preaching is to draw men to Christ (John 12:32). The Lord invites all men to come unto him (Revelation 22:17). That great invitation is extended to sinners through those who preach the gospel (Matthew 11:28-30).

It may come as a surprise to some to know that the "invitation song" at the close of a sermon is an American institution not commonly practiced in other lands. We hasten to add that it is a good tradition, in harmony with Scripture, and has been instrumental in encouraging thousands to respond to Christ.



John Waddey

The Invitation

No matter how well the sermon was prepared and presented, its impact on sinners will be made or lost in the closing exhortation.

The invitation must be *concise*: one-to-five minutes long. It needs to dove-tail into the main lesson. People don't want two sermons in one session.

It must be *personal*. Each sinner must feel the preacher is speaking directly to him alone. Eye contact and gestures must focus on individuals -- not at the floor, ceiling, nor back of the auditorium.

Preacher, make the invitation *informative* by telling folks what they must do to be saved. Nothing serves better than Scripture to explain to men what they must do to be saved. Away with those vague exhortations that leave a searching soul just where the denominational revival preacher does! It is never out of place to explain God's plan of salvation, citing book, chapter, and verse of Scripture. Never be embarrassed to do so. Failure to do so may result in a person's responding but having no idea of what to do to be saved. Be *persuasive* in your invitations. "Preach the

word; be *urgent*" (II Timothy 4:2). Paul wrote: "knowing the terror of the Lord, we *persuade* men" (II Corinthians 5:11). Precious souls are at stake, we dare not be casual, and passive, in appealing to them to respond.

Be *positive* in presenting your invitations. Facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures are of utmost importance just here. Frowning face, harsh voice, and insipid gestures work together to produce negative response. Let your hands, eyes and words reach out to take the hands of the lost to assist them in responding to Jesus. Remember: you are calling men to *Jesus*, not just to "come forward." Because of this mistaken emphasis and terminology, many, many souls have responded to the preacher, or to the congregation, rather than to the Savior.

Be reminded that not all sermons or lessons are closed with an invitation. When two lessons are presented in one session, obviously the first closes without an invitation. In small assemblies where all are faithful saints, one need not relate the points of salvation. When visiting a foreign land where a different custom prevails, we would not insist on a public invitation. Rather we would adapt to the local system -- which often is asking those interested to remain following the sermon for further discussion and teaching, which commonly results in obedience.

The Invitation Song

The invitation song is extremely valuable in helping to move sinners to a proper response. The finest lesson with the most promising audience will fail if closed with a poorly-done song. We need wisely-chosen songs. Not all songs are suitable for invitations. "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling" can move a soul to action, much better than "Ready to Suffer." The song must be timely. "Oh Why Not Tonight" is super for evening lessons, but provokes chuckles when sung at a *morning* service. To help move men, the song must be well-led, properly pitched, and sung to the proper tune and timing. Nothing so effectively spoils a sermon's moving power than a "goofed up"

invitation hymn.


Be Prepared For Responses

Charles Spurgeon once said "I always expect responses where I preach." So must we. Your positive expectation builds confidence in your hearers. Have adequate pens and response cards at hand. One person's confession you can recall; but if ten respond, you're in trouble if not prepared. Make sure your baptistry *stays* clean and filled; baptismal garments should be clean and in place. Dressing rooms should be ready for use. What a tragic commentary on a preacher and congregation to see the baptistry standing empty with no expectations of use; worse still, to see it used for storage. Almost as bad is the pool covered with algae and filth. Such neglect says far more about the congregation and preacher than they wish to be known.

Expect the Unexpected

You will not preach long until the unexpected happens during the invitation. *Little children* will respond wanting baptism. Remember we don't baptize babies. On the other hand don't crush the children by your thoughtlessness. Commend them for their love for Christ and their bravery and pray for them. Make an appointment to go by and talk with them at home. *Children of questionable age* will respond. Those are nine to eleven or so. Always check with their parents before baptizing them. *Mentally incompetent or retarded* folks often respond. Don't baptize such. It makes a mockery of baptism and it makes you look foolish. Be kind and try to avoid embarrassing them. Borderline cases (say, with the mind of a ten-to-twelve-year-old) might be properly immersed. Always discuss with parents before so doing. The emotionally disturbed are frequently seen to respond. Treat them with gentleness, but do not allow them to disrupt the Lord's service. Occasionally a person *under the influence of alcohol or other drugs* will respond. Sometimes they will be belligerent if their wishes are not met. To yield to their demands would dishonor God's sacred ordinance. Now and again a person will re-

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Preaching: Invitation and Response

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spond *who does not understand* the gospel plan of salvation. By all means arrange to teach him before baptism. You may have a member of some denomination respond wishing to "join the church" by transferring his "letter." In all such cases treat them with kindness and consideration. Make a definite appointment for study, and have a prayer in his behalf. Otherwise you will likely lose the opportunity to save his soul.

You may have a soul respond *confessing some vile and shocking sin*. It is not always wise, or in proper taste, to relate such in detail. Think of his family, think of the children present, before you relate the problem. Think of the turmoil that would result if you report that Brother X has been committing fornication with *one* of the ladies of the church. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6).

When a brother or sister is guilty of some serious and publicly-known sin, don't allow this to slip by without proper acknowledgment and repentance.

Now and then we hear of people responding who are *insincere*. They wish to embarrass, disrupt, or make sport of you and the gospel. Don't be naive: don't let them succeed.

Handle all responses with dignity, thoughtfulness and in a Scriptural manner. It is good to let the soul-winner baptize his student who responds during your sermon. Invite a faithful Christian father to immerse his child who responds.

Involve your elders in prayer for penitent brethren. As spiritual shepherds, they need to be involved in such matters. Never treat any soul disrespectfully by rushing through the response procedures as though it were an imposition.

It is proper to prolong the invitation song when souls are responding. A wise preacher assesses his audience. He knows who is a candidate for conversion. The example of one

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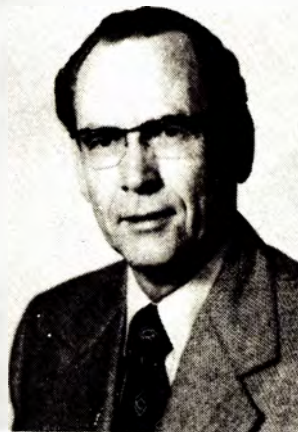
A 'Non-Growing' Church

Church growth has slowed down. What once were growing, vibrant congregations are now only "keeping house for the Lord." Some pessimistic prophets are predicting the demise of the church in the next century. The most optimistic are concerned about the future.

This problem is of widespread concern. In-depth studies have been made. Numerous articles and at least one perceptive book have been written about it. All who love the Lord are praying, and wise elders are planning, for further growth for the Kingdom.

No one has the complete answer, but the following reasons ought to be considered as some of the major contributing causes:

(1) *Competition for the minds of men is keen.* Voices everywhere are crying out to be heard: Politicians, Economists, Social Reformers, and Entertainers are using TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines to get the attention of the people. It is easy for religion to be crowded out.



W. T. Hamilton

(2) *The moral environment is not conducive to church growth.* It is impossible to keep the world from affecting the church. The Corinthian church had problems because of the influence of Corinth! The church in Ephesus was established in an immoral environment, and they "lost their first love" (Revelation 2:4). The same factors exist now.

(3) *A long period of affluence has developed within us a desire to "take it easy."* The decade of the seventies has been labelled the "Me Decade." People have had what they want so long they have turned inward. It is not easy to satisfy every desire, and at the same time to follow God's instruction to "esteem others better than themselves," or to practice self-discipline.

(4) *Inadequate teaching always brings stunted growth.* The only way one can be converted, or edified, is through the word of God. In this hurried age, the time allotted for the gospel message has been scaled down to where only a few 'seed' can be sown. Time spent in Bible classes, and in private study, has been greatly reduced, or eliminated, with many. But it is still true that he who "sows sparingly will reap sparingly" (II Corinthians 9:6).

Let us pray that an analysis of the problem will help us find a solution. As individuals and congregations it is imperative that we grow.

—160926 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 77062.

Limiting The Power Of God

Johnny Ramsey

In Psalms 78, the Old Testament mentions the serious problem of ungodly people who "limited" the Holy One of Israel. In Mark 6, we learn that because of the indifference toward Jesus in Nazareth that "there he could do no mighty work." When sinners "laugh him to scorn" (Mark 5:40), Christ must needs go to regions that will not resist the truth. One of the saddest scenes in the entire Bible is found in Acts 13:51 where Paul and Barnabas shook the dust of an unfriendly place off their shoes and left for elsewhere -- because the citizens of the former area thrust God's word from themselves.

Are you a Nazareth that makes Jesus move on to Capernaum? Are we guilty of limiting the awesome power of Jehovah because of neglect and pride in our lives? Christ came to give us life more abundantly (John 10:10), but some will not come to him for that life (John 5:40). Our lack of faith, devotion, commitment, and depth certainly restricts the blessings that await us. The only life that

counts is one that surrenders to the Master (Luke 9:23). Until and unless we "forsake all that we have," we cannot be proper disciples of the Saviour" (Luke 14:33). Loving anyone or anything more than we love the Lord causes certain spiritual disaster (Matthew 10:37). We must have the wisdom to empty ourselves of vanity, hypocrisy, materialism, and selfishness, lest our lives become so shallow only Satan could use us!

Let us never limit God's power by:

1. Failing to pray for wisdom.
2. Ceasing to deeply study the Bible.
3. Forgetting to tell others about the gospel.
4. Leaning on our own strength.
5. Following the ways of the world.
6. Trusting in earthly riches.
7. Forsaking the worship assembly.
8. Giving less than we should to God's cause.

May we grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18), lest we limit the Lord.

—Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

Howard Winter's Commentary On Romans

Frank D. Young

Brother Howard Winters has written a good commentary on the great book of Romans. With the average Bible student, this commentary fills a real need. This commentary has an appeal to the students at most every level.

It is well arranged, its division heads are good, and make for easy use of the book. In several instances, Brother Winters' treatment of sections makes fine sermon material. Younger men especially, will find this advantageous.

This type book makes for good expository preaching. It also is a good study book, to help in Bible class work. Scriptures are well exposed. Practically every phrase in Romans is analyzed and commented on.

Brother Winters' attitude toward the Scriptures is what all safe Bible students will want. One will be well paid to read this commentary, for study and thought.

Order from : Carolina Christian, Box 5423, Station B, Greenville, S.C. 29606.

—503 Third Ave. N.W., Jasper, AL 35501.

God's Great Love

(No. 3)

Not only is God's great love (John 3:16) the spring, and the stream -- it is the pitcher! It is seen in the expression, "Whosoever believeth." The stream might flow on forever and not reach us, if we don't take the pitcher. God keeps the stream flowing and man should appropriate the blessing. God's grace is universal; but man's salvation is conditional. It is for the believer. Not all believers are alike. The Bible speaks of two kinds. They are the inactive and the active. Concerning the inactive, John speaks: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). The reason of inactivity was the fear of retaliation. Other causes of inactivity are apathy, love of the world, etc. James said of some, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble" (James 1:19). From this we learn that many



W. Edwin Kearley

Preaching: Invitation and Response

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responding may be sufficient to move another. At times there may be a host of responses. Do not discourage souls who might need to respond by stopping too soon. At the same time, I hasten to say: don't brow-beat, high pressure, nor frighten souls into a response that is not properly motivated. It is less than honorable for a preacher to create doubts in the minds of Christians about their salvation in order to report large numbers of baptisms.

Conclusion: The power to convict, convince, and convert men to Christ is in the gospel (Romans 1:16). But God has chosen to use preachers to channel that power to human hearts (I Corinthians 1:21). We who preach must demonstrate in our lives the desirability of coming the Christ. As a beacon light draws the ships safely to the harbor, so our lights shining, help lead men to Christ (Matthew 5:14-16).

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Short Sermons

Errors to be dangerous must have a great deal of truth mingled with them.

He whose religion causes him to stand for nothing and to fall for everything has a different religion than Paul.

Success is the child of two very plain parents —punctuality and accuracy.

have the same degree of faith as the devils. Active, believe, and obedience, are used interchangeably. Paul tells us the thing that avails is "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). We read, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). An example is found in Jesus' healing the ten lepers: "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they

went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke 17:11-17). The lepers were cleansed while in the act of obedience!

James said, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead. Being alone, yea, a man may say, Thou hath faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works . . . but wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:17, 19).

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39502.

Have You Lost Your Bible?

The Bible is the best seller! There are more copies of this book in existence than any other. There are a number of reasons for this popularity. With all of these, there is one that I have never heard mentioned.

I believe many Bibles are sold to replace those that have been lost or misplaced. Perhaps the majority of these are lost at church: nearly every church building has a Bible collection! These are Bibles that have been left at the building and never reclaimed by their owners.

Some are very attractive, with genuine leather covers. Others are not as expensive, yet are in very good condition. Almost all can still be read, and used profitably.

Why are Bibles left at the church building? Some might have been left by elderly people who forgot them, and since then got sick or died. Others might have been left by visitors who have never returned.

Yet, it seems to me that most are left simply



Ancil Jenkins

because the owners had very little use for them. When the owner's name is in the Bible, it may be returned. Often they may remark, "I was wondering where that was. I lost that about three months ago!" How can we do without something "three months" and not miss it? Would you miss a lost Bible like you would a lost watch, or lost toothbrush? Would you have to go immediately and buy a new one if one day had to be spent without a Bible? We do well to ponder the words of Job:

"I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

What can the church do with these Bibles? If the owners can be found, they should be returned. Perhaps they will be treasured more because they temporarily had been lost. However, there may be a good chance it will be lost again!

If the owners cannot be found, the church should give them to someone who will appreciate it. These Bibles may be read by someone who will greatly profit from this gift.

The church can send the Bibles to a mission area. There are areas of the world where many do not have a Bible, and they will greatly benefit from them. A good reference Bible would be a great asset to a preacher who lacks this study tool.

--By the way, do you know where *your* Bible is?

—8445 SW 72nd Street, Miami, FL 33143.

Unity In Religion

First of all there can be no "Christian Unity" unless we believe, teach, and practice what Christ authorizes in the New Testament. Any system short of that would be mockery. It is one thing to agree upon the teachings of the Bible; it is something else to just agree to disagree.

In Ephesians 4:3 we are commanded to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." If the entire religious world were united on some doctrine that violated the



Johnny Ramsey

Scriptures, it would not be the unity Christ desires. There is a difference between union and unity. The recent 'Ecumenical Councils' evidently have overlooked this fact. Were we to tie two cats together by their tails and throw them over a clothesline, that would be *union*, but certainly not *unity*!

There is only one way to acquire unity in the Lord. It cannot be a matter of legislation by hierarchy. Synods and councils cannot vote it into reality. In fact, such complex systems in religion help to create the Babel of voices already in our midst. The only answer is an open heart toward the word of God! Until men are willing to put aside denominational allegiance and sectarian strife, we shall see division running rampant. The creed books and catechisms which have produced the problem must be left behind as we let Christ,

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Destructive Criticism

Someone has well pointed out that at every ball game there are some who could play a perfect game, scoring every time, and making no errors --but, they just won't quit shouting their criticisms, come out of the stands and demonstrate their perfect abilities! Sad to say, this often seems to be the case in the Lord's church, too. The elders, the preacher, Bible class teachers, the songleader, and all who serve in various capacities are often unmercifully criticized.



Joe E. Galloway

Not all criticism is bad. We should, in the right spirit, give suggestions for improvement and try to help correct matters that may be wrong or hurtful. Such would be *constructive* criticism that is designed to help the individual and build up the body of Christ as a whole. Yet, much of the criticism that comes to our attention is *destructive* in nature.

Reasons for Destructive Criticism

Some criticize out of envy, jealousy and covetousness. It seems they feel that they will add to their reputation if they can make others look worse in the sight of acquaintances. Maybe they are unable to function in some important job, or at least are not willing to make the preparation, effort, and spend the necessary time for doing it; so they find fault with those who are doing their best.

Others criticize because they are narrow-minded and self-centered. The matter at hand can be done scripturally a number of ways: but unless decisions are made to suit them, or things are done the way they would do them, they are going to be uncooperative and will criticize! It doesn't seem to ever dawn on such critics that the way the work is being done of which they are so critical is much better than the way they are *not* doing it.

Possibly some criticize because they want to have some input and involvement in everything, and this is the easiest way to *feel* involved. It takes little time, money, and effort to speak critically to others about what is being done. One can criticize whenever and wherever he wishes, and need not be concerned about commitment, solving problems, possible failure, etc., that accompanies involvement in actual work.

The Harm of Destructive Criticism

The person criticized often is hurt by what is said about him. He may even become so discouraged that he eventually may be led to give up a good work because the critic has swayed the general sentiment of many in the congregation against him. How many times have elders been discouraged, and the authority and effectiveness of the whole eldership undermined, because some very vocal critics would not let up until they had *their* way?

Good works may never succeed because they were stopped by such criticism. And the individuals stopped by carping critics may be slow to accept additional responsibilities, or to start new works which need to be done. After all, who wants to risk getting "cut down" repeatedly?

Sometimes we may fail to consider the harm

done to those who *bear* criticism. How many children have turned away from the church as they became older, because (at least in part) they constantly heard their parents criticizing the elders, the preacher, or others who were the mainstays in the church? Critics seldom are careful not to mouth their criticisms before non-members! Is it any wonder that these non-members never become strong prospects for conversion?

Criticism often causes discontent, lack of cooperation, hard feelings, and a general feeling of unrest in a congregation. Weaker members are influenced by the critic, especially if they feel that the critics are their friends. The momentum of discontent that builds up may sway many, who would not

have initially listened to the early criticism, until the matter is out of control and threatens the well-being of the entire congregation.

Finally, the critic himself is condemned before God. He is a hypocrite as he attempts to cast the mote out of his brother's eye while being blinded by the beam that is in his own eye (Matthew 7:1-5). His tongue, used to set on fire and defile the body of Christ, is itself set on fire by hell (James 3:5, 6)!

Let us be careful not to take part in destructive criticism, either by being hypercritical ourselves or by being influenced by those who are so vocal in such criticism!

—218 Pinecrest Drive, Greenville, TN 37743.

"Modern-Day Moriartys"

"The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" involves a showdown between Professor Moriarty and Sherlock Holmes. There is one scene in which Moriarty scolds a servant for letting a flower die. Moriarty says, "You have murdered a flower. To think that for merely murdering a man I was incarcerated six whole weeks!"



That man operated on a completely different moral system than most folks: He valued a flower more than human life!

Many people are operating on a completely different moral system than the one God intended. Many people will rise up in arms to save a seal, or a porpoise, but they think nothing of killing an unborn baby. It is as if the seal is more important than human life.

A case pending in Los Angeles seems to epitomize the afore-mentioned conclusion. In Los Angeles County a bin of 16,000 aborted babies was discovered in 1982. The county has been trying to bury the bin for two years, but the courts will not let it. Pro-abortion groups, not wanting anybody to think that babies are human and deserving of burial, sued to block the interment and won a decision. The feminists said that it was one of the greatest decisions ever rendered.

It is frightening to think that we would not afford the same privilege to dead babies that we would to a dead dog. It is sad that, in an attempt to pretend that something is right when it is wrong, people would deny the decency of a burial to human life. Have we become modern-day "Moriartys?" have we lost sight of the value of even one human life? have we become heartless sadists who view human life in terms of cells, rather than people?

That the unborn baby is a living human cannot be disputed by knowledgeable honest people. A study of the Greek word "brephos" will settle that question forever to one who believes the Bible. The word means "an unborn child, embryo, fetus, a newborn child,

an infant, a babe" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 105).

Prior to his birth, John the Baptist is called a "brephos" in Luke 1:41, 44. John was recognized by God as a living person before he was ever born. Jeremiah was sanctified and ordained as a prophet by God before he was ever even born. Did God sanctify a blob of lifeless cells? or, did he sanctify a living human being yet unborn?

While the abortionists hide behind the slogan of pro-choice, they should be labeled pro-murder. It is as if they say, "We are going to have abortion whether you like it or not, and we dare you to say or imply that it is wrong." It is wrong, however; and decent people must rise up to stop it forever.

—Rt. 1, Box 110, Indian Mound, TN 37079.

Unity In Religion

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the author of Christianity, rule our lives by the New Testament.

In the United States, at the beginning of World War II, a fervent appeal was made to the entire nation. We were urged to be just Americans-not German-Americans, Japanese-Americans or French-Americans-just Americans, nothing else. WE MUST DROP THE HYPHENATION IN CHRISTIANITY, TOO!

If we teach, practice, and obey the same message that was preached in the first century we will be exactly what Paul, Peter, Philip, and Stephen were. They were Christians, members of the Lord's church. Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else! What denomination were they members of? Why, none -- of course! We can read all about the church they were members of in the New Testament.

This is UNITY as Christ prayed for it (John 17:21). Nothing short of it will suffice (I Corinthians 1:10). Are we willing to pay the price? How glorious it is to be neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jew -- but just a Christian.

—Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.



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Words Of

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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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Words Of Truth

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—Acts 26:35

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Landon Duncan Pioneer Preacher Of Virginia

Among the hardy souls who pioneered the gospel in the early days of the Restoration Movement was brother Landon Duncan of Giles County, Virginia. We are fortunate that history has preserved for us some fascinating bits of information about Duncan.

In 1813 Duncan was ordained a Baptist minister.¹ He was a member of the New River Baptist Association.² He also served as tax assessor of Giles County, Virginia.³ On December 20, 1818, Joseph Thomas (known as the "White Pilgrim," preached at the Giles County Court House. His subject was "Faith, Hope, and Charity."⁴ Thomas set forth the Restoration plea. He had been taught by James O'Kelley, was baptized at the instruction and urging of the New England Christians (followers of Elias Smith and Abner Jones), and was influenced in his thinking by Barton Stone of Kentucky.

Landon Duncan, hearing Thomas preach and having read his tract entitled *Emblems of Christian Union*, was convinced of the rightness of "Pilgrim's" plea, and aligned himself with him. Soon he won a neighboring Baptist preacher by the name of Thomas Kirk, who was likewise a member of the New River Association.

Duncan and Kirk "mutually agreed to advocate a reformation from party names and rules, which have a tendency to divide and keep asunder the flock and Church of Christ: which according to the New Testament



John Waddey

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should be one in name, principle, and practice."s

They began to disseminate their new convictions in their teaching at the Walker's Creek Baptist Church. Duncan drafted a question for consideration of his fellow Baptist ministers at the next meeting of the New River Association. Unable to attend, he sent the question by a brother John Howard. It asked:

What is the most appropriate name given among men whereby the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be called?

In addition, he prepared a letter to be read should no satisfactory answer be forthcoming from the group. In it he wrote concerning the need for reformation in the Baptist Church. Being alarmed at Duncan's query and letter, the group appointed a committee to investigate the Walker Creek Church to see if they had departed from the Baptist way.

On August 17, 1819, a committee of Baptists met with the Walker's Creek congregation to interview the members regarding Duncan's teaching. They demanded of Duncan his reasons for raising such questions, to which he responded:

1st. The name Baptist is not after Christ, but is a party name. 2nd. As a party they had made such rules as prohibited liberty of conscience to members of their

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Church of God Minister Obeys Gospel

William B. Kughn

When first contacted by phone, David Gibson said, "Mr. Kughn, I am the minister of the Church of God in Point Pleasant. I am convinced you are teaching the truth in regard to 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.' I am also convinced you are teaching the truth concerning Acts 2:38, as well as other teachings that are contrary to our doctrine. This is presenting a great problem to me, and I need to meet with you as soon as possible." We arranged for a meeting immediately, and David arrived early. He scheduled a meeting for his wife at a later date. Needless to say, it has been an enriching experience to study with this fine young couple.

After David graduated from high school in 1968, he served four years in the Navy. Upon completing his tour of duty, he entered the field of electronics. He became a member of the Church of God in Gallipolis, Ohio. Having the desire to enter the ministry, he enrolled in the Gulf Coast Bible College in Houston, Texas in 1979 where he received his B.S. degree in Bible. His first located work took him to Celina, Tennessee, where he served for one year (1983-84).

The seed was first planted in David's heart by his uncle, Mike Mitchell, who preaches for the church in Henderson, Kentucky, and who influenced him to further his studies in the Tennessee Bible College in Cookville while he was in Celina. He enrolled, and was, as far as he knows, the first denominational preacher to have entered the college. David studied the Connally-Hicks debate on the marriage question, along with the writings of brethren Roy Deaver and Thomas Warren. Having the opportunity to move to his and Beverly's hometown, he came to this area in 1984.

David's desire to learn and declare the whole truth motivated him to a continuing and diligent study of God's word. He availed himself of many debate books, measuring the affirmations and denials of the propositions with the truth. He told me, "I have torn the weekly articles apart that you have written for the *Point Pleasant Register*." He was convinced what the truth teaches about the "second work of grace," baptism, the Lord's Supper, the one church, its organization, worship, and work. As he would discuss these subjects with his fellow-preachers, he would ask, "What do you do about Acts 2:38? You believe repentance is essential to salvation; so why not baptism?" It was sad for him to hear the reply, "I just skip over it."

David could not "skip over" it. Neither could he continue to rationalize, believing that God would accept his ministry because of the good intentions of his heart, while, at the same time, not teaching all things God had commanded (Matthew 28:28). His first challenge was to teach those with whom he was working about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Although some few responded favorably, it created a disturbance within the congregation. This necessitated a meeting with the men who had hoped to reach some agreement, but they were unable to do so because of their unwillingness to accept what the scriptures teach concerning this vital subject. He could no longer be kept in the bondage of false doctrines where he was unable to preach the whole counsel of God; therefore, he submitted his resignation on Saturday, November 23, 1985.

David called me that Saturday evening, informing me what he had done and that he would be assembling with us Sunday morning, along with his wife, two sons, and his parents.

At this worship hour David, having broken the shackles of denominationalism, forsook all in obedience to the gospel. It was my privilege to baptize him Sunday morning, November 24, 1985, and his wife, Beverly, Sunday evening.

On Sunday evening after Beverly was baptized, David admonished us to never become weary in teaching God's word. He advised us not to become discouraged when the responses to the teaching are few and far between. He assured us that many who are tired of the burden of denominationalism are reading and studying diligently, and will eventually obey the gospel as he and Beverly have done. David truly knows how important it is that we persevere in carrying out the great commission.

Plans, at this time, are for David to enter the Tennessee Bible College as soon as possible in 1986. Financial assistance is needed for the

present time as well as the two years he will be in school. David and his wife have forfeited their salary, monthly benefits, as well as housing and utilities, in order to become Christians; but, as Paul, they count it as nothing in order that they may win and serve Christ. Their salary and financial assistance promised them for the next two months have been withdrawn since their obedience to the truth. It is imperative we come to their rescue. Please remember David and his family in prayer as they unite their efforts in the Cause, and prepare to minister in the Lord's church.

We pray that there will be some congregations who will be willing to include some monthly support in their budget for this family for at least two-and-one-half years. For further information, please contact the following:

Elders, Chapel Hill Church of Christ, P.O. Box 308, Gallipolis, Ohio 45631.

Landon Duncan Pioneer Preacher

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society. (a) By debarring them from holding persons of another denomination in fellowship or communing with them when they spread the Lord's table. (b) By prohibiting an invitation being given to God's people of another denomination when they spread the Lord's table themselves. 3rd. I find no plain law of Christ to justify the assembling a delegated body and investing them with powers to enforce any rule they may adopt or to perpetrate traditional doctrines by such delegated power. 4th. I cannot find anything under the Gospel for making and supporting covenants, creeds, articles, disciplines, etc. made by fallible man. 5th. I believe there is but ONE true church which is the body of Christ, and believe it wrong to support any party name or rule, as they create divisions and destroy Christian rule in the administration. 6th. I believe Christ intended in raising a church to make it universal and to be so it should be governed by his laws exclusively. 7th. I believe an improvement from the present confused, divided, and disordered state of the church can be made, and is necessary; and in tender conscience have dissented, and now hold all the faithful in every sect brethren in Christ.

The committee found that four of the ten members at Walker's Creek agreed with Duncan. They were Thomas Kirk, Benjamin Hall, Margaret Hall and Judith Diamond.⁶

Such a statement is a beautiful presentation of the need and basis for restoration and worthy to be placed beside Barton Stone's *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* and Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*.

Landon Duncan's declaration of independence from sectarianism is equally impressive. It was written and entered on the Walker's Creek Church record, July 10, 1819:

I do hereby certify to all men this day that I renounce every sectarian name and every party rule with every known traditional construction of the scriptures and as an humble follower of Christ will know no other name among men but CHRISTIAN in honor of Christ, the head of the church. I also make choice of this name to the exclusion of every other under which the religion of Jesus Christ

may be held forth, and choose this name as a part of that cross which the righteous are called to bear, and through the grace of God given me by the revelation of Jesus Christ, I do believe the Scriptures sufficient for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works and needeth no legislation or additional helps of men for the organization or government of the church of God.⁷

Duncan and his churches practiced foot-washing in worship, a carry-over from their Baptist affiliation.⁸ His co-worker, Parker Lucas, believed and insisted that a "unanimity of religious sentiment" was necessary if there was to be Christian unity. They were accused by their religious neighbors of being Unitarian, and even their friends agreed that they speculated too much on the subject of the Godhead. They were at odds among themselves on the subject. In 1850 Alexander Campbell received a letter from brother Duncan wherein he tells of the difficulties facing the Cause in Giles County. In closing he mentions that he had been impaired for the last five years by reason of paralysis.⁹ Thus we leave one of those hardy pioneers of the faith who took his brave stand for the old paths of the Lord's gospel, and so greatly laid the foundation on which we today stand.

ENDNOTES

¹Barton W. Stone, *The Christian Messenger*, 14 vols. (Ft. Worth, TX: Star Bible Publ., 1978), Vol. 4, 1828, p. 44.

²H. Jackson Darst, *Ante-Bellum Virginia Disciples* (Richmond, VA: Christian Missionary Society, 1959), p. 24.

³Frederick Arthur Hodge, *The Plea and the Pioneers in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Everett Wadley Co., 1905), p. 202.

⁴J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers* (Lynchburg, VA: J. W. West, 1939), p. 274.

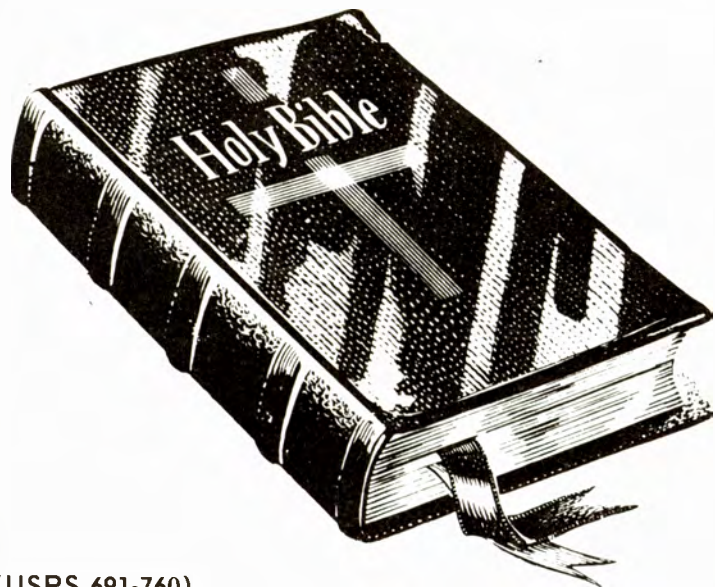
⁵Landon Duncan, Landon Duncan Document, as quoted in J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers* (Lynchburg, VA: J. W. West, 1939), p. 274-275.

⁶Ibid., pp. 276-277.

⁷Ibid., p. 278.

⁸Darst, p. 29.

⁹Chester Bullard Autobiography, typescript copy. —6608 Beaver Ridge Road,



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Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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The Moral Code Of Jesus

The word *moral* relates "to principles of right and wrong in behavior." *Morality* means "a doctrine or system of morals . . . particular moral principles or rules of conduct" (Webster).

Let us consider the system of morality that Jesus gave to the human family. Our generation heard of "the new morality" of the hedonist and the godless pleasure seekers. The perceptive soul soon recognizes their code to be neither new nor moral. Rather, it is the old *immorality* parading under the fictitious name of "morality." This is done to wrap a cloak of respectability around its vile and ugly body.

The code of moral conduct introduced by Jesus was new in two senses: (1) It was a system never before known by man. (2) But it was also a system quite different from any previous one.

The World To Which Jesus Came

To appreciate his morality, we must first acquaint ourselves with the world of Jesus' day. Among the Jews a cold, heartless legalism prevailed. Paul chastized the Jewish brethren for their hypocrisy in his letter to the Romans: "Wherefore thou art without excuse . . . for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost practice the same things" (Romans 2:1). "Thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God" (Romans 2:23). The entire twenty-third chapter of Matthew is devoted to our Lord's scathing rebuke of Pharisaic Judaism. Woe after woe is heaped upon those leaders who had made their religion into "whited



John Waddey

sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). To such pretenders the Lord said, "Ye serpents, ye offsprings of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" (Matthew 23:33).

Outside the Hebrew community, the morals of Gentile Rome prevailed. The degrading influence of idolatry and perverted human wisdom drew men farther and farther away from God's standard of righteousness. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things."

"Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness . . . For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions . . . God gave up into a reprobate mind . . . being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful . . ." (Romans 1:22-31).

The Romans themselves agreed to his assessment: Virgil wrote "Right and wrong are confounded . . ." Tacitus said: "All was one delirium of hate and terror . . . He who had no foe was destroyed by his friend." "The greater the infamy, the wilder the delight." "It was an age of sheer, utter terror," wrote Seutonius. "The earth no longer brings forth any but bad men and cowards." "No guilt or deed of lust is wanting, since Roman poverty disappeared," said Juvenal.

Paul "laid to the charge of both Jews and Greeks, that they (were) all under sin . . . There (was) none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:9-10).

God had granted men long generations to demonstrate by their own failure, the fact that they could not save themselves from

the clutches and stain of sin. They could not improve their moral situation by wisdom or effort. In that dreadful plight, the world was prepared to receive Messiah and his new morality.

Jesus and the Law

The Son of God did what no man before or since has done: He kept the law of God without a single infraction. The apostle reminded his contemporaries that "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Early in his ministry he announced, "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Having fulfilled every aspect of the law, he took "it out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

"But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). His new covenant covers the entire spectrum of human conduct, whether it be public or private, between God or man, worship, or daily conduct.

Christ Has A Law

Contrary to the thinking of some, Jesus has given us a law of righteousness. To James it is "the perfect law, the law of liberty" of which we must be a doer to be blessed (James 1:25). To Paul it is "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that we must walk after (Romans 8:2-4).

We Are Not Under A Law System

However, Christ does not save us by a legal system, such as Moses' law. "By the works of law shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Romans 3:20). Along with Paul we know, "that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16). "If righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought" (Galatians 2:21). Having demonstrated man's inability to save himself by any system or means of human achievement, Paul concludes: "we reckon therefore that a man is

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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 26:35

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The Moral Code Of Jesus

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justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Romans 3:28). Thus the great theme of the gospel is: "By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works that no man should glory" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Having saved us by grace, the Lord expects us to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts, (and that) we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world . . ." (Titus 2:12). Our motivation is not just a fear of punishment, nor a hope of physical rewards. Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Principles and Precepts

Rather than a great number of prohibitions and specific commandments, Jesus gave us a few basic principles by which to measure each option and deed. That which is commonly called the "golden rule" regulates thousands of hard decisions relating to human relations: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that man should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). When weighing any action we are reminded "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). When contemplating any question of worship or religious practice, we must "not . . . go beyond the things which are written" (I Corinthians 4:6). In the realm of dress and public manners, Christians are to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety . . . professing godliness through good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10).

A Heavier Responsibility

Such a system of principles places a much heavier responsibility upon the individual and his own conscience than did the old law. One was born a Jew - he had no choice in the matter; everyone who becomes a Christian does so by personal decision. Under Moses, every detail of conduct was spelled out, much as we parents do for our younger

Continued on page 3.



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Henry Hyche

Brother Henry Hyche, one of the elders of the Sixth Avenue church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, died suddenly during a meeting of the elders November 25, 1985. He had celebrated his 69th birthday only 13 days earlier.

He was the sixth of twelve children born to Ira and Mary (Johnson) Hyche, of whom two sisters and two brothers survive, along with his wife, four children, and seven grandchildren. He lived his entire lifetime within a very short distance of his birthplace, residing in only three of four houses.

His life and success testify what a man can do "against the odds," for his formal education was quite limited. He attended the rural one-teacher Grammar School near his home, and completed the ninth grade in Jasper. But all his life he was an avid reader. The day before his death he returned to the church library some books which he had read, including a commentary. His home library contained some valuable volumes, and numerous tapes of some great gospel preachers.

His parents were not members of the church of Christ, but Henry never joined the denomination they attended, nor any other. From the Curry community in the same county came Miss Verda Rushing, who taught school for 12½ years. Henry began dating her, and with her he sometimes attended the Baptist services. Subsequent to their marriage at Jasper in 1938, he went occasionally with her to church, and later encouraged their children to accompany their mother to the Baptist services. But he resolved to take the Bible as his guide, so he found Baptist doctrine at variance with the word of God. Sister Hyche says: "He listened to brother [Gus] Nichols on the radio all the time, and that was the way he was converted." Near their home was the MacArthur Heights church of Christ, but his family had not attended services there. He and his wife learned from the radio sermons God's plan of salvation, and about the Lord's church, so they asked the minister at MacArthur Heights to baptize them into Christ. He did, using the baptism in Jasper's old building on Fifth Avenue.

For several years they worshiped at MacArthur Heights, where he was appointed an elder. But because that congregation later became opposed to congregational cooperation in evangelism, and also objected to church support of orphans homes, the Hyches transferred their membership and 'workship' to Jasper. Brother Hyche taught



Flavil H. Nichols

the Ladies' Bible class on Sunday mornings for several years. In 1965 he, with four others (David Beard, Paul Dozier, Lincoln Herzig, and John Panter), was selected by the congregation for the deaconship. After serving as a deacon for about five years, he (with the same four brethren) was chosen and appointed to the eldership September 18, 1970. He served faithfully as an elder to the fullest extent of his ability until his death. Sister Hyche cannot remember his ever missing an elder's meeting during the more than fifteen years he thus served. Being a firm believer in the word of God, and a man of strong convictions, he always firmly stood for what he understood the Bible to teach -- whether it be on the subject of divorce and remarriage, church discipline, or any other theme.

Henry Hyche was a hard worker. His retirement in 1978 followed more than forty years in the coal mine, yet he was employed at only two different mines. During all those years he was involved in only one accident: shortly before his retirement a rock slide broke some bones in his left foot, leaving him with a slight limp. Many miners his age were disabled by "black lung," but brother Hyche escaped it. He attributed his good health in that respect to the fact that he never smoked in his life.

Not only did he work hard himself, but he also taught his children the value of honest toil. During summer vacations from school, he gave them jobs around the house. Sometimes he had them to "clear new ground," on which he raised vegetables. Surplus produce from the garden was sold alongside the highway near their home.

While the children recall with pleasure the many jobs they had to perform, they are thankful that their parents demanded that they learn what hard work is. They lament the fact that in modern city living there are not enough home tasks to teach children to work.

Brother and sister Hyche were staunch believers in Christian education. Their children grew up at a time when coal miners were frequently called out on strikes. The year their oldest son was a senior in college, the other two sons were also in David Lipscomb College. In those days no government grant was known, nor were any scholarships available which did not have to be repaid. (One son did get a government LOAN -- but he repaid every penny of it -- he worked at TWO jobs instead of only one)! Although their three sons were in college, and their daughter was a senior in high school, the miners -- including brother Hyche! -- were out on strike for NINE (9) months that year!!! Asked how on earth they managed financially, sister Hyche replied: "We did without everything except the absolute necessities! And we saved pennies like some people now save dollars!"

Was it worth such sacrifices? Ask the

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Henry Hyche

Continued from page 2

children! "One thing for sure," said one son, "if it were not for 'Pap-paw' and 'Mee-maw' sending me to Lipscomb, there's no telling WHERE I'd be today -- nor WHAT I'd be, either!" Their daughter remarked: "There was never any doubt about the KIND of education we were going to get: it would be at a CHRISTIAN school! But WE could pick WHICH Christian college to attend." Since her three brothers attended Lipscomb, Linda chose Freed-Hardeman. She teased her brothers that it could have been because she feared she might be unable to live UP TO the reputation they had made at Lipscomb --or, she may have been afraid she could not live it DOWN! [Such friendly banter among the children reflects their love for one another]. Actually her choice was influenced by two significant facts: a girl friend was going to FHC, and also that school was a little cheaper than DLC.

Gus Nichols was described as brother Hyche's "favorite" preacher. But an early preacher at MacArthur Heights, brother Johnny Nicholas, was a frequent visitor in the Hyche home. He and his wife spent many hours with the Hyches, endearing themselves to them and their children. Henry also admired brother Bobby Duncan, and sister Hyche says that both he and she had stated that neither of them may (?) be still here when Bob returns for a revival in 1993! At the close of our recent meeting brother Hyche was overheard to remark to Johnny Ramsey that he would like for brother Ramsey to return for another revival, but that some of us (!) will not be here "next time!" He has many sermons by brother Ramsey on cassette tapes. Another preacher he highly respected is brother Guy N. Woods.

His family recalls that he attended only one debate, to their knowledge, and that was the Gus Nichols-Ronald Sanders discussion at Sixth Avenue.

His hobbies were gardening and fishing. He had plans to go fishing the day after his death.

If a man can be appraised by his children's success, then Henry Hyche was a valuable man! Ken went to David Lipscomb College, where he majored in chemistry. Upon graduation he went to work for Kodak at Kingsport, Tennessee, and is still with that company.

He found his wife, a member of the Madison, Tennessee, church, in a German class at D.L.C., and has served as an elder of the church at Kingsport.

Edwin got his degree in education from D.L.C., and his master's at M.T.S.U. At Lipscomb he found his wife, from Hartsville, Tennessee. "Eddie" is an elder at Liberty Lincoln church, just outside Fairview, Tennessee, where he has been for 23 years.

Durant ("Red") majored in business at Lipscomb, and got his teacher's certificate from what is now the University of North Alabama (then, "Florence State"). He taught at McCollum one year, and every year since then has taught at Sumiton. His wife is from Cordova, in his home county; and with his family he worships at Adamsville, Alabama.

Linda went to Freed-Hardeman two years, and the University of Alabama one year. She married Levi Sides, a faithful gospel preacher, and they currently are with the Capitol Heights church in Montgomery,

Alabama, for a second tenure of service.

The Hyches have seven grandchildren, and all but the youngest (who is only 12) are faithful members of Christ's church.

A Memorial Scholarship Fund

The children of brother and sister Hyche are establishing a trust fund in MEMORY of their father, and in HONOR of their beloved mother, the interest from which fund is to be used to educate and train future gospel preachers for the church of Christ. The eldership of the Sixth Avenue church will be asked to administer it. The children are to be congratulated for choosing such a fine means to honor and to perpetuate the memory of those they love. Others who wish to do so are invited to contribute to this fund, which will be known as the *Hyche Preachers Scholarship Fund*. Gifts should be made payable to the above-named fund itself, and may be mailed to the Elders, Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

A Tribute To Henry B. Hyche

Henry B. Hyche
Nov. 12, 1916-Nov. 25, 1985

A Resolution

WHEREAS, brother Henry B. Hyche and his family worshiped regularly with this congregation, attending every possible service; --and,

WHEREAS, for several years he taught the Ladies Bible class on Sunday mornings; --and,

WHEREAS, he was chosen by our membership and was appointed a deacon of this congregation in 1965, in which capacity he served well for five years; --and,

WHEREAS, he was selected by the congregation to become one of its elders, and was



Henry B. Hyche

ordained an elder on September 18, 1970, which office he faithfully filled to the best of his ability for more than fifteen years, until his death; --and,

WHEREAS, he was interested in world evangelism, encouraging all missionary work and all faithful missionaries, both at home and abroad; especially was he involved in keeping in contact with Ron Harper, our former missionary to New Zealand; --and,

WHEREAS, he helped direct our educational program, including the screening and selection of faithful and capable teachers; assisted in choosing a well-rounded biblical curriculum that is educationally sound; and helped find for our use only scriptural class materials; --and,

WHEREAS, he helped us schedule faithful gospel preachers for revivals, reporting even the night of his death that only one date is unconfirmed before 1990, and that Bobby Duncan can come in 1993; --and,

WHEREAS, brother Henry B. Hyche was suddenly snatched by death from our midst during a meeting of the elders on Monday night, November 25, 1985; --

--BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we, his fellow elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, hereby certify that we collectively and individually do feel a keen personal loss in his passing; --and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we do hereby convey to his beloved wife and children our sincere Christian sympathy for them in their great loss, and our prayers as they face the future without brother Henry B. Hyche.

DONE BY ORDER of the eldership of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, in a regular meeting, December 23, 1985, and signed by us individually.

David Beard
Paul Dozier
Sam Evans
Lincoln Herzig
Dempsey Jones

A. C. McGlaun
John Panter
Wayne Primm
E. R. Tarence
Fletcher Wade

The Moral Code Of Jesus

Continued from page 2

children; in Christ we are granted the privilege of weighing many points in our minds and drawing our own conclusions in the light of those God-given principles. How much should I give to God? To the Jew, Moses prescribed a tenth (Leviticus 27:30); to us Jesus says, "give as you have prospered" (I Corinthians 16:2), and as you have purposed in your heart (II Corinthians 9:7), "for God loveth a cheerful giver."

There Are Moral Absolutes

Lest we be mistaken, we clearly affirm that there are moral absolutes in Christ's system. Paul reminds us, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal . . ." (Romans 13:9). But we must recognize the relatives that leave us to determine when, where, and to what degree we are obligated. How oft shall we pray? How much shall we give? What shall be the style of our hair? our beard? our dress? and many other similar matters?

A More Demanding System

Christ's morality is more demanding than that of the Old Covenant. While Moses proscribed specific sinful acts, Christ sought to eliminate the very root of the problem from the human heart. Moses said "Thou shalt not kill," but Jesus forbade being angry with one's brother (Matthew 5:22), for anger always precedes violence and murder. If there is aught between us and our neighbor, it must be resolved at once -- even worship must wait for the reconciliation (Matthew 5:21-24). The Old Law forbade adultery; Jesus forbade the lustful look that prepares the mind for the sinful act (Matthew 5:27-28). Moses warned against breaking one's oath; Jesus said, "Swear not at all" (Matthew 5:33-34). The Law said, "love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy;" Christ said, "Love your enemies and pray for them . . . that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven . . ." (Matthew 5:43-45).

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

What Is It Costing Us?

David, the king of Israel, committed a grave error when he numbered the people of Israel. Due to his iniquity, Gad (the prophet of God) listed three alternatives of punishment, from which David was to chose one. "So Gad came unto David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days pestilence in they land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me" (II Samuel 24:13).



Victor M. Eskew

The king chose the pestilence. "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed, and there died of

the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men" (24:15). When David saw the greatness of the plague, he cried, saying: "Lo, I have sinned, and have done wickedly . . . let thine hand, I pray thee be against me, and against my father's house" (24:17).

The Lord consented to the change in David's punishment, but, in order to stay the plague, a sacrifice had to be made. He was sent to the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite to accomplish this. Upon David's arrival, he met Araunah and explained to him his business. "And Araunah said unto David, Let my Lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood" (24:22). Thus, David had everything needed at his disposal, having been offered it by Araunah.

David, however, would not accept the things offered by Araunah free of charge. His reason in refusing the things is found in II Samuel 24:24, and contained therein is a marvelous lesson for Christians today: "And the king said unto Araunah, Nay: but I will surely buy

it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."

David was a man of conscientiousness. He refused to give unto God something which cost him nothing out of his own pocket. Would that more in congregations of the Lord's people could think as David thought! If they would, they would not be satisfied to give a dollar or two when the collection plate passed by on Sunday morning. For many, their contribution is not a sacrifice at all. They give God the "leftovers," or the pocket-change which is handy as the contribution is gathered. They are satisfied to give to God that which costs them *nothing*.

Each person needs to ask himself the question: "What is my giving costing me?" If it is little or nothing, consider prayerfully David's words: ". . . neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

—608 So. 4th St., Hayti, MO 63851.

"Don't Drink And Drive"

Bob Plunket

I get a little angry every time I hear this spot on television! The liquor people are trying to appease all of the mothers and fathers and husbands and wives whose loved ones have been slaughtered on the highways. The impression they want to leave is this: "You can do everything else and drink." Of course, you should not drink and drive. It would make a lot more sense, however, if they said, "Don't drink and do anything." And why not? Alcohol is a narcotic, mind-altering drug. Many times they say to young people, "Don't fool around with drugs *and alcohol*" as though alcohol were in a different category. Listen: the same thing that makes drinking and driving dangerous, makes everything else dangerous while drinking!

I can think of a few more things we ought not to do and drink. Don't drink and play with matches. Many of the fires in the woods and in the home are alcohol related. Don't drink and go home. Family members are there. Much of the wife-battering and child abuse is alcohol related. Don't drink and go to work. You may turn out sorry goods, or you might push the wrong button. Don't drink and go to bed. Seventy percent of all the people who choke to death in their sleep have been drinking. Don't drink and walk. You might fall and kill yourself. We are aware of two nationally-known figures who both died intoxicated. One was walking across the room intoxicated, fell and cut his head on a coffee table and bled to death. The other fell off a boat and drowned.

Someone may say then, "When can we drink?" There is no safe time to drink, there is not safe place, and there is no safe amount to drink, any more than there is a right time, a right place or a right amount of cocaine or heroin to shoot. They are all drugs.

We must not let this deceitful commercial fool us into thinking we can drink all we want to, so long as we don't drive. The wise man said it well, "Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging" (Proverbs 20:1). Christians

are urged to be "sober" (II Thessalonians 5:8). "The end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer"

(I Peter 4:7).

—Church of Christ, 110 E. 4th Street, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

A Good Product

W. T. Hamilton

In this age of conformity, it is easy for one to get an inferiority complex. We are so prone to compare ourselves with others. And it may be that they merely wear their success well. They have the Midas touch in business; they always know just what to say socially; they always get the breaks! Of course, if we could see beneath the surface, see their inner problems, we would cease envying them, or trying to be like them.

Instead of comparing one's self with what someone else seems to be, how about looking at one's own individuality. God made us all different. But he did a good work with each. Each has a place to fill, a work to do, a purpose for life. God made us that way. And he knew what he was doing.

If one has a tendency to feel inferior, he should remember three things:

(1) GOD MADE US. And God does not turn out an inferior product. Once one was making an excuse to Charles Spurgeon for his failure to try a certain task, on the ground that he was a "nobody." Spurgeon quickly replied: "God Almighty had no time to make nobodies!"

(2) GOD WORKS THROUGH US. The idea of being in partnership with God is shocking, but true. Antonio Stradivari, the most celebrated of Italian violin makers, had the right idea:

I say not God himself can make man's best
Without best men to help him . . .

'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands; he could not

make

Antonio Strdivari's violins
Without Antonio.

--George Elliott.

No wonder he made such violins!

(3) GOD DWELLS IN US. And this is the most shocking thought of all! When one becomes his child, he abides within. And surely, if God comes to dwell with us, ours cannot be an inferior house!

—16026 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 77062.

If

If you were busy being kind,
Before you knew it, you would find
You'd soon forget to think 'twas true
That someone was unkind to you.
If you were busy being glad,
And cheering people who are sad,
Although your heart might ache a bit,
You'd soon forget to notice it.
If you were busy being good,
And doing just the best you could,
You'd not have time to blame some man
Who's doing just the best he can.
If you were busy being true
To what you know you ought to do,
You'd be so busy you'd forget
The blunders of the folks you've met.



Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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What Preachers Can Do To Stop Abortion

The battle to stop abortion would soon be won if the moral and spiritual leaders of the land could be awakened and inspired to join the fray. It is obvious that many preachers feel little or no obligation to actively involve themselves in the conflict. The following thoughts are addressed to such men.



John Waddey

It is the duty of ministers to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12). This warfare involves more than just abstract doctrinal questions. We must also fight those moral evils that destroy the souls of men. Ours is a spiritual war of ideologies. "We do not war according to the flesh . . ." We are "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

At the heart of the abortion controversy is the conflict of the humanistic versus the Biblical view of man. Those who view man only as a highly-evolved animal have no scruples in destroying weak or unwanted lives. Christians who see man as the offspring of God (Acts 17:28), reverence and respect all human life as made in God's image. The humanist knows no higher code of conduct than "might makes right." We know the law of God which says "thou shalt not kill" (Romans 13:8).

Men are needed to stand in the gaps and

help to repair the moral walls of the nation, and even of the church. In every generation God seeks such men (Ezekiel 22:30). It is unbelievable that men who should be crying out against evil are sometimes found defending the unholy practice. Among the liberal denominations, there exists a *Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights*.

Faithful preachers are needed to provide a good example of positive involvement in the fight to save human life from abortion violence. "Be thou an example to them that believe . . ." (I Timothy 4:12). One dedicated soldier can be the cause of a hundred new recruits, or to stir up the uncommitted to fervent involvement.

Preachers can lead the members of their congregation to a proper understanding about the evil of abortion. "Let our people also learn to maintain good works . . ." (Titus 3:14). Surely to save an innocent life is a good work. Truth makes men free (John 8:32). Ignorance and error enslave. Christians need to be taught the sacredness of human life and the evil of killing, no matter what euphemisms are used to camouflage the deed. People must learn the humanity of the unborn child and its developmental progress. The barbarity of abortion, its malevolent impact on babies, mothers and society must be exposed. Don't wait until more lives are lost and others ruined before you speak. Preventive medicine is always best. Show your people why it is right for them to fight against Satan and his evil ways (James 4:7).

To be a moral beacon in a world of moral/spiritual darkness is part of a preacher's duty (Philippians 2:15). You have numerous opportunities to speak to this subject in your pulpit and classroom and on other platforms as well. Preachers often are asked to speak at civic clubs, school functions, preachers' meet-

ings. There are opportunities to speak on radio, TV or to write news columns. Preach God's word on this serious matter to that broader audience (II Timothy 4:2).

To be effective, one must arm himself adequately to do battle with the evil practices of the day and the arguments defending such. Like a well-equipped Roman soldier, we need the whole armor of God, plus the courage to stand and fight (Ephesians 6:13-18). Ignorance is not bliss in this conflict. Our pro-abortion enemy is usually vocal, brazened, and loaded with a hundred deceitful arguments that sound "reasonable" to the uninformed. Take the time to educate yourself so that you can refute every false argument and establish your case for the sacredness of life. By all means purchase and consume *A Handbook on Abortion* by Dr. J. C. Willke (Hayes Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio 45224). My book, *Fighting the Good Fight of Faith*, deals with the religious aspects of the question.

Ministers should use their influence to bring their fellow preachers to a proper view of this crucial issue. Without your help they may well become involved in the sin by their tolerance or by actually counselling a troubled mother to abort her child. The golden rule should prompt us to offer our knowledge to our fellow servants (Matthew 7:12).

One can help by leading his congregation to reach out with a helping hand to women with problem pregnancies. The church can minister to them in Jesus' name. Without condoning their sin, we can assist unwed mothers with proper food, shelter, and prenatal medical care. Some young girls in this condition are literally on the streets, on their own. Poor mothers may need our help. Es-

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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 26:35

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS . . . Editor
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What Preachers Can Do To Stop Abortion

Continued from page 1

pecially should rape victims be our concern. Our charge is to "do good to all men, especially them of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). The unfortunate mother and her baby are worthy subjects of our benevolence. To smugly withhold assistance could well drive a desperate mother to an abortion clinic.

We can all pray diligently for God's help in defeating the death peddlers, the necro-philiacs. We need to offer "supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings" for our rulers, that they will use their offices to stop the slaughter (I Timothy 2:1-2). We must pray for those girls and women contemplating abortion, that the eyes of their hearts be enlightened before they stain their hands with the blood of their own young (Ephesians 1:18). Pray that God will smite the hard hearts of the abortionists who kill for the greed of money, that they will turn from their vicious trade.

Finally we preachers must be willing to endure the wrath and railing of those who would destroy a baby that stands in the way of their pleasure, freedom, or money. When we testify of their evil works, they will hate us, even as they did Jesus (John 7:7). Likely you never have encountered the scorn and abuse the pro-abortionists will heap upon you. But "blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely . . ." (Matthew 5:11). To see the smile of one baby you saved will make it all worthwhile. To hear the thanks of one mother you helped to avoid so horrible a mistake will repay you a thousand fold.

Abortion can and will be stopped. May you be a part of the victorious celebration when that day comes.

Short Sermons

A frown is just a smile turned upside down.
* * * *

It is said that the death penalty does not discourage crime, but it probably does to the one who committed it.

The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Some Lessons From Football

Jesus and his apostles used familiar things to illustrate divine truth. Our Lord referred to the lilies, fowls, a fisherman, a sower, and numerous other things to illustrate his points. Paul referred to a race, boxing, a soldier's armour, and such like. Since the sports world's attention is focused on the "Super Bowl," let us draw some lessons from the game of football.



Flavil H. Nichols

Just as all members of the team must cooperate in order to win, so in the church all members should learn the value of working together. "Let nothing be done through strife . . ." (Philippians 2:3).

The game of football is governed by a rule-book. The game must be played by the rules --and they read the same to me, as they do to you. The rule-book not only tells how to score, it also spells out penalties for those who violate the rules. Similarly, the 'game' of life has a rule-book --the Bible! Unlike the sports rule-book, the Bible never needs revision, for it is inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16). The Holy Spirit by the mouth of David and other inspired men (Acts 1:16) spake the scriptures, and forbids any changes or alterations of the word (Galatians 1:6-9). Those who do not speak according to this word have no light in them (Isaiah 8:20), nor do they have God with them (II John 9-11). This rule-book is the same all over the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49). Ignorance of the rules does not excuse nor justify violations (Hosea 4:6). In fact, men are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them" (Ephesians 4:18). No player is allowed to twist the rules, nor to 'interpret' them, to suit his own notions (II Peter 3:16). The Bible, like a rule-book, tells us what the penalties will be for each infraction (Psalms 9:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

All players must obey the coach, who may represent God, our Father. We are fortunate to have such a God as he is! Daniel exclaimed: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him" (Daniel 2:20-22). Therefore as 'players' on his team, "we ought to obey God, rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

Only the members of his team are subject to the coach, and all who submit to God are members of his church (Acts 2:47). Those who do not obey God are unsaved (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). As the coach has a game-plan, so God has a plan for us and for our lives (Matthew 7:21; Ephesians 1:9, 11, 12). A respectable coach disciplines unruly players, and God chastens us (Hebrews 12:9), requiring also his church to discipline unruly members (II Thessalonians 3:6).

All the football officials may represent Christ, for he has "all power . . . in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). He is the Referee, Umpire, Line Judge, Field Judge --all the officials in one --judging both the progress made, and the conduct of the players. And all decisions will be made in harmony with the rule-book, for "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16; note also Acts 17:30-31; II Timothy 4:1-8; I Peter 4:5; Acts 10:42).

In the New Testament church there are "elders in every church" (Acts 14:23) "in every city" (Titus 1:5), who may be represented by the Quarterback. The Quarterback himself is a member of the team, who must comply with the directions of the Coach. Upon the instructions of the Coach, the Quarterback calls the plays. No player is allowed to argue with the Quarterback, nor to call a different set of signals, thus dividing the team (Hebrews 13:7, 17). A team spirit is very necessary: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13). It is a sin to cause division among the team (church) members! Not all players have the same abilities, nor the same responsibilities. For example, the half-back may not be a good punter, the center may not be a good pass-receiver, the quarterback may not be a good defense lineman, etc. Even so in the church we have "differing" gifts or abilities; but each should use his to the fullest extent possible (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:14-31).

Some other lessons which may be learned from this sport are: (1) If one does not play according to the rules, he will be penalized. Similarly, we will suffer if we violate God's rules (I Corinthians 9:24-27). (2) The violator is not the only one who suffers: --the whole team is set back. Backsliders retard and hinder the whole congregation (I Corinthians 5:6-7). (3) One mistake can affect the outcome of the game. This also is true in the church. (4) While faithfulness (Revelation 2:10) is required, no one is expected to be sinlessly perfect; yet each is expected to do his

Continued on page 3

Worry And The Kingdom Of God

John P. Weekley

Our Lord said, "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 6:33). The word rendered "thought" means "worry." Worry will cause one to be distracted from spiritual goals. In the parable of the sower we read, "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with CARES and RICHES and pleasures of this life, and bring NO fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14, caps mine jpw). The word which is translated "choke" conveys the idea of "crowding." "Anxieties" that go with materialism can "crowd" one away from the most important things in life.

Not only is this anxiety (Matthew 6:34) distracting, but it also deals with time. The time element in this verse is future. Jesus is warning us against *living in the future*. There is a vast difference in *planning* for the future versus *living* in the future. The Bible itself is a book which deals with plans for the future. Passages like Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; Isaiah 7:14; Galatians 4:4; Acts 17:30-31, and many others so demonstrate. But never do we find God getting ahead of himself. Jesus on more than one occasion referred to his hour that was to come (John 2:4; 7:6; 12:23). When Christians *live* in the future, instead of *planning* for the future, their lives become burdened not only with today's problems but also with tomorrow's. That is too much of a load for any person to bear, and it is forbidden.

The Lord said, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body" (Matthew 6:25). This passage forbids distracting cares for the basic necessities of life. One can become so concerned about physical needs for self that he forgets God. In Luke 12:16-21 all of the references to "I" show that this man was rich toward himself because he was overly concerned about himself. His main interests in life were for his self-needs rather than his godly needs. He became so involved with his needs that he forgot God. We are to be concerned about the basic needs of life (I Timothy 5:8; II Thessalonians 3:10), but not to the degree that it distracts us from spiritual needs (Matthew

16:26).

Just prior to making the above statement, Jesus said, "... ye cannot serve God and mammon" (verse 24). The Greek word for "mammon" not only means riches, but carries the idea of TRUSTING in riches. Our Lord said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt . . ." (Matthew 6:19). So we as Christians are not to: (1) treasure up earthly things, Matthew 6:19; (2) trust in earthly riches, Matthew 6:24; (3) be OVERCONCERNED about earthly needs, Matthew 6:25; or (4) be OVERBURDENED with earthly problems, Matthew 6:34.

The Lord said, "(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) . . ." (Matthew 6:32). After reading Psalms 1:18-32 it is evident that three of the basic causes for the Gentiles to give up a knowledge of God were: (1) materialistic goals rather than spiritual, (2) trust in material things rather than God, and (3) over-concern (worry) about material possessions. These objectives always pull men away from God.

"God is a spirit" (John 4:24). God's word is a spiritual message (John 6:63). God's kingdom is a spiritual one (Matthew 6:33; Luke 17:20-21). And God's hope for man is spiritual (I Corinthians 15:50). Thus, for one to order his life in harmony with a knowledge of God and his will, one's objectives MUST BE spiritual, not physical.

Two things which go together in a given society are materialism and worry. It is difficult to know which comes first. It is like the chicken-or-egg dilemma for the evolutionist: which came first? But it seems that affluence breeds anxiety; then anxiety creates a greater desire for material things, and also a vain trust in the physical.

But the question arises, How can we put materialism and worry in the right perspectives? We don't want to trust in riches; and also we want to reduce our concerns to a day-at-a-time. The answer is found in the word of God. In Ecclesiastes 12:13 man's true purpose in life is stated. In Matthew 4:4 we find man's true sustenance in life. Man's true possessions in life are named in Luke 12:15. In Matthew 6:33 we find man's true priorities during life on earth. When these four Bible facts become a part of our lives (James 1:21), we see that we have less to worry about, more to be happy about, and find ourselves going about our Father's business.

Some examples where materialism and worries have distracted men from God's will are: (1) Elders sometime fail to launch needed programs for the local church because they are over-concerned about the future, such as building programs. (2) Some elders fail to lead in discipline programs for their flocks because of worry and (real or imaginary) fears about future consequences. (3) Some preachers quit preaching because they worry about retirement needs. (4) Some qualified Christian men fail to begin preaching because of anxieties about the future of the present evil age and the "ism-trends" in the church, rather than believing in the power and victory of Truth. These fears and worries are created and intensified simply because we are not seeking first God's kingdom.

The two basic things in this article that keep men from seeking first God's will are

materialism and anxiety. The common denominator in overcoming these two obstacles is found in Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Where is your heart? Is your heart living in the year 2,000 burdened with problems that haven't even happened yet -- if ever they will? Is your heart over-involved in material possessions to the extent that it no longer cares for the poor, the lost, the church, or its own spiritual growth? (Hebrews 6:1).

For our hearts to be right, there are some things we must do: We must guard our hearts from evil (Proverbs 4:23). We must remove some things from our hearts (I Peter 5:7). We must clean-up our hearts and keep them pure (James 4:8). It is not very difficult for a faithful Christian to be more concerned about material things and the cares of this life than God's child should be. But it is totally possible for the Christian to be free from such sin (I Corinthians 10:12-13).

—Cherokee Church of Christ, P.O. Box 233, Cherokee, Alabama 35616.

Authority, Please

The religious world generally does not understand New Testament Christianity. And those misunderstandings continue to try to make inroads into the church.

On my desk is an ad trying to sell us: "A rosary of outstanding value. Oval beads strongly mounted on silverplated wire and chain."

Another ad is trying to sell us "the only piano in the world designed with the assistance of a computer." They even offered free coffee, donuts, and a luncheon to prospective buyers for churches.

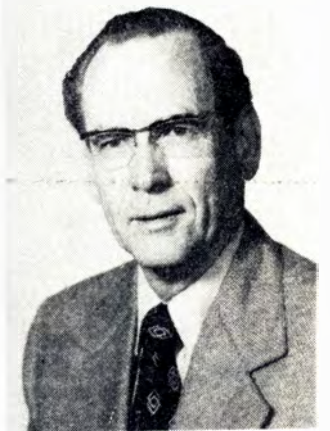
Still another wants to send us a "free catalog of 'tailor-made' choir robes and ministerial gowns."

All of these have come in the mail recently. And then there are the phone calls! The other day some woman called and requested permission to come some Sunday morning and preach for us about a benevolent program she was working on. And on and on it goes.

It is easy to say "no" to requests like the above because it is easy to see that the New Testament does not authorize such things. But some requests are more subtle. Denominational preachers who cannot get into our pulpits in person sometimes manage to get there by filming their sermons. If something is entertaining, popular, or catchy, we are tempted to use it to lure in people who have lost their appetite for the sincere milk of the WORD. I think I remember reading something in the Book about those who "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

Any time we trade the plain preaching of the gospel for the philosophies of the world, we have made a bad, bad trade.

—16026 Diana Lane, Houston, Texas 77062.



W. T. Hamilton

Some Lessons From Football

Continued from page 2

best. There is a vast difference between accidentally DROPPING the ball, and in selling out to known gamblers (I John 1:7-10). (5) Training rules are for our --and the team's-- own good. God never demands that we give up one thing that is BEST for us! (Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2). All divine regulations are "for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24).

There is worldly honor for a winning football team, with each player entitled to a monetary reward. But for the faithful Christian, there is God's approval in this life, and "in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30), with "an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (I Peter 1:4).

Practical Theism

Dick Sztanyo

Many articles have been written on "practical atheism." "Practical atheism" manifests itself in the lives of those who *do* believe in God, but *who live, act, and think as if God does not exist!* Their thoughts are rarely focused upon God and his will; they do not attend worship assemblies regularly; their speech and actions are indistinguishable from others around them who do NOT believe in God. In short, they are *really* no different from *atheists*, in spite of the fact that they *do* believe in God. Actually, they are more cowardly and dishonest than the atheist who, at least, has the courage of his convictions; whereas the "practical atheist" does not.

But, while articles have been plentiful on "practical atheism," I have yet to see the first word on "practical *theism*." The "practical theist" is one who doubts, or is unsure of, God's existence -- but *who lives, acts, and thinks as if God does exist*. There are currently some within the body of Christ who counsel men and women to adopt this posture toward God. I have heard with my own ears a statement like the following: "When persons express their doubts concerning God's existence, I advise them to act 'as if' he does exist for one month, and watch what happens" (my paraphrase). Persons who accept this advice actually admit the possibility (?) of the non-existence of God, and are led to think that their *beliefs and/or actions* will make a difference in *reality!* But, if God does not really exist (and, since they do not *know* for sure, such is a *strong* possibility -- so far as *they* are concerned), one's subjective beliefs (however sincere) and actions (however strenuous) will not bring him into existence! That is, one's beliefs and/or actions cannot change the reality of the situation!! *God either exists, or he does not!* One's belief will not change the truth!

Biblical writers, by way of contrast, insisted that men put any "belief" to the test so as to determine whether or not it was (or is) true (see Isaiah 41:21; I Thessalonians 5:21; I Peter 3:15; John 8:32). Once this determination has been made, then one's beliefs and actions are to be brought into line with the truth (that is, the reality involved). This *obligation* (and, it is a mandate from the Lord) *cannot be fulfilled at all* by the "practical theist." He defines *faith* as, "living as if the position one accepts is true." This is agnosticism of the rankest sort, and an utter perversion of Biblical faith. The same God who is the *source* of faith, and the One who *defines* faith, said: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21), and "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob" (Isaiah 41:21). Biblical faith is non-existent in the absence of adequate evidence.

One philosopher-theologian (not a member of the church) recently wrote:

I have just opened a learned and authoritative textbook of the Christian Faith, and it says: "We ought not to believe the truth of any statement without evidence. That is as much a matter of common sense for Christians as for anyone else. Plainly, then, the idea of 'faith' as a sort of admission ticket to the company of those who accept a whole lot of things without proper evidence will not do"

The whole notion of believing on inadequate evidence is alien to Christian thinking (Harry Blamires, *On Christian Truth*, pp. 1-2).

But, this is precisely what the "practical theist" asks us to do, namely, to believe in the existence of God *without* adequate evidence!! Biblical writers, however, *knew* that adequate evidence exists for one to properly argue the case for God (see Psalms 19:1f; Romans 1:19-21; Hebrews 3:4; Acts 14:14-17; 17:22-31). Indeed, God "left not himself without witness" (Acts 14:17), but rather, he has "showed it" unto men (Romans 1:19). In fact, "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are" (and have been -- D.S.) "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). In the face of available evidence, those who reject God are rendered "excuseless" (to coin a term). There *is* adequate evidence to *know* that God exists, and one can *know* that he *knows* the truth on this subject.

The Bible contains an excellent example of "practical theism" at work. The *context* is Isaiah 40-46, and the *subject* is: God vs. "gods." A crucial stage in the argument is reached in Isaiah 41:21-24, 28: "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it altogether . . . For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word."

These people both believed and acted "as if" their "gods" were real; but they were not.

The false prophets in Isaiah 41 used an "argument" (?) similar to that used by the "practical theist." Though each is SUBJECTIVELY convinced that his conclusion is correct, the false prophets sought to prove the existence of their "gods," whereas our modern practical theists mean to prove the existence of "God." But SUBJECTIVE CONVICTION is no substitute for OBJECTIVE TRUTH. And, it is definitely not PROOF!! Subjectively, one may adopt the "try-it,-you'll-like-it" approach; but let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that this is the approach urged upon us by Scripture. *Even God himself* (in the passage being considered), *does not neglect the need for authentic credentials in order to establish the position advanced.*

Our modern advisers should read (and carefully study) this passage. In it, they should observe the sheer folly of "practical theism." Moreover, they should note God's utter contempt for the "practical theistic" approach. Most importantly, they (like the rest of us) should observe God's demand to settle this question on the basis of *adequate evidence*. (NOTE: in this particular context, the evidence is predictive prophecy).

"Practical theism" is heresy. The Christian system makes a demand upon man so exclusive and so radical, that it *cannot* be recommended on any other basis than the *fact* that it stands the test of *hard evidence*, and the *fact* that, as a result of standing the test, the *Christian system is true!!!* "We ought not believe the truth of any statement without evidence" is the hallmark of genuine *Christian* theism. Let us all refuse to play the "as-if" game.

—Brown Trail School of Preaching, P.O. Box 865, Hurst, TX 76053.

Secret Fraternal Orders

For too many years we have been far too reluctant to speak out against the Lodges and "Secret Orders." There are several basic errors connected with such arrangements, and any one conversant with the Bible knows this to be the factual view. In attending funerals which Masons conduct you will hear them say: "Now our departed brother has gone to the grand lodge above." This anti-Biblical statement needs to be rebuked loud and clear. No one can go to heaven through a fraternal order. Only through Christ and his church can this be accomplished (Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Ephesians 5:22-27).

Leaders in these "Secret Orders" are called "Worshipful Master," "Potentate," and other terms that belong only to the Lord. In I Timothy 6:15 and Matthew 4:10 we are taught that the Lord of heaven and earth is the only potentate and the exclusive One to be worshipped.

Perhaps the most blasphemous part of the



Johnny Ramsey

Lodge is when the "member to be" is told that he can "come out of darkness into light" by virtue of membership in the fraternal order! In Colossians 1:13; Acts 26:18; and II Timothy 1:10 we learn that such blessings come only through Christ.

In Ephesians 5:11-12 we read: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

The injunction of II Corinthians 6 rings clear to Christians: "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

—Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

Short Sermons

There is no real substitute for brains, but silence does pretty well.

* * *

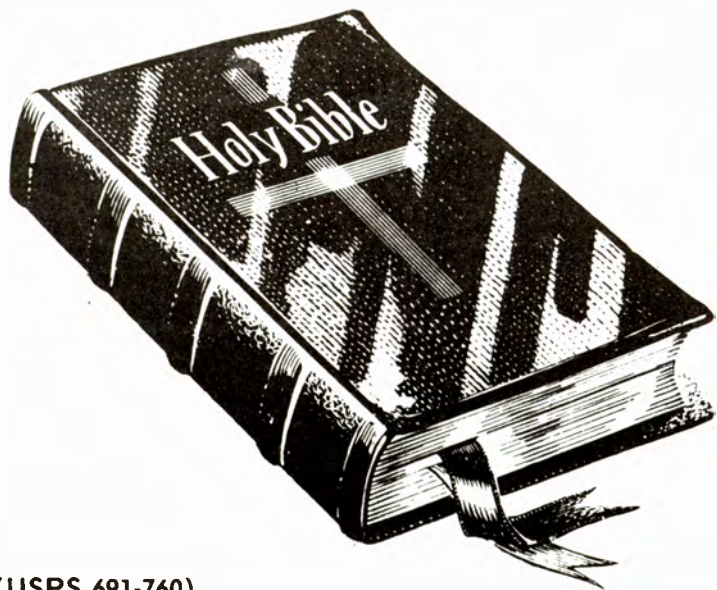
Many a fellow gets a reputation for being energetic when in truth he is merely fidgety.

* * *

The best way to learn the value of money is to try to borrow some.

* * *

Somehow, what you hear is never so important as what you overhear.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 6

Welfare-ism

Since World War II America has developed an extensive welfare system. While some have been helped by this program, not all results have been positive. Among the failures of the system is that many welfare recipients are not inclined to want to get off it by becoming self-sufficient. It is not uncommon to hear, "Why should I work when, I can stay home and draw my check and make almost as much?" Not only are incentive and ambition destroyed, so is self-respect and dignity. God says "If any will not work neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10). He expects a man to provide for his own (I Timothy 5:8).



John Waddey

When he constituted ancient Israel, God made provision for the poor. They were given the privilege of gleaning the fields of the prosperous (Deuteronomy 24:19-22). Thus help was provided, but still they worked for what they got. Self-respect was preserved while their needs were met. While traveling in Africa and Asia this author was impressed with the fact that while the people were very poor by our standards, they were determined to improve themselves. They worked long and hard to provide their needs and to get ahead. They have something many of American's welfare recipients do not have, i.e., self-respect and ambition.

There is another kind of welfare-ism that likewise does much harm: In their commitment to mission work, some strong churches have spoiled some weak churches in mission fields. The strong brethren have been so generous and patient in their financial support

that the mission church has had no incentive or ambition to become self-supporting.

One sees two kinds of mission churches. One will be aggressive, sacrificial and determined to be self-sustaining. It may need help for a limited time, but from the first it wants to stand on its own feet. Its members commit themselves financially before they ask others to help. If a strong church will provide them a gospel preacher, they will work diligently to support his efforts of evangelism. In short, they ask no one to do what they are capable of doing for themselves. Given a few years of outside help, they will soon be able to assume full self-sufficiency. Such a congregation will nearly always grow rapidly and mature early. It is the very nature of independence and responsibility to produce such characteristics. Almost always this type church will be evangelistic, and will be inclined to assist other mission calls at an early date.

The other kind of mission church will be lethargic and indifferent. Its members will show little inclination to give generously or to reach out evangelistically. If they want a building, they look for someone to pay for it. When they need a preacher, they expect someone else to supply his salary. They might ask another congregation, or a school, to conduct a campaign in their community, and few (if any) of their own members participate in the outreach. Such churches usually will reflect a poor record of generosity in their giving and a slowness in developing their own teachers, elders, and soul-winners. They may likely be very hesitant to give up assistance sent from supporting churches and to supply their own needs. Surely everyone would agree that such a condition is not healthy and productive of good. The author hastens to add that such a situation is not peculiar to primitive churches in the Third World. Numerous examples are found in Europe, The Commonwealth nations, and America.


WHAT CAN BE DONE

Welfare-ism is both contagious and chronic.

Once it fixes itself upon a body, it is most difficult to cure. The following suggestions can help us to avoid encouraging the problem, and can promote sound spiritual health in mission fields.

1. When planting mission churches, every effort should be made to place responsibility on the local brethren from the very beginning. This encourages growth, maturity and responsibility.
2. Rather than do a job *for those brethren, help them to do the job.*
3. It is generally a mistake to provide a modern meeting house, lock and key, for a new group of Christians. It will do them much more good to struggle to acquire their own facilities. What they have struggled to achieve for themselves will have far more meaning and value to them.
4. If the strong church supplies a preacher, it is wise to allow the local brethren to supply his housing, or his utilities, or his Social Security. What costs nothing is usually not appreciated. From the beginning they must learn that they who are taught in the word should communicate unto those who teach them in all good things (Galatians 6:6).
5. Those who conduct evangelistic campaigns for mission churches should insist that the receiving brethren work with them in knocking doors and teaching classes. How else will they learn to do this essential work? They should open their homes and tables to the volunteers who have journeyed to help them.
6. When a strong church agrees to assist a mission congregation, there should be a definite plan and timetable for the receiving church to gradually assume its financial independence. The very fact of knowing that in 5 years (or 10, as the agreement may be) the outside support will be gone, becomes a powerful incentive to build up the church by growth, both in numbers and in giving. When the agreement to support a mission church is open-ended and unconditional, human nature

Continued on page 2



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:35

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Postal Rates Force Price Increase

Words Of Truth is mailed under a permit for the preferred rate of second-class postage. Effective January 1, 1986, the U. S. Postal Service increased the rate from 6.5¢ per copy to 8.4¢ each copy. The cost of getting this journal to our readers was therefore raised by 1.9¢ each copy.



Mr. Horace Moore, Vice — President/Publisher of Mid-South Newspapers, Inc., whose *Northwest Alabamian* prints and mails *Words Of Truth* for us, writes:

This does not sound like very much money, but it amounts to approximately \$800.00 per month increase. . . I do not

have enough profit built in to absorb this extra cost of postage, so therefore I will have to pass it along to the churches.

I have tried to publish for you a quality *Words Of Truth* at the lowest price possible . . . but when the postage increases there is nothing we can do but pay the increase.

This raises the subscription from 20¢ to 22¢ a week. This makes it only \$11.44 annually, which is the price of only one (1) postage stamp per week. In other words, after you have read your copy, a first class stamp to send it to some member of your family will be as expensive as a *subscription* for them to receive it directly!

It is our aim to maintain a high standard of journalism, with articles designed to convert the unsaved and to promote spiritual growth. We solicit your continued readership, and desire your assistance to increase the circulation of *Words Of Truth*.

— The Editor.

Welfare-ism

Continued from page 1

will tend to receive it as long as possible. In religion, as in business, we tend to accept all the 'golden eggs' the 'goose' will lay.

7. The preacher who accepts work with a mission congregation that needs outside help on his salary should insist that those brethren assist him in raising those funds. They should feel a responsibility to help find the support that directly benefits them. This encourages responsibility.

8. Elders who send to a mission work should expect accountability from those who receive assistance. As stewards of God's funds they need to know how they are being used. It also encourages the recipients to be careful in their management and use of the help received. Some helping congregations are embarrassed, even appalled, when they learn that their support has not been put to its intended use.

CONCLUSION

We offer these thoughts, not to discourage mission work; rather, to encourage good stewardship of the manifold gifts of God (I Peter 4:10). We would not hinder young churches; we would help them to help themselves. Welfare-ism is not the true benevolence that God enjoins. *Churches* (as well as *men*) must provide for their own (I Timothy 5:8). Among congregations as among men, those who will not work to supply their own needs should not expect others to do so (II Thessalonians 3:10).

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Short Sermons

The silver lining is easier to find in somebody else's cloud.

* * *

All play and no work presents the problem of what to do with your leisure.

* * *

Truth only has to change hands a few times to become fiction.

An Open Letter To "Bill" Banowsky

Dear brother Banowsky:

During my college years I preached in a Methodist Church one Sunday. Because of their respect for our brethren in their town, they sang a cappella that morning. My sermon was on the New Testament church, showing that it can be identified by its 'earmarks' in the New Testament. By taking the Bible as our guide, we can — and have—reproduced that church today exactly as it was taught to be in the first century. Years ago I read and appreciated brother Leroy Brownlow's Sermon in the Methodist Church. Many others also have preached in denominational pulpits, speaking "as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11), teaching the very truths the hearers needed to hear.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

But this is a far cry from your preaching in the Methodist Church in Fort Worth on Sunday morning, January 5, 1986. I saw the VCR reproduction of that service, and was grieved to hear you tell that denomination that the best thing they could do was to keep their church program and their pastor, Dr. Bailey, on TV. If Jesus or one of his apostles had been in your place, do you for one moment suppose that he would have endorsed the Methodist denomination? Would he not have cried:

"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13)? You passed up an excellent opportunity to present a dynamic plea for Christ as the only begotten Son of God, the Bible as the verbally-inspired word of God, and the church as the heaven-born, blood-bought body of Christ! You fumbled the ball when it comes to pleading with men to let the Bible be our guide—our only guide—in matters of religion. You did not exhort the hearer to believe with all his heart in Jesus Christ, and obey him. Neither did you zero in on the warnings of the Holy Spirit against adding to, or in any way perverting (Galatians 1:6-10) the gospel of Christ. Nor did you plead for unity in Christ (John 17:20-21), nor cry out against religious division (I Corinthians 1:10-14).

Not from the sermon itself, but from the caption flashed on the screen, I learned that your sermon was to be "Christ in you, the hope of Glory". Probably most of those present had been sprinkled into the Methodist Church; many of that denomination have never even *seen* an immersion. Do you *actually* believe that Christ is *in* even the unimmersed—regardless of their piety? Much of what you said is true, and some of it would have been appropriately taught to Christians. However, your assertion that

What your mind can conceive,
and what your heart can believe,
you can achieve!

is simply false! Man can conceive of flying through the air by 'flapping' his arms, without

Continued On Page 4

Restoration Convictions

Dabney Phillips

The Christian has convictions relative to the uniqueness of the Bible and to the deity of Jesus. This conviction has cost the lives of thousands of individuals who have graced God's earth. In the early eighteenth century in America, there was a breed of men who possessed this spiritual steel of *courage*. People do not leave the religion of their parents and friends over trivial matters. This article purports to cite the deep convictions of a number of our "fathers in the faith."

Thomas Campbell and his illustrious son, Alexander, broke with Presbyterianism. This was a difficult task, as their religious past was hoary with age. Thomas wrote the well-known document, "Declaration and Address," in September, 1809, which was in direct opposition to all that he previously held to be dear. It was at the historic meeting at the home of Abraham Altars in August, 1809, where Thomas Campbell coined the phrase, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent."

Andrew Munro, the area bookstore owner, stated in response to the slogan: "If we adopt that as a practice, then there is an end to infant baptism."

Thomas Campbell then replied: "If infant baptism is not found in the Scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it."

After a major spiritual struggle, "Raccoon" John Smith made a break from Calvinism. His friends told him that his family would go hungry and that he would lose his farm. Bravely, "Raccoon" replied, "Conscience is an article that I have not brought into the market; but if I should offer it for sale, Montgomery County (Kentucky) with all its lands and houses would not be enough to buy it, much less that farm of one hundred acres."

Barton W. Stone paid the price for returning to New Testament Christianity. Following Stone's and four other preachers' departure from Presbyterianism, those four in time defected from the truth; two returned to the Presbyterian faith, and two went with the Shakers. It was then that Stone commented, "Of the five of us who left the Presbyterians, I only was left, and they sought my life" (Cf. I Kings 19:10). Stone informed the Cane Ridge and Concord congregations that he was resigning as their preacher due to his new convictions. He was willing to give up two salaries; but these congregations refused to accept his resignation, and in time came into the restoration fold.

When Walter Scott accepted the assignment to preach on the Western Reserve in 1827-1830, it was a decision of tremendous proportions. He would be away from his wife and three children almost constantly; he would leave his preaching at the church in Pittsburgh, and the teaching in his academy in the same city. Scott prepared himself by study, prayer, and consulting with brethren prior to launching into this evangelistic endeavor. His efforts were crowned with one thousand additions for three years, as the Mahoning River became a second "Jordan River." During this period of time he preached from two to three times daily -- eating and sleeping when he could!

The tender Moses Lard was in financial straits most of his life. He refused to write for an annual fee of \$5,000 for the secular New York Ledger, as he claimed he could not

write on a schedule.

T. B. Larimore said, as he described the convictions of Tolbert Fanning, his former teacher, "He preached as if he believed the temporal and eternal salvation of the whole human race and all the holy angels depended upon the discourse as then and there delivered."

J. W. McGarvey indicated his convictions when he stated, "If I were in the ocean on a plank, I would fight to maintain it from anyone else."

David Lipscomb almost went back to the Primitive Baptist Church, upon the defection

of Jesse Ferguson. However, he read his Bible again, and concluded that the Bible is right -- and he remained in the Lord's church! Lipscomb's slogan as follows is indicative of his strong convictions: "Be true to the truth, oppose the error, but forbear with humanity."

It would be interesting to know how well the twentieth century Christian compares with those courageous Christians who lived approximately one hundred seventy-five years ago. May each reader make an evaluation of his faith (I Corinthians 13:5).

100 Carlton Place, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Undenominational Christianity

Neither Roman Catholicism nor modern denominationalism arose in Palestine. The Roman Catholic church arose as a result of a departure from the simplicity of Christ's congregational form of government, guided by the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice, which departure permitted more and more authority to be



W. A. Holley

vested in bishops of the various local churches, finally culminating in the idea that the Pope should rule the entire church. All standard encyclopedias will show that the Roman church became fully established about 606 A.D. Thus, the Roman church had an embryonic beginning (Acts 20:28-31; I Timothy 4:1-3). The Roman Catholic Church is not mentioned by name in the Old Testament or the New Testament!!

More modern churches such as the Baptist, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Seventh Day Adventist, the Pentecostal, the Church of God (in its modern definitions) are not mentioned in Sacred Scripture. Many other modern churches could be listed, but space forbids such.

We do not wish to be unkind, or cruel, nor unnecessarily harsh; but we do wish to speak the truth as it is taught in your Bible. The church existed long before denominationalism ever came into the world. We believe that honest men and women want to know the truth. The church of Christ, the original church, the church established by Jesus Christ, had its beginning on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 16:18, 19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41, 47; 11:13-15). It is not mean and bigoted to merely state the simple truth of God! It is truth that makes men free (John 8:30-32).

We suggest that Ephesians 4:1-6 be read. Here you will find God's basis for true Christian unity. It is apostolic Christianity unmixed with human churches and human creeds and human traditions. We are urging all honest and sincere people to return to the old Jerusalem gospel and thus to forsake all religions of purely human origin. Please

note--

(1) There is one body or church -- since the body is the church and the church is his body (I Corinthians 12:13, 20; Colossians 1:18, 24; Ephesians 1:22-23). When Jesus lived on the earth, he had but one physical body; now, that he has returned to heaven, he has but one spiritual body -- the church. The one true and Scriptural church cannot be a conglomeration of denominational churches wearing different names, teaching contradictory doctrines, requiring different terms of salvation, and different systems of worship (Matthew 15:9).

(2) There is one Holy Spirit. And this Spirit is not the author of the various creeds and doctrines of men. The one Holy Spirit speaks with one voice as revealed in the Holy Bible (Acts 1:16; 2:1-4; Hebrews 3:7-11; Acts 28:25-27; II Timothy 3:15-17). To learn what the Spirit says to you read the Bible.

(3) There is but one great hope or aspiration that really means any thing to a dying person. It is the hope of eternal life. Here our lives are beset with trials and sickness and death; but there is coming another day and another world! Through Jesus Christ we are able to overcome all things if we remain faithful servants of him who died for us (Titus 1:2; Romans 8:24-25; Mark 10:30; Hebrews 6:18-20; I Peter 1:4). Christians have a reservation in heaven!

(4) There is one Lord Jesus Christ. Willingly, he came from heaven, lived, and died upon the old rugged cross, thus shedding his precious blood for the sins of the world (Hebrews 2:9; John 3:16; Romans 5:8, 18-19; I John 2:2; 4:14). Jesus now possesses all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-20). He has commanded (as is his right) faith, repentance, confession of his name, and baptism in his name for remission of sins. No man has a God-given right to change the commands of the Lord (Galatians 1:6-10; Revelation 22:18-19).

(5) There is one faith. This faith has been divinely delivered once for all (Jude 3). Saving faith comes from hearing God's holy word (Romans 10:17). The faith that saves is the faith that obeys (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16:26). No man can be justified by "faith alone" (James 2:14-26). To argue for the faith of one's choice is equal to arguing for the Jesus Christ of one's choice!! Is it scriptural to believe in the God, or the Holy Spirit,

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An Open Letter To "Bill" Banowsky

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any sort of plane; and he may be made to believe it is within the realm of possibility - but he CANNOT achieve it. Man may conceive of turning stones into bread, and may be made to believe he can do it—but no man on earth can achieve it! That doctrine is sheer Humanism! It is blatantly false!

It is fine to teach God's children how to deal with worry and anxiety, and to encourage the making of good New Year's Resolutions. But you made those who had never been "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5) think they have been "born again," saying (as you waved your hand toward them) each should "be thankful that you are a child of God!!" You made no effort to convert them, but made them think they already have been "born of water and of the Spirit" — for there is no other way to become a child of God (John 3:3, 5). Dear brother, if (?) being sprinkled into the Methodist Church is the same as being born again, when are you going to start sprinkling people into the Methodist Church?

—Incidentally, if there had been a public response by someone who wanted to join the Methodist Church that day as you stood at the 'altar' during the invitation song, what would you have done??? Would you have told him what Peter told unsaved believers in Acts 2:38? or, what Saul of Tarsus was told in Acts 22:16? or, that baptism is a burial — not sprinkling of pouring, according to Romans 6:3-4? — Pray tell us: What would you have done???

Through about half the sermon I felt like crying because of such perversions of truth on your part! My heart still aches as I recall that you quoted Romans 8:28 and applied it to people in religious error, as if they (in the Bible sense) truly "love God" and are the "called according to his purpose."

Perhaps the part of your sermon which shocked me most was in connection with your recommendation that those in your audience approach the New Year with an attitude of gratitude, and a forgiving spirit (which, of course, all endorse). But referring to natural disasters, and the number of children who starve to death each year, you blasphemously blamed God for all such, avering that you would not even check into a hotel that was run like this world is run! You encouraged your hearers to — in your words — "damn God" for this tragedy, and then "forgive him!!!" I could hardly believe my ears, and silently prayed that you will repent of such blasphemy!

Are you trying to unite the Bible church with the Methodists? Is this what recent "unity" efforts are intended to lead the Lord's church into? Is this the kind of ecumenicity envisioned for our brethren? Some have predicted that we will lose our identity, and become just "another denomination" within ten years! At your present rate, it may not be that long!

Some sins are "secret sins" (Psalms 90:8) — "secret" from men only, not "secret" from God (Ezekiel 11:5). But you have not sinned secretly in this matter; therefore it cannot be taken care of between only you and God. You have not "trespassed against" me as an individual, nor against any other person; therefore Matthew 18:15-18 does not apply to this situation. Rather, you have given "offense" to the whole church, as mentioned in I Corinthians 10:32. Evidently it was regarding such *public* sins that the apostle Paul

wrote: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20) — otherwise he contradicted Jesus (Matthew 18:15-18). When Peter sinned publicly, Paul publicly pointed out his error "before them all" (Galatians 2:11-14). I know of no command to rebuke PRIVATELY any one who is guilty of a PUBLIC sin. The case of adultery at Corinth was publicly known, and it was dealt with publicly (I Corinthians 5:1-13). False teaching is a public sin, and such teachers are to be publicly dealt with (Romans 16:17-18).

Brother Banowsky, simple, trusting, Bible "FAITH" still "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

And I fear you have sadly neglected to fill your heart with, and feed your soul upon, God's word. For one who just a few years ago was ranked among the "Great Preachers Of Today" to go so far from God's truth as you have, is a solemn reminder to me and all others that we should "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

With genuine Christian love for you as a capable many-talented brother, I earnestly plead with you to "repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22-24).

In brotherly love,

I Died Last Night

Johnny Ramsey

Genesis 27:2, "I know not the day of my meath."

An unusual business leader often shocked his banker friend by abruptly saying: "I died last night; where does that leave my family financially?" That was his quaint way of telling the banker to help him with his money so as to better provide for his loved ones.

But, friend, supposed you had died last night: — where would you spend eternity? What shape, spiritually, would you and your loved ones be in if death had intervened yesterday? Perhaps we are all guilty of passing over the serious nature of this solemn idea. Do we honestly realize that the next funeral may be our own? Psalms 90:12 should express our own genuine request: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom."

If death does come soon for us, what heritage have we left our children? Will our sons be the gospel preachers and elders the Lord needs so desperately in the years to come? Will our daughters be the spiritual, modest women the church must have

(I Peter 3:1-3)? If our life upon the earth is soon over, have we left behind us souls who were saved by our teaching and example (I Timothy 4:16)? Will we leave nothing precious to remember? or shall God remember us for our goodness (Nehemiah 2:20 and 13:31)?

Job 3:17 speaks of a place where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest." Hebrews 4:9 mentions the "rest" that yet remains for the people of Jehovah. And, beautifully, in II Corinthians 5:1 Paul mentions "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" awaiting the faithful Christian! Death holds no lasting sting and the grave no permanent victory for devoted saints (I Corinthians 15:54-58).

It makes an everlasting difference just who died last night. Comfort one another with these words!

—Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

Udenominational Christianity

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of one's choice? The creeds and doctrines of men must be destroyed if you would be saved. We prayerfully urge you to return to the ancient gospel of Jesus Christ for guidance and direction in all matters that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).

(6) There is one baptism. This baptism is water baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism. There are only two recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism: one occurred on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, and the second at the home of Cornelius (Acts 2:1-4; 10:1, 44-48; 11:13-16). By A.D. 64, Holy Spirit baptism had ceased, and the only baptism left was water baptism (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:4-6). Water baptism will continue to the end of the world. Hence, Holy Spirit baptism served its divine purpose and has ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-13; Hebrews 2:1-4; Mark 16:18-20). Water baptism cannot be sprinkling or pouring since the word "baptism" means to bury or immerse (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

What is the design of this one baptism? It is "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28;

Acts 2:38). Many preachers vehemently deny the foregoing affirmation. They contend that baptism has nothing to do with remission of sins. Herewith, we submit a quotation from a renowned denominational preacher of the past. It reads:

"If Brother Vaughn convinced us that 'born of water' refers to anything but the baptism of one previously born of the Spirit, we never knew it, and we would have owned it to him and to our readers. It means nothing else, and no Baptist that we ever heard or read of ever believed otherwise until A. Campbell frightened them away from an interpretation that is sustained by the consensus of all scholars of all denominations in all ages." (The Tennessee Baptist, page 5, October 30, 1886, J. R. Graves, editor. Quoted from the Gospel Advocate Commentary on John, page 45).

(7) There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, in all and through all. We must serve and worship him all the days of our lives (John 4:23-24; Revelation 2:10). There is no God of one's choice here.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



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Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 7

Overcoming Selfishness, A Deadly Sin Seldom Confessed

(NUMBER 1)

CHARLES E. CROUCH

Jesus came that we may live abundantly (John 10:10). Healthy self-esteem is a vital element of the faith which produces that life. Selfishness, however, destroys life. Though seldom confessed, selfishness is a very destructive and prevalent old sin. Not many are like Paul, who most gladly spent and was spent for other souls; or like Timothy, who cared truly for the state of others (Philippians 2:19-21; II Corinthians 12:15). Most people "seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 2:21).

Selfishness is excessive self-love, exaggerated individualism. It is to care unduly or exclusively for self, without due regard for the needs or rights of others. Selfishness is degenerative: It stunts the spirit and robs life of the completeness, security, and treasure in Christ. To be self-centered is to be self-destructive. Nothing is more devastating to personality, family, church, or soul than to exalt self (Matthew 23:12; I Corinthians 6:9-11; 5:11). The essence of this sin is to dethrone God and enthrone self (II Timothy 3:2).

Selfishness produces self-righteousness, which robs the individual of joy, and robs God of praise and service (Luke 18:9-14). It breeds covetousness "which is idolatry" (Colossian 3:17). Covetousness is unrighteous desire for personal gain, advantage, honor, etc. (John 7:18), which becomes a weight upon the soul, robbing it of contentment and sapping the body of energy needed to serve God. It is "a root of all kinds of evil," a fountain from which flows "many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Timothy 6:9, 10). A covetous person will glorify self rather than God, which destroys

the image of God in us.

Selfishness is a barrier to faith, and a curse to life (Psalms 10:3). A selfish man does not see or believe the tragic consequences inflicted upon the human race by this sinful problem. More people will overcome selfishness only when they recognize and abhor its evil fruit (Romans 12:9).

The darkest chapters in history are colored by greed. The most abysmal failures may be traced, directly or indirectly, to selfishness. It enticed Lot into Sodom, and caused the rich young ruler to turn away from Jesus. It destroyed Balaam, Korah, and Achan, and turned Gehazi into a leper. Selfishness led Absalom to revolt against King David and caused his early death. It led Judas to betray Jesus. It led Ananias and Sapphira to hypocrisy and death. It caused Simon the sorcerer to try to buy heaven's power with money. It makes people today fretful and miserable in the midst of plenty, just as it did Eve, Ahab, and Haman. It robs life of joy by fixing our gaze upon what we have not, and preventing appreciation of what we have. It prevents trust in God, and separates souls from God now and eternally (I Corinthians 6:9-11; 5:11). The tenth command of the Mosaic law forbade coveting "anything that is thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17). Jesus said, "Keep yourselves from all covetousness" (Luke 12:15).

This curse to the human race is truly related to every major human shortcoming. Selfishness is the main reason many are not Christians. Selfish people consider the cost of discipleship too great (Luke 9:23). They live by the rule, "My will, not thine, be done," which is the way of despair and death, not of joy and

life. And it does not make good sense as the guiding aspiration and rule of life.

Selfishness is a large obstacle to Christian growth. The church cannot grow unless Christians do; and growth in Christ requires adequate spiritual food, diligent exercise, and good atmosphere. Selfishness stupefies and warps the spirits, making us slaves of our appetites, leading to mere animalism.

Selfishness is a massive obstacle to Christian service. It prevents giving our bodies as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1; I Corinthians 6:19, 20). When we seek our own things first and not God's, to advance ourselves and not God's kingdom, we become stagnant and barren like the Dead Sea which, having no outlet, always receives but never gives.

Selfishness is the largest single cause of discord, misery, and fragmentation in marriage and the family God has given into our power the happiness of those around us, and this is largely to be secured by the power of kindness, a chief product of unselfish life (Matthew 16:24). Happiness, joy and peace are by-products of righteousness—right thinking and right doing. Serious domestic problems are always traceable, directly or indirectly, to exaggerated individualism—the evil thinking, speaking, and doing of self-willed people.

"Love . . . seeketh not its own" (I Corinthians 13:5; 10:24). Self-denial is the first test of Christian discipleship (Luke 9:23; 14:26, 27). Nothing is more unlike Jesus than selfishness. William E. Gladstone, one of England's great prime ministers said, "Selfishness is the

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Our Rule Of Faith And Practice

In Genesis 6:22 we learn that Noah obeyed God by doing exactly what the Creator had commanded. For this explicit action Noah is commended in Hebrews 11:7. In every endeavor of life we see the need for proper standards and absolute authority. For instance a yardstick is not 34 or 38 inches long but precisely 36! Football teams have eleven men on each side, and the field is 100 yards long with proper boundaries. Baseball has nine men on a team, while basketball has five; and specific rules govern each sport. While fans of various games understand these points, for some reason they fail to realize that Christianity has rules, standards of authority, and precise guidelines, also!

Christ taught (John 12:48) that we will be judged by his word. II Timothy 3:16-17 tells us emphatically that the Holy Scriptures furnish us completely with all we need in the spiritual realm. Therefore we would be wise to study, learn and put into daily practice the precepts of the Bible! In Old Testament days individuals who thought properly would preface their actions with words like these: "What does God say about it?" or, "Is there any word from the Lord?" (Read I Kings 22; Jeremiah 17:15; or 37:17).

It is still wise to hearken to the Sacred Text as we strive to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

We live, in this age, under the direction of the New Testament and Christ who is the mediator (Hebrews 8:6-13). We shall be judged by the gospel of the Lord (Romans



JOHNNY RAMSEY

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Teaching The Theory Of Evolution

I do not see how one who claims to be a Christian can accept either theistic evolution, or atheistic evolution. It appears to me that clear passages in the Bible must be surrendered in order to accept either form of the theory of organic evolution. When I studied zoology at Freed-Hardeman college, our professor, J. R. Endsley, would point out the difference between scientific facts, and the evolutionist's 'interpretation' of those facts. He helped us to learn that we can accept every fact of science, without accepting some infidel's "explanation" as to how those facts came to be.

All Christians are surely disturbed by the news that such teaching is NOT being given some classes at Abilene Christian University. This matter is of such grave concern to our brotherhood that I am giving editorial space to it this week. The following article is almost twice as long as I usually ask authors to submit. But because of its nature, I chose not to divide it into two sections for succeeding issues. I urge each reader to send for a copy of the book offered. Send a contribution as a expression of your gratitude for the convictions and courage of brother Bert Thompson and brother Wayne Jackson. Let us pray that those who teach false doctrine will come back to the Bible.

THE TEACHING OF EVOLUTION AT ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY WAYNE JACKSON

Several millennia ago a psalmist penned these words: "Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). Responsible Christian people, who have been blessed by the Lord with children, are keenly aware of the value of these precious offspring. Together with that profound sense of thanksgiving is also the sober knowledge that it is our weighty responsibility to train our youngsters in the service of the Creator, for apart from serving the Living God there is no real meaning to life (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Isaiah 43:7).

Rearing children to live for Jehovah is not an easy task in this wicked twentieth century. We thus seek assistance in this noble assignment from a variety of sources, one of which is the utilization of Christian colleges. Administration officials associated with our schools have promised us that if we will entrust to them our children, they will provide them with a balanced education within the framework of biblical soundness. They have pledged that while our youngsters are being prepared to enter the secular world, within the

community of the Christian college their faith is being wonderfully enriched. And we believed them!

This past year a discovery came to light concerning one of our Christian schools that is so bizarre, so shocking, that you will initially find it incredible. No one likes to think that he has been betrayed! And yet, the evidence is so overwhelming, the documentation is so clear, that no honest investigator will be able to deny it. It is the story of the teaching of evolution — raw evolution; not presented as mere theory, but as "scientific fact," with some of the most rabidly atheistic textbooks in print used as the media of communication. The crime is not being perpetrated on the campus of some humanistically oriented institution, but from the sanctified halls of ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY.

Abilene Christian College (now a university) was founded in September of 1906 by A. B. Barret, a gospel preacher from Tennessee "who envisioned a center of Christian education in the Southwest." For almost four score years the institution has been closely associated with the churches of Christ. The "Charter" of the school states that the facility was created for the purpose of providing an education "in which the arts, sciences, languages and Holy Scriptures shall be taught, together with such other courses of instruction as shall be deemed advisable. . . ." In another document entitled, "The Purpose of Abilene Christian College" (*Staff Handbook*, 1971-1972, p 15), it is claimed that one of the functions of that institution is to *exalt the Bible as the word of God*. That, admittedly, is a noble goal.

It is now known that this original purpose has been prostituted — at least by some professors at Abilene Christian University. Moreover, there is ample proof that this subversion of our youth's faith is not simply a recent occurrence; there is, in fact, documented proof that evolutionary errors have been propagated "on the hill" (as the university locale in Abilene is familiarly known) for *more than a decade*, and that complaints relative to the same have been ignored, denied, and concealed. Furthermore, this amazing cover-up continues to be perpetuated unto this very hour! Involved in it are ACU administrators, some members of the Board of Trustees, and other faculty members, including teachers in the Bible department!

Apparently, the "powers that be" in Abilene are secure in the conviction that: (a) No one will believe the charges that have been made; (b) They are not accountable to the people of the churches of Christ. In fact, in their pride, certain officials have stated that they do not intend to "bend" to outside pressures — apparently no matter how "rotten" the doctrine may be (and I borrow that descriptive from one of ACU's professors who characterized the teaching in precisely that way). (c) Administrators obviously feel that they are powerful

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Teaching The Theory Of Evolution

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enough to weather any storm that comes; the controversy will subside eventually! They may underestimate our people.

The events of this episode commenced (from our vantage point) about a year ago when Dr. Bert Thompson, Associate Editor of *Reason & Revelation* and Board Member of Apologetics Press, Inc., received a letter from a very concerned biology major at Abilene Christian University. The student claimed that in some of his science courses at ACU the theory of evolution was being taught blatantly. It was not being presented as "theory," but as a factual system of belief that cannot be scientifically refuted. Moreover (and this is tremendously important to remember) it was not being taught within the context of a dialogue for scientific rebuttal; rather it was being presented as the only viable explanation of the history of earth's creatures!

Frankly, when brother Thompson shared this initial information with me, we both confessed that it seemed almost unbelievable. Bert Thompson, a 1971 biology graduate of A.C.U., did not want to believe that such could be true of his alma mater. He determined, therefore, to check out the matter thoroughly and so be convinced only on the basis of hard-core, irrefutable evidence.

The *very first thing* that Thompson did was to write personal letters to the professors whose names had been mentioned — Drs. Kenneth Williams and Archie Manis. When that brotherly procedure secured absolutely zero results, the inquiry was intensified. As the investigation progressed across the months, materials began to come to light that left us absolutely numb, and I am not exaggerating when I say that the entire scenario of "shenanigans" that has been perpetrated by some of those associated with ACU in regard to this matter would almost rival a television soap-opera.

Dr. Thompson pled with University officials to correct this evil situation. He sought to deal with them on a private basis. When they stiffened their necks and declared that no "outsiders" were going to tell them what to teach or how to run their school, there was no other choice but to take this matter to the brotherhood in general. Our brethren do have the right to have their "say" about what is being taught in a Christian school. Our colleges need to learn that they are not beyond accountability!

All of this, therefore, has resulted in the publication of one of the most explosive books in the history of brotherhood literature. The book, authored by Bert Thompson, is entitled, *IS GENESIS MYTH? — The Shocking Story of the Teaching of Evolution at Abilene Christian University*. This volume is literally a bombshell. ACU officials have known for sometime that it was coming, and they have attempted every kind of ploy imaginable in order to negate its effect.

You surely must think that I am over-stating the case. I do not blame you. However, I invite you to carefully consider the following as gleaned from this new book. As you read, I want you to think of the youngsters — sons and daughters like your own perhaps — who are now studying under such instructors, and being guided by such administrators, as are revealed in this narrative. You just may wish to let them know how you feel!

First, some of the most rabidly atheistic literature in print is used as the basic texts in some of ACU's science classes. For example, in a biology seminar class in the spring of 1985, Dr. Archie Manis required his students to use the infamous book, *Science and Creationism*, a volume which is passionately anti-creation. It is edited by humanist Ashley Montagu and contains chapters by well-known atheists like Stephen Gould, Isaac Asimov, etc. The Bible has no greater enemies than these men! Consider this quote from the book:

"... whatever the historical antecedents of Genesis, it represents but one of the innumerable creation myths which different people at different times have invented in order to account for the manner in which Earth and everything upon it came into being" (p.6).

How's that for a "Christian education"??!

Second, in addition to the forgoing, a number of "handouts" are made available to the students which not only present the theory of evolution as a factual account of origins, they are blatantly anti-Bible. Some of the handouts are by unbelievers whose major mission in life is to oppose the Genesis account of creation. One handout is a photocopy of the Chapter, "Creationist Arguments," from Douglas Futuyma's book, *Science on Trial*; it is a radical attempt to disprove the arguments employed in support of the biblical account of creation. In this connection, you will surely be

interested to know that it is admitted by Manis that *no refutation whatsoever* is made of these atheistic materials; further, the instructor presents absolutely no positive affirmation of creationist arguments that negate evolutionary presuppositions!

Third, a handout entitled *Evolution Notes*, authored by Archie Manis himself states: "Evolution history and methodology will continue to feed debates for generations, but the fact of evolution is beyond dispute. The concept is rational, scientific, and supported by an overwhelming mass of evidence from past and present" (p. 4). Another document, in professor Manis' own handwriting, affirms that the teaching of evolution at ACU "has been and is being presented as a body of scientific thought supported by a body of scientific evidence. As theory goes — there is no decisive evidence against any of these viewpoints, from science."

Fourth, a Manis biology seminar handout entitled *Research in Genesis* characterizes the Genesis account of creation (chapters 1 and 2) as creation "hymns," and, in fact accommodates the documentary Hypothesis. Further it urges students to take the Genesis record, along with the "modern, synthetic view of evolution," and from these two views, synthetic view of evolution," and from these two views, "synthesize" a "personal statement of belief about origins." Moreover, Manis hands out a photo-reproduction of Genesis 1, which, in his own script, he marginally notes as "Creation Hymn, Myth No. 1."

All of this is but a fraction of the evidence that has been assembled in this book. It is a volume that no one can afford to ignore. For your copy of, *IS GENESIS MYTH?*, write to: Apologetics Press, Inc., 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117. There is no charge for the book. However, any contribution to help with publication and postage will be genuinely appreciated. — Editor, *Christian Courier*, 3906 E. Main St., Stockton, CA 95205.

Short Sermons

Blessed are they who have nothing to say, and who cannot be persuaded to say it.

* * *

It is not the greatness of our troubles, but the littleness of our spirit which causes so much sorrow.

Overcoming Selfishness, A Deadly Sin Seldom Confessed

Continued from page 1

greatest curse of the human race."

Selfish ambition is enormously destructive to the well-being, unity and progress of the church. It produces discord, strife, unbalanced concern for truth, unconcern for the lost and helpless, promotes sinful exclusiveness, entangles and immobilizes the church. It is false piety that preaches unity in Christ and prays for the destitute—but does not "seek peace, and pursue it," or minister to the lost or truly needy. No victories are won for Christ with what we reserve or spend for selfish ambition and/or indulgence.

Selfishness is a huge hindrance to Christian giving. It steals and enslaves the heart, exaggerates the value of earthly things, and causes us to make our supreme investments on earth rather than in heaven (Matthew 6:19-33). Selfishness is a major cause of robbing God and man—of love, loyalty, time, service and

means. Selfish people love material things more than eternal things because the god of the world means more to them than the God of heaven (I John 2:15-17). They seek first the things of the world because their faith in temporal things is greater than their faith in God. They love self, money and pleasure "rather than" God (II Timothy 3:1-5). While holding "a form of godliness," they deny its power.

Because of the blinding effect of selfishness, the gain of gold means more to a selfish person than the gain of godliness or God (I Timothy 6:5). He trusts earthly wealth more than heavenly and prefers material security to that in Christ. He is unlike Paul (Philippians 3:8). Because of the distorting effect of his sin, he prefers the perishable to the imperishable. He walks by sight, not by faith (II Corinthians

5:7). He does not believe God's promise concerning what we receive in return for what we must sacrifice to prepare for eternity (Mark 10:28-30). It is "impossible" for one who trusts in riches but not in God (Mark 10:23-27), to die to self and become a servant of righteousness (Romans 6:11-18). But when God's love and his will become ours, we become servants of God—and selfishness is overcome.

The selfish person is not in submission to God's will (Matthew 22:39; James 2:8; Romans 14:20, 21; I Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:24, 33; Philippians 2:4, 21; II Timothy 3:2). He is self-willed, and his greatest need is a change of masters (Matthew 6:19-24). He needs to humble himself before God and repent (I Peter 5:6). Repentance is a change of mind and will toward sin, God, and self.

— 14418 Alger Road, Cleveland, OH 44111.

The Scriptures Are From God

"And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:19-21).



Virgil E. Bradford

There is no truer statement in all the Bible than that of Jeremiah 10:23: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." This is exactly what Peter affirms, and relates it to the scriptures. When Peter wrote "no prophecy of scripture IS . . ." he is telling us that no scripture *came to be, or came into existence, from the mind of the prophet.* This he explains in verse 21 saying "no pro-

phesy ever came by the will of man." Man did not search his own mind and give the world the scriptures, the Bible, but "men spake from God." The Bible is the mind and message of God to mortal men. And of course there is no possible way for man to know the mind of God except through a revelation from God.

Now God, or deity, is *one*, but one divine nature made up of three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who moved, or inspired men to write the messages of God. Paul comments in

I Corinthians 2:11 like this: "the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God."

The Bible claims to be *verbally* inspired, that is, the very words of God were infused into the minds of apostles and prophets who faithfully set them to writing and gave us the message from a loving Father that makes men "wise unto salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." The "private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20) has to do, not with our *understanding* of the scripture nor our *explanation* of the scripture, but with the *origin* of the scriptures: they came from God, not man.

Now, let me give you an example or two. Take the existence of the universe, the heavens and the earth. Men, many of them

scientists so-called, have made and continue to make the wildest claims about this matter. For instance, the Big Bang Theory. There was a gigantic explosion of something that they can't quite explain and, lo and behold, here we are! My friend, it has never been known that *something* came from *nothing*. The theory of *mind* growing out of *matter* is gross foolishness. But the Spirit has revealed the origin of all things: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." How do you know? The Spirit of God revealed it! In ten simple words the Lord God tells us of the origin of all things. Hear this: "Let all the earth fear the Lord, Let all the earth stand in awe of him. For he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:9).

Or take the high moral and ethical standards of the Almighty God and the salvation from sin by Jesus Christ! The Bible, the word of the Spirit, has made it so plain that the "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." In no other way can we know of sin, its nature, its consequences; nor can we know that God has provided the way for our salvation through Jesus Christ except by the word that lives and abides.

— 1113 Biltmore Drive, Nashville, TN 37204.

Restoration (No. VIII)

FRANKLIN CAMP

Keep in mind that Zephaniah saw the failure of the restoration under Josiah. He gives the reasons it did not last. This is the reason it is timely for us today.

3. A third reason that Zephaniah gives for a restoration losing its mission is **MATERIALISM**. "Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesk, for all the merchant people re cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off. . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land" (Zephaniah) 1:11, 18).

The Bible warns over and over about the danger of material things. Temporal things become a consuming passion, and lead to making them the primary purpose of life. Covetousness led to the downfall of Eve: She saw the forbidden fruit, "a tree to the desired" The word "desired" is translated "coveted" in Joshua 7:21, where Achan's sin of covetousness caused the defeat of Israel.

The desire for bread was the reason the first generation of the nation of Israel failed to enter Canaan: "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). It was here that the devil made his first attack on Christ. He knew the appeal of material things. The history of Israel's failures can be traced in a large measure by their affluence. Satan does not care how religious one is if spiritual things are not primary in his life. He knows where one will end up. Material things will lead one away from God. Is there no connection between the elaborate buildings and recreational buildings today, and the drift away from the original mission of the Restoration? Buildings should be a means to

an end. God reminded David that he was content dwelling in a tent (II Samuel 7:1-8; I Chronicles 17:1-6).

Jesus warned his disciples about the danger of temporal things: "But lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore, the light in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness" (Matthew 6:19-23)!

Is there any doubt that this passage teaches that the desire for material things blinds one to truth? Who are the ones who show the greatest interest in truth? Affluence tends to lead to pride; and pride, to a closed mind. Why did the young ruler turn away from Christ? His earthly treasures evidently closed his ears to spiritual values. Is there an application of the parable of the sower to our problem of drifting today? "These are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark 4:18, 19). *Things and selfishness go together.* Selfishness is the opposite of self denial which is basic to genuine Christianity. Selfishness leads to self-deception. Self-deception leads to false interpretation of scriptures. The self-centered person looks for ways to justify what one wants. The lawyer was interested in justifying himself when he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). Is he not an example of where the light had turned to darkness, just as Jesus said?

Why the sudden attempt on the part of some

of our brethren in trying to find justification for fellowship with the Christian Church? Why the sudden surge in shifting away from Bible authority to hermenutics? Is there any thing new about the use of instruments of music in worship? Even one of the defenders in the Christian Church has forsaken all the past attempted defense, and said there is no authority!

— P. O. Box 2005, East Gadsden, Al 35903.

Our Rule Of Faith And Practice

Continued from page 2

2:16). He ushered in the new covenant by the shedding of precious blood (Matthew 26:28), and Hebrews 13:20 informs us that this is "the everlasting testament." Therefore we shall not be judged by our feelings (Romans 10:1-3), latter-day revelations (Revelations 22:18-19), nor the creeds of men (Mark 7:7-13). If we teach, obey and live the message of the New Testament we will be exactly what Paul, Peter, Stephen, James and John were in the first century — just Christians — and that is what God desires for us to be (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16).

Divine guidelines — heavenly blueprints — can be found in the last will and testament of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:15-17). Let us joyfully hearken to the Bible as we cogently remember that Hebrews 5:9 and Revelation 22:14 put a high premium upon those who obey the blessed Redeemer. In the day of judgment it will be of no value to have *claimed* to follow Jesus (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21). *There is no substitute for obedience!* There truly is a proper rule for us to follow. We dare not come short of it (James 4:17), or go beyond it (II John 9).

— Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of T

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 8

Wrong Assumption — Wrong Conclusions

(No. 1)

Wrong assumptions are a prelude to wrong conclusions. Overlooking the importance of this principle causes some to enter into their Bible study with minds made up, and with little interest in actually investigating in order to learn anything. Unlike the Bereans who searched the scriptures to make sure that what was preached by Paul was truth (Acts 17:11), many today turn to the sacred volume to find substantiation for their already-formed belief. If they can't locate any scriptural support for their viewpoint they will not hesitate to strain a passage to make it fit their peculiar idea. Such people misinterpret Paul's injunction to "Prove all things" (I Thessalonians 5:21) to mean that if they have an idea then go to the Bible to "prove" that idea!! This sort of reasoning (?) has led some even in the Lord's church to have the eccentric notion that "You can prove anything by the Bible." Such thinking betrays the ignorance of the person who holds this as a rule for the use of the Bible. Actually the Bible is really not a book to be used to "prove" anything!! The Bible is its own proof and must be accepted for what it says. We preachers, too, need to learn this valuable truth.



Jerri Manasco

don't know how to study the Bible profitably. The ability of the preacher to present persuasive arguments on a topic he has outlined solely from within his own head has resulted in warped approaches to the use of God's holy word. Paul's charge to Timothy has been overlooked: "Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). It is noteworthy that Paul did not just say, "Preach"!!

Structuring sermons from assumptions is, to say the least, a dangerous precedent. In fact, it is totally unthinkable for one who wants his hearers to gain a truly great knowledge of God's will. Peter dealt with those who abuse the scriptures in their teaching. He referred specifically to Paul's writings, "in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16). Peter is speaking of those who take scriptures out of their rightful context to make a passage teach (?) what the writer of that passage did not even have in mind.

Let me illustrate: I have heard someone remark that one needs to be married or he would burn in hell. The "proof" text was I Corinthians 7:9: "... for it is better to marry than to burn." What a pitiable abuse of a powerful passage!! The *context* of the verse shows that Paul is discussing the relative merits of being married or remaining unmarried. Paul shows that it would be better to marry than to be consumed with the burning of passion's lust. Paul refers in another place to perversions of sex when he speaks of those who "burned in their lust one for another" (Romans 1:27). -- Of course, there is a burning hell (Matthew 25:41) for those who live in sin; but the passage in I Corinthians 7:9 does not prove it, for that is not the subject under consideration there. It is amazing how otherwise intelligent people can follow such senseless and ridiculous

handling of the Bible.

It is not a matter of thinking of something to say and then locating verses to sustain it. Too many personal assumptions find their way into sermons in this manner. The Old Testament book of Nehemiah (8:8) offers an interesting observation that may help: "So they read in the book in the law of God **DISTINCTLY**, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." They read "in the book" and caused their auditors to "understand the **READING**." Those in charge of the service did not formulate some viewpoint and then turn to the "book" for proof. They simply read from the book and explained that. What the Bible actually said was enough for them; and it ought to be enough for us. The first century legal scholars whom Jesus had to deal with had not learned that lesson. Rather than be content with what God's law actually required, those men appealed to the long and burdensome traditions that had been tacked on to the Bible. They sought to make the Bible fit into their commentary (Read Matthew 15:1-9). It is dangerous to read religious assumptions into what God has actually said.

It is amazing how the faithful preachers of the first century managed to preach without advocating "positions" on issues. All they did was present the issues as God revealed them!! Their only aim was to relay the message of God. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you . . ." (I Corinthians 11:23). Paul then went on to deliver the Lord's instructions on the Lord's supper. If the apostle had any assumptions about that communion he did not express them. He was content with the Lord's teaching.

While in Rome Paul received some Jewish guests into his chambers. Having heard of the church, or, as they called it, "this sect," these men requested Paul to tell them some-

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 26:35

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS . . . Editor

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Wrong Assumption - Wrong Conclusions

Continued from page 1

thing of his work and of this movement (Acts 28:22). It is noteworthy that Paul did not begin on the assumption that the church is a sect, for the church is NOT a sect. Paul's approach was very simple. He did not express his own mind on the subject, but "expounded and testified the kingdom of God, BOTH OUT OF THE LAW OF MOSES, AND OUT OF THE PROPHETS, from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23). For those who say that one will not have anything much to talk about if he just uses the Bible, let him take note that Paul spent the day expounding just the Bible!! This great apostle presented God's word on the subject, and he did not take any of the blame for those who did not believe. He did warn them that they would fall under Isaiah's inspired denunciation of unbelief (Acts 28:25-27; Isaiah 6:9-10). Paul could not be responsible for anyone's unbelief if he preached the Bible just the way it is.

Every preacher, Bible class teacher, and personal worker must take heed to what is written in the scriptures. Study the word of God and teach it just as it is and leave off your assumptions. Assumptions can't save a soul!

—Rt. 2, Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

Faulkner University To Open School Of Biblical Studies Building

Faulkner University's Johnson Hall has been converted to the new building that will be devoted entirely to the School of Biblical Studies. Occupancy is expected some time this semester.

A number of congregations have agreed to assist in financing the conversion and the upkeep and maintenance of the building in Montgomery, Alabama.

The Time To Obey God Is When One Learns The Will Of God

"We fully intend to get back into the Lord's work as soon as we retire and do not have so many things competing for our time."

"I know I should obey the gospel; but there are several things I want to do first."

How often that which should have top priority is moved way down the list. When Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), he was telling us that *nothing* is of greater importance!

It is so easy to put off obeying the instructions of Jesus when one refuses to allow himself to consider the urgency of so doing. "I will, some time," or, "I intend to, some day," or "Don't worry about me; there is plenty of time."

Someone told the story of a girl named Mary, whose aunt had urged her to become a Christian, but the girl delayed making her decision, saying: "I will when I am older."

There came a day when mother was ill, and Mary ordered some beautiful flowers for



Edsel Burleson

her. When she returned home, she went to her mother's room, but the flowers were not there.

"Didn't the florist send the flowers I ordered?" she asked her aunt. "Yes," she replied, "they are down in the kitchen. As soon as they begin to be withered and dry, I will bring them up to your mother's room."

Mary was shocked, and her eyes flashed as she said: "I want my mother to have these flowers while they are fresh and beautiful. I love her too much to give her what is wilted and faded."

"Oh!" exclaimed her aunt. "You told me that you intended to give your life to *Jesus* when it was wilted and faded; and so I supposed you would feel that way about this gift to your mother!"

To which Mary replied: "You are right, I have not been fair to Jesus! I will give him the best of my life now while I am young and strong and able to serve him. I will give myself today, and always!"

Solomon insisted, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Paul urged the young preacher, Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). Both are saying that the time to do the will of God is as *soon as one learns* the will of God.

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Some Things We Can Know

There are numerous things about God I don't know. In fact, I am not equipped to understand much about him. I am human, and he is deity. I wear the blinders of the flesh, and he is infinite. But he wants me to know all about him that I am able to understand, so he wrote a Book in which he reveals himself to man to the extent that man is able to understand.

But I don't even understand all that he has revealed! However, I am working on it, and, with additional study, I understand a little more clearly all the time.

The Book tells me some things about God that I understand -- in a way. I understand what the Bible says; but I am not able to fully appreciate it. For instance, I understand that I am a child of God! (I John 3:1). But, oh, how I long to fathom the depths of that relationship! I understand that God loves me



W. T. Hamilton

dearly (Ephesians 3:17-19); and yet that love "passes knowledge." Wouldn't it be wonderful to comprehend it fully? I am his heir (Romans 8:17); and I have studied diligently all that the Bible says about heaven; but I do not know yet REALLY what it will be like to be there. I'm looking forward to the experience, even though I do not know all about it yet!

Just because I don't understand fully all that has been revealed about him, does not mean that I cannot know him in a real and intimate sense. Nor does it mean that Christianity does not fill my needs. Nor that I cannot love him more than life itself.

On the other hand, the fact that my knowledge is not yet complete does not mean that I cannot KNOW what to do to please him. He has made that crystal clear. For instance, when his Book says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," I can understand that! And I can understand such statements as, ". . . commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). I can't misunderstand that! So, the things necessary to live for him, and serve him here, are made plain. I'll do those things while I continue to study about him and see if I cannot understand him better along the way.

—16026 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 77062.

C. P. Roland: 1893-1985

E. Claude Gardner

The venerable Clifford Paul Roland departed this life on December 11, 1985. He had resided with one of his sons, H. C., in Knoxville, Tennessee after the death of his wife, Grace, in November, 1984.

He was born to Isaac Newton and Mary Margaret Roland on July 4, 1893 at Essary Springs, Tennessee. He is survived by a daughter, Josephine Riddick; four sons, Charles, Paul, H. C. (Mack), and Ike; 19 grandchildren; 33 great grandchildren; and one brother, Lee J.

Funeral services were conducted at the Henderson, Tennessee, Church of Christ on December 14, 1985 and burial was in the Henderson Cemetery. Participating in the service were Kelley B. Doyle, Fred Brigance, John M. Hall, Max Patterson, and E. Claude Gardner.

C. P. Roland lived a very long life which was full, happy, and successful. For about eighty years he was a Christian and served as a valiant soldier of the Cross. He serves as an example as a father, husband, teacher, administrator, scholar, elder, and gospel preacher.

Since 1940, he served as an elder in the Henderson church. Over a sixty-year period he preached the gospel, established congregations, baptized hundreds, and conducted many funerals and weddings.

He gave up a good job to move to Henderson in 1921 to teach in Freed-Hardeman College. He had a desire to see that his children receive a Christian education and all five children graduated from Freed-Hardeman College. When he began at the College, he taught physics and chemistry but he was so versatile and scholarly that in ensuing years he taught mathematics, history, and Bible.

Although he had opportunities to go elsewhere he remained to help build and stabilize Freed-Hardeman College for over six decades. He served the College longer than has any other person and likely this record will not be equalled. He held key administrative positions — dean of the college; business manager; student recruiter; vice president; curator; and vice president emeritus. His greatest contribution in life apart from his family was probably his dedicated service to the Lord in Christian education at Freed-Hardeman College. He multiplied himself through the students who went forth to teach, preach, and to work in places of responsibility. During the depression years, he sacrificed tremendously while laboring at the College with little or no money for himself and his family.

During the past forty-two years I knew brother Roland as highly intelligent, a scholar, a good teacher, faithful gospel preacher, modest, kind, patient, understanding, spiritual, happy, man of wisdom, and a multi-talented servant of God.

On May 3, 1980, the Board of Trustees of Freed-Hardeman College conferred the Doctor of Laws upon brother Roland as a special tribute to him for his extraordinary service to the College and to the Cause of Christ.

The C. P. and Grace Roland Scholarship Fund has been established at Freed-Hardeman College. Memorial gifts from their friends can be added to this fund to help young people and to perpetuate the work to

which they gave most of their years. Gifts may be sent as follows: Freed-Hardeman College, Roland Scholarship Fund, Henderson,

TN 38340.

—President Freed-Hardeman College Henderson, Tennessee 38340.

Christian, Hypocrite, Or Infidel?

Dean Fugett

I was once asked, "Which is worse: to be a Christian, but not live the Christian life? Or, not to be a Christian, but lead a good life?"

This question strikes the heart of a basic problem for people today. On the one hand, we have the unfaithful child of God, even the hypocrite. On the other hand, we have the "good, moral man" seeking to be saved by his good living. I hasten to say that I would not want to occupy either's shoes. Both are lost! The child of God, because he has left his first love (Revelation 2:1-5); the moral man, because he never became a child of God, never entered God's family (I John 3:10).

The comparison in this question is indicative of a false concept, a false standard of measure -- measuring ourselves by others (II Corinthians 10:12). The "good" man measures himself by the unfaithful church member, and comes to the conclusion that he is safe because he measures better than this hypocrite. The unfaithful member measures himself by those who never became Christians, and concludes

that he is better than they. But, both are still lost! What is accomplished by just being better than someone else, if we still don't measure up to Christ's standard (Hebrews 5:8-9)?

The unfaithful child of God must repent (Acts 8:22-24) confess his sins, and ask God's forgiveness to again be in a state of inheritance (I John 1:7; 2:2). The moral but unconverted man must still obey the gospel to become a Christian (Hebrews 5:8-9; Acts 2:38). Cornelius was just such a man! (Acts 10:2; 47-48; 11:13-14).

Again, I emphasize, they both are lost! That is "worse" enough! I urge that the unfaithful one repent and do the first works; and that the moral man obey the gospel. Then both their lives will begin to count for something.

It seems rather foolish to picture two people, lost in torment, arguing about which was "better" or "worse!"

—P.O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

Why Do People Repent?

Repentance is produced by godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10) such was manifested by David in Psalms 51 based on Nathan's bold preaching in II Samuel 12. David humbly admitted: "I have sinned." Since it is very difficult to find a man today who will admit he is a sinner, we truly appreciate even King Saul who openly confessed that he had erred exceeding and had "played the fool." We need much stronger preaching in our own day that will convict the gainsayer (Titus 1:9-10).

The goodness of God also leads men to repentance (Romans 2:4) so we desperately need more precise proclamation concerning the love of God and his gracious desire for man's redemption.

Examples of righteousness rebuke the world (Hebrews 11:7) and can help men to change their minds and turn to God.

The emptiness of worldly matters helped the prodigal son to leave the pig-pen and head for home (Luke 15). We need to point out clearly the futility of carnality to those about us also (I John 2:15-17).

May all of us maintain a penitent attitude at all times! An unknown poet has blessed us



JOHNNY RAMSEY

with these words:

'Tis not enough to say,
"I'm sorry and repent,"

And then go on from day to day
Just as we always went.

Repentance is to leave
The sins we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing them no more.

Let us therefore, obey Hebrews 3:13 and "exhort one another daily lest any be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Repentance truly is the key to an obedient, faithful, fruitful and rich life before the Almighty!

— Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76104.

Law School Expands At Faulkner University

Three Bible courses are now being offered at the Jones School of Law. These courses are a part of the first law school academic catalog to be published in the school's history. President Ernest Clevenger assisted in the lay-out and assembly of this catalog.

Faulkner University recently opened the new Thomas Goode Jones School of Law building in Montgomery with a Board of Trustees Reception. The renovated campus building will house the law school offices, classrooms and the new, expanded library.

Who Are The Victims Of Agnosticism?

Perhaps the greatest heresy of our time is agnosticism *within* the church. The erroneous belief that truth can never be learned in this life is a false doctrine that supports every other false doctrine while undermining every Bible doctrine.

The number of those who affirm that we cannot know truth may be growing every day. Members of the church are being influenced, more and more, to believe that truth is something that we can search for while supposing that we can never find it. Some seem to see no danger in this philosophy.

There are plenty of reasons for combating this mistaken notion concerning the nature of *truth*. Even if we could not see any harm in it, we would be obligated to combat it simply because it is false. We have no right to set ourselves up as judges to decide which false doctrines are "serious," and which ones are not (Jude 3). In addition to this, let us consider some of the victims of this teaching.

God is a victim. Agnosticism presumptuously places a quivering questionmark where God has placed a persevering period. When the word of God reveals that a thing is wrong, no man has the right to teach that it is, even possibly, not wrong. When the New Testament teaches that a thing is right, it is right. When God reveals, in his word, that a given proposition is true, only an arrogant and reckless man would dare to say that it is possibly untrue. While God paints many things a bold black, and other things a bright white - a subjectivist calls God a liar by painting both a sickening gray!

"For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Romans 3:3, 4).

"As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust him" (Psalm 18:30).

Gospel preachers are victims. Those who will not give in are accused, regularly, of being arrogant when they claim to *know* truth. Others lose their power when they claim *not* to know. After any gospel sermon a preacher should be able to humbly and truthfully say, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you..." (I Corinthians 11:23).

The prophets of old spoke *after* the word of the Lord came unto them. And they spoke clearly. We do not read of a righteous prophet who said to the people: "Now there is the message God told me to proclaim to you as I understand it. But *I am* fallible. I could be mistaken about it." The prophets spoke definitely, because God had revealed their message to them. But what of the message that is proclaimed by faithful gospel preachers today?

"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).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all



TIM NICHOLS

longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2).

Members are victims. Those who are influenced to firmly believe this doctrine can firmly believe no other. Unfaithful members will be left in their lost condition by those who wear blinders and cannot see that they have left the truth, since they cannot(?) know truth (James 5:19, 20).

Alien sinners are victims. When they ask, "What must I do to be saved?" the agnostic cannot

answer with the kind of certainty that the question requires. For all he *knows*, there is nothing that the sinner **MUST** do in order to be saved. He can only begin expressing opinions about it.

All are victims. This philosophy robs every person of any reason to study the Bible. This is why we must continue to speak out concerning this persistent error.

— Route 1, Box 211, Burlington, WV 26726.

An Anchor Of The Soul

The Hebrew writer wrote, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; WHICH HOPE WE HAVE AS

AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, both sure and steadfast..." (Hebrews 6:17-19).

The two immutable things are (1) his promise and (2) his oath. Robert Milligan wrote, "We may, I think, safely affirm that God can do anything that is consistent with his own nature, and nothing that is contrary to it. He can create a universe, and he can raise the dead; but he cannot lie or deny himself (II Timothy 2:13), because he is himself the truth absolute (John 14:6, 17; I John 5:6). And hence his promises are all *yea* and *amen* in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 1:20). 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,' says Christ, 'but my word shall not pass away' (Matthew 24:35). Every promise of God is, like himself, absolutely unchangable. With an oath or without an oath, it remains the same until it is accomplished (Matthew 5:18). No opposing power in heaven, earth, or hell, can ever nullify or set aside a decree or promise of Jehovah." (Commentary on Hebrews, by Robert Milligan, p. 186).

Peter stated, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy HATH BEGOTTEN US AGAIN UNTO A LIVELY HOPE BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD" (I Peter 1:3).

Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19). Jesus has promised to bless us in this life. He said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). If we meet the Lord's conditions, he will enable us to have the necessities of life. Many think only in terms of this life: therefore, they are miserable. Worry, fear, adultery, divorce, etc., fill the lives of people who think only of this life.

In Christ we have eternal hope. Therefore, the Christian who hopes in Christ does not yield to the lust of the flesh. He realizes that short term pleasure will end in ruin,



W. Edwin Kearley

both for now and in eternity. He realizes that worry is a waste of time which manifests a lack of faith in God. Love of God toward us and our love to him casts out fear. John stated, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18).

Paul taught, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:24-25). Also he said, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Corinthians 13:13). Faith will be lost in sight when we see the Lord. Hope will be realized when we gain the blessings of heaven. Love will continue forever.

IS YOUR SOUL ANCHORED IN CHRIST?
—103 E. Lena, Bay St. Louis, MS 39522.

Faulkner University

Forms Business School

Faulkner University announces the formation of the Harris School of Business and Management, named in honor of major supporter and long-time trustee Ken Harris, Sr.

The establishment of this school comes about in part due to recent statistics showing that forty-two percent of the Faulkner freshmen class plan to go into some field of business.

Harris is the Chairman of the Board of the Pike County Bank and the founder of Harris Tire and Rubber Company. Of the new school he said: "As a part of a Christian university, the Harris School of Business and Management will teach students the value of a relationship as well as the value of the dollar. Students will not only learn how to make a profit, they will learn how to profit one another, and this will make a difference in the future."

The first graduating class of the new school in Montgomery, Alabama, will receive their diplomas in 1988.

Short Sermons

Don't stare up the steps, but step up the stairs if you want to be successful.

* * *

There is one thing in favor of falling in love with yourself - you won't have to pay alimony.

* * *

Nothing is ever lost by politeness - except a seat on the bus.

* * *

Never tell your wife that you are unworthy of her; enjoy yourself until she finds it out.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Wrong Assumptions — Wrong Conclusions

(NO. 2)

The human mind is so constituted that once it is made up, it is impossible (in some cases) to unmake it! This prejudiced mind-set is what we who teach the Bible run into frequently in the attempt to turn people to righteousness. People tend to form their conclusions on religious issues without regard to the proper method of reaching sound conclusions. Far too often individuals



Jerri Manasco

have formed opinions that MUST NOT be made to adjust to anything else; everything else must be made to fit into their notions. Their own previous assumptions are the starting place for many people, who do not recognize that the Bible is the place from which to draw our ideas.

Jesus met with preconceived ideas in his earthly ministry. One prominent case is that of the Sadducees who denied the resurrection. (Their kind is around today!!) These "intellectual" Jews presented Jesus with a hypothetical case that simply could not be solved by those who believed in a resurrection -- at least this was what the Sadducees thought! Listen to their 'unanswerable' riddle: "Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having, no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all

the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her" (Matthew 22:24-28). Now isn't that a real puzzle? The Sadducees thought so! In their mind, if Jesus is stumped by this riddle, he will ruin his whole career and cause the people to lose faith in his ability as a teacher. If he denies the resurrection on the basis of their proposition, then his whole system falls; on the other hand, if he ventures to allow all these people to be, or to remain, married after the resurrection, then he is justifying adultery, "for they all had her." But right here is where their riddle failed: they ASSUMED (as does at least one prominent religious body today) that earthly marriages will continue in eternity. They failed to consider the possibility of a higher order of existence.

Jesus dealt their challenge a dreadful blow. First, Jesus rebuked their improper knowledge of the Bible: "Ye do err, not knowing the scripture . . ." Second, Jesus rebuked their infidelity: they had no faith in the power of God to accomplish what the human mind regards as impossibility. Third, Jesus challenged their assumption that people must be in eternity as they are now: he pointed out that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage; the need for marriage no longer exists! Fourth, Jesus demolished their whole scheme by showing that according to Moses—whom they professed to adore -- God is the God of the living and not the God of the dead! Thus were they silenced by the force of the scriptures!

Those who deny the resurrection today do so largely because they cannot "understand" how such a thing is possible. Apparently this was a problem in the first century, too. Paul had to deal with those who inquired, "How are the dead raised up?" (I Corinthians 15:35). Paul handled that question masterfully by replying

that God will take care of that detail himself (verses 36-38). Our faith rests upon the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-4; I Thessalonians 4:13-16; Acts 24:14-15). We need not know or understand the mechanics of it to believe in the reality of it! Just because the resurrection is not yet a part of my personal experience is no reason for me to deny it altogether.

Others have been led into the trap of assuming that evolutionary science (?) is so well established that every other idea of man's origins must be pressed into the evolutionary scheme. How deceived some have become! The Bible account of creation is said by the untaught to be merely a poetic statement, affirming the reality of God's hand in man's development; but that it is not a historic document relating facts. If one believes that idea, then he has rejected the Bible entirely. The fact is that the Bible gives us the *truth* about man's origins. Human assumption has caused many to cast that aside in favor of the weak arguments for the impossible evolution of all things from a great big nothing! The Bible says, "In the beginning God . . ." (Genesis 1:1); and in THAT BEGINNING God made man and woman (male and female) (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6). The *real* question is: Did God create evolution? or, did God create heaven and earth and all things therein, *as the Bible says he did?*

The purpose of this article is to encourage the reader to let the Bible speak for itself. Do not allow your mind to be led into error by the foolish assumptions men have made before they have searched the scriptures.

—Rt. 2 Box 513, Haleyville, Alabama 35565.

Short Sermon

Nothing is ever lost by politeness - except a seat on the bus.



Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:35

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS . . . Editor
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Preach The Gospel

The greatest message delivered is the gospel of Christ. It offers the greatest hope man can contemplate. The hope it tenders is eternal life.

Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached. He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20). "Go" is an imperative command or mandate. The command is to teach. Mark's record says "preach" (Mark 16:15). Because of the different methods of teaching, some have tried to make a distinction between *teaching* and *preaching*. As you can see, Mark and Matthew use "preach" and "teach" to refer to the same act. The *method* is not bound, but the imparting of the message is bound.

THE COMMAND TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IS WORLD WIDE IN ITS SCOPE.

Matthew's record says "teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Mark's record says "preach . . . to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Jesus gave the procedure, ". . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). We must begin where we are and enlarge our efforts to spread the gospel as far as we can.

THE GOSPEL MUST BE PREACHED. Fairy tales that tickle the ears will not save the soul. The idea is not to entertain a carnal heart. Paul said to the Ephesian elders,

Continued on page 3



W. Edwin Kearley

A Word Of Appreciation

Recently this publication made known to its readers the urgent financial need of Georgia Christian School, located near Valdosta, Georgia. We deeply appreciate those who have responded to assist the school in this crucial hour. One hundred and fifty thousand dollars has been raised thus far. This money, along with the aid of creditors, will allow the school to continue operating for several months. Gifts have been received from two dollars from a widow on social security to ten thousand dollars. Every gift, regardless of the amount, is a great help.

There was one error in the previous article that needs to be corrected. Though Joseph Shulam, missionary to Jerusalem, did attend Georgia Christian as a dormitory student, he



Frank Chesser

was converted "prior" to his coming, not while a student here as was previously stated. We regret this error and are happy to make correction.

In its 72 years history, Georgia Christian has had a tremendous impact on the cause of Christ. Over 50,000 hours of Bible are taught each school year, for less than one dollar per hour of Bible instruction. The dormitories bring in non-Christian students from various states and foreign countries, thus providing a mission field for evangelism. Some of these young people are unwanted by their own parents. Georgia Christian has given meaning, purpose and direction to many young lives on the road to ruin.

Efforts are presently being made to assure future financial stability. Securing funds for the school's present indebtedness will allow the school to go on to greater heights than ever before. The future looks bright. Please continue to help by sending your tax deductible contributions to: Georgia Christian School, Route 2, Box 310, Valdosta, Georgia, 31601.

—Route 2, Box 344, Valdosta, Georgia 31601.

What Shall It Profit?

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 takes self-appraisal of our *OWN* relation to that "GREAT SALVATION." It is a tragic thing for any one to neglect the salvation of his soul. The soul is the most precious possession of us all (Mark 8:36-37). If we lose this, we have lost everything, regardless of our success in any other area of endeavor.

The consideration of the salvation of our soul is no trivial matter. There is no trivial sin, because there is no trivial scripture to transgress. Our God is not trivial, therefore there is no trivial offense. God has never dealt in trivialities. He gave us the "UNSPEAKABLE GIFT" (I Corinthians 9:15) of his own "ONLY BEGOTTEN SON" (John 3:16). The greatness of the soul demanded the greatness of the sacrifice paid for it — paid for it because of sin. We need to learn to hate sin because of its eternal effect on our souls, and the great cost to our God.

God gave his best (Romans 5:8; John 3:16; II Corinthians 5:21). On the basis of that sacrifice, the gift, and the justification it wrought, God devised a great plan to reconcile man to himself (II Corinthians 5:19). Man's response to that plan consists of (1) FAITH (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24), (2) REPENTANCE (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30, 31), and (4) BAPTISM (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). These actions 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 save himself and others (I Timothy 4:16).

Peter's admonition still rings, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Jesus asks: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Our answer to that

question will determine our destiny eternally.
— P. O. Box 75, Cave City, AR 72521.

Tragic Loss

W. T. Hamilton

You often hear it said that we are losing half of our young people in the church. Accurate statistics are hard to come by.

There are some young people we never have! Even though they are reared in Christian homes, attend every service of the church, and are baptized at an early age — they are never really converted to Christ. They have not established their own faith. What religion they have is by generation, rather than regeneration. When they leave us, we have not actually lost them—we never had them.

Others we keep -- nominally, but not actually. They never "quit" the church. Their names are retained on the roll. They profess to be members of the Lord's church. But when you say that much for them, you have exhausted the description of their religion.

But there are some we do lose -- some who were genuinely Christian. They do not withstand the pressures on every hand: the influence of an atheistic teacher, disapproval of their peer-group, social acceptance of sin, ridicule from a heathen companion in marriage, etc., etc. "In time of temptation (they) fall away" (Luke 8:18).

Somehow, we fail to prepare them for the inevitable trials which will come their way. In our desire to provide the very best for them, we often fail to give them the best: training which will toughen them, so they can cope with the temptations Satan hurls their way.

And the toll is tragic.
—16026 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 77062.

John Mark: The Man Who Redeemed Himself

Most of us know the bitter taste of failure. We have borne the humiliation of our own stupidity, cowardice, or laziness. We reproached ourselves and wished for another chance to redeem ourselves. Such was the experience of John Mark.

About the Man

His Hebrew name, John, meant "the grace of God." Marcus, his Latin surname, meant "hammer." "Mark" was a popular name



John Waddey

among the Romans (Acts 12:12). Jews commonly adopted a Greek or Latin name for use among the Gentiles.

Mark's mother was a well-to-do disciple named Mary. Her home was a frequent meeting-place for the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Since his father is never mentioned in the record, we assume that Mary was widowed. Mark was a cousin (A.S.V.) of Barnabas, the noted leader of the Jerusalem church and later a great missionary to the Gentiles (Colossians 4:10).

Some scholars think that Mary's home was the site of the upper room where the Lord and his disciples took the last supper and where the disciples met following the resurrection. Their reasoning is based upon information gleaned from Acts 12:23-24. The home was large enough to accommodate many disciples. It had a gate and an inner court. There was at least one household servant. The apostle Peter frequented their home. When released from jail, he immediately went to Mary's house. Rhoda, the maid, recognized his familiar voice.

It is thought by most that the young man in Gethsemane when Christ was arrested was Mark. Only Mark's gospel relates that "a certain young man followed with him, having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body: and they lay hold on him; but he left the linen cloth and fled naked" (14:51-52). If Jesus and his band had met for the last meal in his house, the lad may have followed them out to the garden with only his bed sheet wrapped

around him. Only Mark could have known of such an incident since all the other disciples had fled (Mark 14:50).

It is likely that Peter converted Mark. This conclusion is drawn from I Peter 5:13 where the apostle calls "Mark my son." This expression commonly described one's convert (I Corinthians 4:15).

When Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus journeyed to Antioch in A.D. 45, Mark was allowed to accompany them (Acts 12:25). Both in Jerusalem and Antioch, the young man was privileged to witness the preaching and sweeping success of the gospel.

The Test He Failed

In A.D. 48 Saul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey. Mark was invited to accompany them as an "attendant" (Acts 13:2-5). Being youthful he did not go as a preacher, but as an assistant or apprentice. We can imagine what a thrilling, exciting adventure that must have been for the young man: the sea voyage, the new and strange sights and experiences, the adventure of it all.

For some unknown reason however, John Mark "departed from them" at Perga "and returned to Jerusalem" (Acts 13:14). Luke, the sacred historian, assigns no reason for his action. But Paul's later reaction toward Mark proves it to have been unacceptable (Acts 15:36-40).

Several possibilities are set forth for Mark's defection. Perhaps he was fearful of the danger of that wild, rugged country of Asia Minor into which they were heading. He may have taken exception to Paul's assuming the leadership of the mission team which Mark's relative, Barnabas, had begun. Possibly he did not agree with Paul's emphasis on Gentile evangelism. Then, maybe he was just a homesick boy needing to see his mother. Whatever the case, Paul found Mark's conduct so inexcusable that he refused to allow the youth to go with him again! John Mark put his hand to the plow and then looked back. To Paul, the words of Christ applied here: such made a man unfit for the kingdom (Luke 9:62). At this early stage of his life, Mark lacked the grace of perseverance. He had no staying quality!

His Second Chance

When a second missionary trip was planned in A.D. 51, Barnabas was ready to give his young relative a chance to redeem himself (Acts 15:36-40). Paul, however, was intractable. To him, Mark's conduct was in-

excusable. Paul reasoned that a general cannot build his campaign on unreliable men. Gentle Barnabas argued that a brother deserved a second chance. The contention was sharp. Imagine the emotions Mark must have experienced as the controversy raged about him.

Each man being adamant in his thinking about the young man, the two friends parted company. Paul chose Silas to accompany him on a journey throughout Syria and Cilicia. Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus. So far as we know the two friends never worked together again.

The Productive Years

Some 11 years of Mark's life are passed by in silence. But in A.D. 62 Paul wrote to the church at Colossae from his Roman prison. Now Mark was with him (Colossians 4:10). He was endorsed by Paul in his gospel work. To Philemon, Paul called Mark his "fellow-worker" (Philemon 24). This term is used by the apostle to describe his trusted and proven helpers. Later as Paul waited the day of his execution, he asked for Mark to come, saying "for he is useful to me for ministering" (II Timothy 4:11). No man could ask for a greater testimonial than this from the noble apostle Paul. Still later, we find Mark serving with Peter (I Peter 5:13).

In about A.D. 65 Mark penned his account of the life of Christ. It seems to have been written especially to appeal to the Roman mind. Justin Martyr called Mark's book "the memoirs of Peter." Papias wrote in A.D. 140 that "John used to say (that) Mark, who was Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, all that he recollected of what Christ had said or done . . . He followed Peter . . . and Peter adapted his instruction to practical needs . . ." Later tradition has Mark traveling and evangelizing in Egypt where he suffered martyrdom.

Lessons to Remember

All of us are like Mark in some way. Most of us have failed miserably at some point in life: we have let down those who trusted us. We have all longed for a second chance. We can redeem ourselves if we truly want to pay the required price.

Mark learned from his mistake and recovered himself. May we do as well. "A righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again" (Proverbs 24:16).

Would that all of us were fortunate enough to have a relative or a friend like Barnabas who will stand by us, stick up for us, and give us that second chance.

We are impressed with the impartiality of the Bible. It presents its characters without "make-up," as they truly were. This is a mark of its uniqueness and inspiration. Also it is an encouragement to us as we struggle with our human weaknesses.

May our failure never be the cause of alienating other friends. Such a burden would be heavy to bear.

We do not read that Mark ever preached a sermon, or worked a miracle. His greatness lay not in his own genius, but in his willingness to help others.

We are reminded that there are frequently points of dispute with good arguments on both sides. Both Paul and Barnabas were valid in their logic.

The lesson of grace and forgiveness is well learned. A fallen brother can return to God (Galatians 6:1-2).

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Preach The Gospel

Continued from page 2

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

THE MISSION TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IS AGE LASTING. Jesus said that he would be with mankind "even unto the end of the world." The Hebrew writer wrote concerning Christ, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). He is able to save the last man.

To carry out the mission to preach the gospel, **WE MUST BEGIN WHERE WE ARE.** To the apostles Jesus said, ". . . ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judean, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The apostles began where they were to preach the gospel. They radiated from Jerusalem to

the known world.

WHAT MUST THE ALIEN SINNER HEAR? He must be convinced that God is, that Christ is God's son, that man is a sinner, that Christ shed his life's blood for the redemption of man. He needs to learn salvation is conditional on faith and obedience. ". . . he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION IS THE MOST URGENT MESSAGE. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). It is more important than awaking people whose house is on fire. The body just returns to the earth; but the soul will die, or live, eternally. The choice is made while in the body.

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Dying In Faith

In Hebrews 11, the writer names several of the stalwart and faithful followers of God from the dawn of creation down to the time of Noah, and some later ones also. The inspired testimony concerning these men and women of faith reveals three characteristics possessed by each which is worthy of our observation and emulation.

1. They all HEARD God. 2. They all BELIEVED God.

3. They all OBEYED God. Roy Fuller

With the pen of inspiration and assurance the writer affirms that "These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off were assured of them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13).



By faith they understood that the earth was not their permanent habitation, and they viewed life as a journey to a land of promise. They saw themselves as strangers and pilgrims on earth. They were not so wedded to this earth-life, as many seem to be in our day and time. They longed for something far better than the best that this life has to offer. They saw by faith and sought by obedience that land of promise where they would be united with their God. Their rest would be permanent. Their weary feet would travel no more, and their every need would be supplied by the gracious host of that heavenly country.

These great sojourners of antiquity had a far better apprehension and understanding of life's brevity, its uncertainties, and its hardships than so many, many, who now live in this affluent age. To "die in faith" should be the supreme goal of every person upon this earth. Surely it is fundamental truth that no one can die in the faith unless he is "in" the faith. We are warned: "Examine yourselves whether ye are in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:5). We must be "Established in the faith" (Colossians 2:6-7). We must "Continue

in the faith" (Colossians 1:21-23).

By any standard of measurement the most important achievement that any person can attain in this world is to DIE IN FAITH. The greatest personal tragedy that could befall anyone would be to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul. Jesus said: "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Our ultimate objective should be to die in faith. We should be willing to make any personal sacrifice, pay any price, go anywhere, and do anything required of us by our God in exchange for that eternal life which he has promised to those who die in faith. The Hebrew writer again stated: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

When the sum total of our life has been considered, the only thing that really matters is: What is our relationship with God when we draw our last breath on earth? Will others be able to know and to say that we died "in faith?"

—Rt. 4 Box 479, Elba, AL 36323.

1986 ETSOPM LECTURESHIP

March 2-5

Studies In Timothy and Titus

SUNDAY, MARCH 2
10:00 An Introduction to Timothy and Titus
GEORGE GOLDMAN
11:00 Preach the Word
WILLARD COLLINS
7:00 The Biblical View of Wine
ROD RUTHERFORD

MONDAY, MARCH 3
9:00 Warning Against False Doctrine (I Tim. 1:1-11)
KENT BAILEY
10:00 Paul's Thanksgiving for Mercy (I Tim. 1:12-20)
BEN FLATT
11:00 Prayer in Public Worship (I Tim. 2:1-7)
DAVID LIPE
1:00 Men and Women in Public Worship (I Tim. 2:8-15)
FRANK YOUNG

2:00 Office of the Overseer (I Tim. 3:1-7)
ROBERT TAYLOR
3:00 Office of the Deacon (I Tim. 3:8-16)
GENE WEST
4:00 Apostasy Predicted by the Spirit (I Tim. 4:1-5)
HUGO McCORD
7:00 Difficult Texts and Qualifications of Church Officers (I Tim. 3:4, 11; Tit. 1:6)
ROBERT TAYLOR

TUESDAY, MARCH 4
9:00 Advice to Timothy as a Good Minister (I Tim. 4:6-16)
JOHN WADDEY
10:00 Instruction Concerning Widows (I Tim. 5:1-16)
ED MYERS
11:00 Instructions Concerning Elders and Slaves (I Tim. 5:17-6:2)
GENE STILWELL

1:00 Instructions to Timothy (I Tim. 6:3-10)
ROBERT CARRELL
2:00 Charge To Timothy (I Tim. 6:11-21)
LAMAR PLUNKETT
3:00 Qualities of the Steadfast Servant (II Tim. 1:1-18)
JERRY GROSS
4:00 Duties of the Steadfast Servant (II Tim. 2:1-13)
RALPH GILMORE
7:00 The Question of Evangelistic Oversight
JAMES HUDLEY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5
9:00 Minister's Reaction to Doctrinal Error (II Tim. 2:14-26) ...
WAYNE MILLER
10:00 Instructions Concerning Apostasy (II Tim. 3:1-17)
WILLIAM WOODSON

11:00 Final Charge to Timothy (II Tim. 4:1;8)
BILL NICKS
1:00 Personal Word to Timothy (II Tim. 4:9-22)
JOHN MARK HICKS
2:00 Instructions Concerning Missions (Tit. 1:1-16)
CLARENCE DeLOACH
3:00 Instructions Concerning Various Groups (Tit. 2:1-15) ...
DEWEY FOGERSON
4:00 Instructions Concerning Christians Among Men (Tit. 3:1-15)
DON JACKSON
7:00 The Role of Women
TOM HOLLAND
LADIES CLASS MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY
2:00 God's Plan For Women
BECKY GROSS

EAST TENNESSEE SCHOOL OF PREACHING AND MISSIONS

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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1986

NUMBER 10

Christian Parents

The home was instituted by God. "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his 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



W. Edwin Kearley

she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:21-25). The woman that God made was made to be a "help meet" (helper suitable) for man (Genesis 2:18).

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . ." (Genesis 1:28). It is certainly true: people need to prepare themselves to be parents. Preparation must take place in several areas. Children need food, clothing, shelter, education (spiritual and secular), love, discipline, and understanding. People need to prepare themselves so they can earn enough to care for themselves and their offspring. They most of all need to prepare themselves spiritually to be able to live an exemplary life before their children, and to teach them how to live spiritually. Paul taught, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Someone has listed twenty duties or qualities for Christian parents. They are as follows: (1) Love and patience. (2) Teach children

the love of God. (3) Exercise discipline: (A) This is done so that children have respect for parents. (B) Apply discipline immediately. (C) Make the discipline fit or be appropriate to the offense. (4) Teach children the standards of Christian living as early as possible. (5) Remember to set a good example: The example of Timothy's mother and grandmother were cited in the Bible. "As is the mother, so is the daughter" (Ezekiel 16:44). (6) Talk across to the child, not down to him. (7) Treat the child as a person. (8) Insist that the family sit down at the table to eat together, rather than all going separate ways, or eating in front of the television set. (9) Teach the "facts of life" to your children at home. (10) Teach children to love and appreciate your mate. (11) Pay attention

to questions, give answers even if you have to say: "I don't know." (12) Deal with child's request like God deals with us: sometimes the answer is "Yes," sometimes "No," and sometimes "Wait awhile." (13) Teach some economic values; try to help them understand about your budget. (14) Do not let them date until they are old enough. (15) Teach them not to date a person they would not marry. (16) Teach them to date a person who will help them go to heaven. (17) Teach them to memorize scriptures. (18) Teach them not to compromise principles. (19) Teach them to dress in modest and sensible apparel. (20) Teach them by word, and exemplify before them at all times Christian attitudes in all areas of life.

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Religious Unity, And Freedom

In a recent copyrighted article released by the New York Times News Service, there is a report stating that a panel of Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic leaders have "taken a major step toward resolving some of the theological disagreements" that have divided churches.

One of their conclusions was that if a church baptizes only adults, they should continue to do so; but they should also recognize those who baptize infants. The report did not say how we are to handle the



W. T. Hamilton

fact that baptism is to be preceded by faith (Mark 16:15-16), and repentance (Acts 2:38), neither of which can be done by an infant; nor how we are to conclude that infant baptism is all right, when such was never practiced in the first century church.

Another consideration of the panel was that "re-baptism" is a definite no-no. Their position was that baptism is "unrepeatable." Of significance is the account in Acts 19:1-7 where the inspired Apostle Paul "re-baptized" about twelve men. This makes me wonder what Paul's comments would have been had he attended the panel! How can Bible believers who understand that we are "buried with him" in baptism (Romans 6:3-4), "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), conscientiously be a part of such an ecumenical movement?

I am in favor of religious unity. Jesus prayed

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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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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Religious Unity, And Freedom

Continued from page 1

for it (John 17). The apostles admonished churches to practice it. But there has been a missing ingredient -- and a necessary one-- in all of the modern-day ecumenical movements. There must be a STANDARD OF AUTHORITY. And that can be only one thing: The Bible. When that is accepted, then all religious questions can be settled by "What saith the Book?" Incidentally, that will bring some interesting conclusions!

—16026 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 70962.



Flavil H. Nichols

The Devils' "Sifter"

In my boyhood days I remember seeing my mother put cornmeal into a circular container which was called a "sieve," or "sifter." It had fine-meshed screen for a bottom; and as she shook the "sieve" from side to side, the meal would "sift" through the screen into a receptacle, leaving the larger pieces ("bran") on top of the screen to be discarded. The first sifter I can recall was a "home-made" one: my father took an old cheese "hoop" and used screen wire to make the bottom. Later I remember a bought one (!) which was [more-or-less] like a half-gallon bucket, with a handle on one side; inside were wires which by turning a small crank could be rotated against the screen, thus stirring through the cornmeal, and forcing the finer particles through the sieve.



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

I think of that kitchen device every time I read Luke 22:31-34 "The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy

brethren. And he said unto him. Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

Satan earlier had entered into Judas Iscariot, who had bargained with the chief priests to betray Jesus into their hands for 30 pieces of silver (verses 3-6). Although the devil already had Judas, he wanted Simon Peter also! Jesus told that disciple whose name means "the rock" that "Satan hath desired to have thee" (verse 31). We should let this serve as a warning to each of us! Regardless of how many others the devil may already have, he wants US! He is a foe to every child of God, and wants each of us. Later the apostle Peter wrote: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). He wanted to "sift" Peter to see if he were "chaff" (bran) or "wheat."

The devil is a crafty adversary. He "beguiled Eve through his subtlety" (II Corinthians 11:3), and Paul mentioned the devil's "devices" (II Corinthians 2:11), and wrote about "the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). ["Wiles" means "tricks or strategies intended to ensnare or deceive."]

I do not suppose the devil is limited to only one "sifter" --he must have several! He knows which one to use for each one of us. In subsequent issues we propose to notice some of his "sifters."

Will Their Argument Bear Close Scrutiny?

We were not at all pleased to learn that some men in this area recently shot and killed two bears while they were hibernating in their den. The act was unsportsmanlike and illegal. The Department of Natural Resources (D.N.R.) has been trying to encourage the establishment of these bears in the area, and feel that the effort has been set back three years.



Tim Nichols

Autopsies revealed that, between them, the two bears were carrying seven unborn bear cubs. A representative of the D.N.R., who was interviewed on the radio, stated: "What we have is nine dead bears. That's all there is to it." The public sentiment seems to be that baby bears, killed unlawfully before birth, are murdered baby bears! Whether or not those who did the deed will be charged with *nine* counts of taking

"game" out of season remains to be seen. But we want to point out that, among those we've heard expressing themselves, all have expressed that it is self-evident that the *unborn bears* are now *dead bears*.

Why is it so difficult for many to see the same truth regarding *human* babies in the *human* womb? Why are people rising up in righteous indignation over the death of brute beasts, in the womb of animals, who will say nothing about the millions of human lives willingly taken every year while in *human* wombs? Is it not at least as self-evident that an unborn *human* baby is a *baby*? Why do the laws of our land protect unborn *bears*, and punish those who kill them, while declaring open season with maternal consent on our own unborn?

John the Baptist was a "babe" (Greek: *brepfos*) when he "leaped" in the womb of Elizabeth (Luke 1:4). After Jesus was born, the angel of the Lord told some shepherds that they would "find the babe (*brepfos*) wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). Would Elizabeth, a woman "well stricken in years" (Luke 1:7), have been justified in willingly taking the life

of John before his birth? The answer is self-evident. Would Mary, an unmarried, young and poor woman, have been justified in taking the life of our Lord in the manger? The answer is self-evident. "Fetal tissue" is *living, human* flesh. It is simply a matter of location.

When will the laws of our land reinstate the right of life to our unborn? When will their rights be raised to make them at *least* equal to the rights of baby beasts? The Creator of human life, who breathed into him the breath of life, hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17).

—P.O. Box 512, Keyser, WV 26726.

Short Sermons

Tact is the art of convincing people that they know more than you. * * * *

More people die by the spoon and fork than by the gun and sword. * * *

Some doctors believe in the shock treatment mailed out on the first of every month.

A Wanted Man

Everyone is familiar with the FBI's list of ten most wanted men whose pictures are displayed in the post offices of the nation. These men are wanted because of their wickedness. I want to tell you about another wanted man: wanted for service in God's kingdom because of his goodness. Ezekiel pictures Jehovah as looking for a righteous man to stand in the gap to build up the damaged



John Waddey

walls of Zion and help protect the nation against her enemies (Ezekiel 22:30). Sadly, God found no such man in that generation.

His Description

I. He is a man who puts God's business above his personal interests. This man will not allow his profession, job, business career, or recreation usurp the place of the Lord's cause in his life. He truly seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). He denies himself and follows Christ, bearing his cross (Matthew 16:24). All of this stems from the fact that he loves the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matthew 22:37).

II. This man leads his family in serving God in the church. He would never think of *sending* them, while he stays home. Like Abraham, he will "command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah. . . ." (Genesis 18:19). He will diligently teach God's precepts to his children and talk of them both morning and night (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). As a good nurseryman he will carefully nurture his children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). A man deceives himself who thinks he can simply *send* the wife and children to church while he golfs, or sleeps -- and all will be well. What he *does* speaks much louder than what he *says*. Chances are he will live to regret his failure to provide them leadership in the proper way to serve God. God's man will say to his offspring: "imitate me as I imitate the Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1).

III. God wants a man who is willing to provide the right example to his children and those around him. A faithful man of God will be an "example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). He will refuse to indulge himself in worldly habits such as tobacco, beverage alcohol, and gambling, since he would not want his sons to practice them. He will always be honest, truthful, and faithful, because that is what he expects of his youngsters. "A righteous man that walketh in his integrity, blessed are his children after him" (Proverbs 20:7).

IV. God seeks a man who thinks more of his spiritual growth than of his educational or recreational growth. This man recognizes the superior importance of the inward man that is being renewed day by day (II Corinthians 4:16). While men of the world spend great amounts of time and money for additional education or to improve their golf game, God's man will be satisfying his soul's appetite for God's word (Matthew 5:6). He will long for the sincere milk of God's word and be determined to learn its message

(I Peter 2:2). While others are reading books on their favorite sport, he will be searching the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

V. Our man will measure his giving by what is left over, rather than by what he gave. In a day of inflated money, one might give a large number of dollars and yet never deny himself anything. He will honor Jehovah with his substance and the first fruits of *all* his increase (Proverbs 3:9). Like the Macedonian Christians (II Corinthians 8), he will give to God even beyond what others might expect. This occurs because he has fully dedicated himself to the Lord and nothing is held back. The church can accomplish great things for God with a man who gives sacrificially to the Lord who sacrificed his life for us).

VI. The Father seeks a man who will worship and serve in the kingdom for the Christ's sake rather than his own. Some folks are religious for reasons other than pleasing Christ. It might be to please a mate, or to gain social standing. For some who are afool of the law, it's to get probation, or a parole. Others participate for social values, or to gain a position of power. God's man will "do all things for the gospel's sake" (I Corinthians 9:23). The apostles thought of themselves as servants for Jesus' sake (II Corinthians 4:5). He who practices his religion to please men should not be a servant of Jesus (Galatians 1:10).

VII. Rather than just a *brilliant* mind, God wants a man with a *willing mind*. All those who will to do his will shall know of the teaching, promised Jesus (John 7:17). God's man will be like young Samuel who responded to God's voice, "Speak Jehovah, for thy servant heareth" (I Samuel 3:9). Like Isaiah he will respond to God's call: "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

VIII. God is looking for a man who desires to serve rather than to be served. In this he is like Jesus who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45). Rather than asking what the church can do for him, he inquires what he can do for others. This denial of selfish interests makes him a true disciple of the Nazarene (Matthew 16:24).

IX. This man sees his own faults rather than the faults of others. As Paul, he confesses himself to be the chief of sinners (I Timothy

1:15). Rather than concentrating on the mote in his neighbor's eye, he is concerned to overcome his own failures (Luke 6:41-42). For most of us our own deficiencies will provide a full-time job, leaving little time for analyzing our brother's life.

X. God's wanted man is more concerned about winning souls for Christ than winning the honor and praise of the world. He recognizes the eternal intrinsic value of the human soul (Mark 8:36-37). He is willing to become all things to all men to save his neighbor's soul (I Corinthians 9:22).

Each man who reads these lines should honestly face the question: "Am I on God's wanted list? If not what lack I yet?" The following lines were gleaned from a church bulletin some time back:

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

When you get what you want in your struggle for self,
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself
And see what the man has to say.

For it isn't your father, or mother, or wife,
Whose judgment upon you must pass,
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life,
Is the one staring back from the glass.

You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum,
And think you're a wonderful guy;
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum,
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

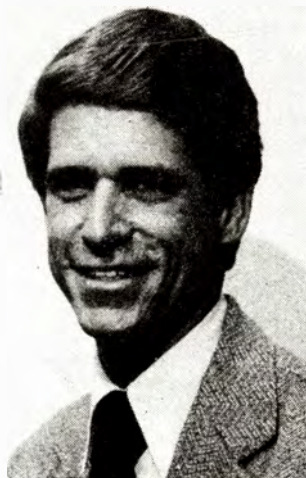
He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test,
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years,
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you have cheated the man in the glass.

The Fine Art Of Humility

A young preacher heard so many compliments in his early career that it went to his head. He became cocky and arrogant and took liberties about careful preparation. On one occasion it caught up with him. He entered the pulpit overconfidently — only to go completely blank and stutter and stammer until he admitted defeat and took his seat in humble embarrassment. Afterward, an elderly gentleman said, "Don't give up. Learn from it. If you'd gone up like you come, you coulda' come down like you went up!"

Of all the qualities a faithful gospel preacher



Jimmy Edwards

should possess, humility may be the most important. It is true that he must be sincere, enthusiastic, pure in lifestyle and biblically knowledgeable; but if he has all these traits, and more, but lacks humility, he is not an authentic Christian.

In Batsell Barrett Baxter's book *The Heart of the Yale Lectures* (which is a sifting of the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching) several of the most outstanding lectures on important aspects of preaching are included. In chapter six, which deals with "Attitudes," a good amount of attention is devoted to the subject of humility. The following are some quotations from some of the world's outstanding rhetoricians. Every gospel preacher can learn much from these gold mines of instruction from William Pierson Merrill, William Jewett Tucker, Phillips Brooks, George Wharton Pepper, Elmore McNeill McKee and James Stalker, respectively:

Continued on page 4

The Fine Art Of Humility

Continued from page 3

Fundamental to the character of every true spokesman of God, every leader of the spiritual advance of humanity, is a great and deep humility which would keep him silent and lost in the crowd but for the overwhelming compulsion of a message which must be spoken. Every prophet bears that hall-mark of humility.

The safety of the preacher, the safeguard from himself, lies in the growth of humility. All God's chosen ones have had it. It is the sure and fine quality which underlies their natures.

First, count and rejoice to count yourself the servant of the people to whom you minister. Second, never allow yourself to feel equal to your work.

I do not say that he must be confident of his ability to deliver the message with effect. Rather he must distrust himself and lean on God.

And so the preacher of today like Isaiah in the Temple will ask for his own cleansing, acknowledge his dependence on God, and then find to his sheer amazement that God can use him.

... I always seem to myself to be only beginning to learn my trade; and the furthest I ever get in the way of confidence is to believe that I shall preach well the next time.

The statements of the Yale Lecturers emphasize a subject which is stressed consistently in the word of God — humility. Every faithful preacher in the Lord's kingdom would do well to periodically review the biblical passages which mention lowliness, meekness, abasement and submissiveness.

In both the Old and New Testament texts the Lord encourages humility. Solomon wrote: "Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud" and "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit" (Proverbs 16:19; 29:23). Both James and Peter penned: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6; I Peter 5:5). The same writers exhorted their readers: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" and "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (James 4:10; I Peter 5:6).

The Bible contains several accounts of men practicing the fine art of humility. Take, for example, the apostle Paul. Near the end of the third missionary journey, "from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17). In his conversation with them he described his personal ministry saying he had served the Lord "with all humility of mind" (Acts 20:19). Paul's service to the first century church was without pride and arrogance. There was no haughtiness or assertiveness. He reflected a spirit of absolute humility.

Every gospel preacher today should be extremely careful to "Put on . . . humbleness of mind . . ." (Colossians 3:12) and do his best to "be clothed with humility" (I Peter 5:5). Too, the gospel preacher needs to know

that becoming and remaining humble does not come by accident. To be humble in disposition and lifestyle requires study, prayer, earnest determination and time. It takes a keen awareness that if a man of God is to please God (and that is foremost) and be successful in a local ministry he must be humble!

He that is down need fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble, ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

—Bunyan

—512 Gardendale Drive, Montgomery, AL 36110.

Are You Sincere...

1. When you willfully miss church services while away from home on vacation?

2. When you wear clothing that you know is immodest and enticing?

3. When you allow Little League Baseball to be the *dominant* factor in the summer schedule of your family?

4. When you are gone so much on the week ends that the elders cannot count on you to assist in the local program?

5. When, as a teenager, you allow popularity to dictate the course of your actions in regard to what you wear, where you go, and what you do?

6. When you allow anything and everything to crowd out real Bible study -- especially



Johnny Ramsey

since you tell your neighbors that we follow the BIBLE ALONE in religion?

7. When you oppose church discipline, even though the scriptures demand it?

8. When plain teaching offends you, even though you know it is the only thing that can save you?

9. When you give such a small percentage of your income to the cause of Christ, while claiming to put the kingdom first?

10. When you fully realize you ought to be baptized into Christ, but stubbornly refuse to obey the Lord?

11. When you partake of the Lord's Supper on Sunday night when you could have been present that morning?

Are you really sincere? What a penetrating question! To go to heaven we must be right with God. No deceitfulness will make it past the gates of glory. It is time for personal inventory (II Corinthians 13:5). In the day of judgment only the sincerely obedient (Luke 6:46; I Peter 1:22-23) will be ushered into the land of fadeless day. If we are lost, what a terrible price to pay for insincerity!

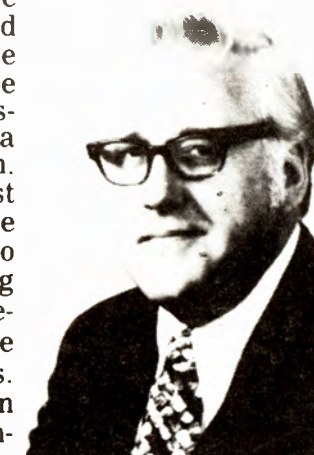
—Editor, Christian Bible Teacher, 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

Take Heed, Lest You Get Caught In Your Own "Mouth" Trap!

It is easy for one to think that if he did not originate some story, he would not be held guilty for passing it on. Such is a very false conclusion. If one says just enough to put the mind of another to work in the wrong direction, he is responsible for the rumor which results. "Rumor is like an egg; when it is hatched it has wings."

James said, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:2-5).

It is an unusually strong statement for James to make that one who is able to bridle his tongue is a "perfect" (or, mature) man.



Edsel Burlison

He explains that one who is able to control his tongue, is able also to control his whole body. The best way to save face is to keep the lower end of it shut. Someone said, "Dignity is the capacity to hold back on the tongue what never should have been on the mind in the first place."

Wisdom is knowing when to speak your mind, and when to mind your speech. We must beware of half-truths, lest we find ourselves with the wrong half! A lady invited friends to a mushroom steak dinner. When the mushroom can was opened, a light scum was on top. The guests were expected soon, so the lady suggested to her maid, "Give the dog a little, and if he eats it, it is probably all right." The dog liked it and begged for more. So the dinner was completed and served.

After the main course, the maid whispered to her employer, "Ma'am, the dog is dead!" There was only one thing to do. Some time later at the emergency room, the guests were reclining after the use of a stomach pump. The lady asked the maid, "Where is the dog now?" "Out in the driveway, Ma'am, where he fell when the car hit him!"

How very careful one should be about information he receives before passing it on. May we never create smoke that will cause someone else to assume there's a fire. Take heed, lest you get caught in your own "mouth trap"!

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 11

New Testament Baptism

While baptism is essentially a New Testament ordinance, a clue to its meaning may be found in two Old Testament types: (1) the flood (I Peter 3:19-21), and (2) the crossing of the Red Sea by the Jews who fled Egyptian slavery (I Corinthians 10:1-13).



R. W. Gray

In the former we observe that "baptism" transfers the believer into a new and clean relationship (Compare Romans 6:1-7). The latter Old Testament type of baptism marked the consummation of God's deliverance of his people from bondage to and servitude of Egypt's potentate (Exodus 14:21-30). Thus the inspired record reveals that as God chose the waters of the flood (the type) as a means of saving Noah and his family, he has chosen baptism (the antitype) as a means of saving us "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:19-22). And as God chose the crossing of the Red Sea (the type) as a means of "saving" his people from bondage (Exodus 14:30), he has chosen New Testament baptism (the antitype) as the means of bringing us "into Christ" where we escape the bondage of sin. When their baptism (crossing under the cloud in the sea) was complete, the Bible says, "Thus (or in this manner) the Lord saved Israel that day . . ." (Exodus 14:30; I Corinthians 10:1-2). This is why Paul said of this antitype, "for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is FREED from sin" (Romans 6:5-7). And again, "For as many of you as have been

baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:27, 29).

Our English word "Baptism" is derived from the Greek "baptisma," and denotes the action of plunging in water. This may be seen from the language of our English Bibles. A believing, confessing Ethiopian went down "into the water" where he was "baptized." Following the action he came up "out of the water" (Acts 8:35-39). The record says we are "buried" with Christ when baptized, wherein also we are "risen" with him (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4).

It is extremely interesting, yet seriously regretted, that some who point to the beautiful pictures portrayed in the foregoing paragraph as proof that New Testament baptism is immersion (as opposed to pouring or sprinkling), will steadfastly deny that these verses have anything at all to do with water baptism when it is pointed out that they establish the absolute essentiality of the ordinance. Such "handling" (?) of the scriptures is obviously a serious blunder (II Peter 3:16-18).

Considerable misunderstanding exists regarding the origin and design of baptism. A general habit of referring to it as a 'church ordinance' has contributed to some of the difficulties. Baptism is not a 'church ordinance' in the sense that it originated with the church, is derived from some decree of the church, or is administered to those already "in the church." It was, rather, commanded by Christ when he said, ". . . teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . ." (Matthew 28:18-19).

A misconception regarding the design of baptism derives from the practice of 'baptizing' (?) infants. New Testament baptism is always believer's baptism. It is preceded by genuine repentance, and has no scriptural meaning apart from these prerequisites. For this reason so-called "baptismal regeneration" must be rejected. It represents a perversion of New Testament baptism. Divorced from

faith and repentance, baptism secures no blessing. It is for nothing and into nothing. The promise is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). And the believer is commanded to "repent and be baptized, . . . for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). It was a penitent, believing Saul of Tarsus who was instructed to "arise, . . . be baptized, and wash away thy sins . . ." (Acts 22:16). Inasmuch as infants are incapable of meeting the requirements of baptism, they are not subjects of it. Nor do they need to be "saved" for they are "safe" (Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14).

When administered to a believing, confessing, penitent, baptism brings one into contact with Christ's death wherein his blood was shed. Paul wrote, ". . . so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death: . . . that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). John records that after Jesus was dead, his blood was shed (John 19:34-35). We are saved when we contact that blood (Romans 5:9).

Far from being a 'work of righteousness' that 'merits' salvation, baptism is a passive act wherein one submits to being washed from sin through faith in the Lord's promise that the baptized believer shall be saved (Colossians 2:12-13; Mark 16:16). The "washing (or, laver) of regeneration," that is, the washing that belongs to regeneration, is set out in contrast with "works of righteousness which we have done." And it is by that washing, i.e., baptism, that we are said to be saved (See Titus 3:5).

A blessed hope is ours through identification with Christ in his death which we have symbolically entered, and where our salvation is assured (Hebrews 5:9; Romans 5:7-10; 6:1-7).

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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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Baptists Make Baptism Necessary

The Lord Jesus Christ is "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). According to Ben M. Bogard, a prominent Baptist preacher of times past, the partaking of the Lord's Supper is a command to be obeyed. He said: "One of the things the Lord had commanded was the partaking of the Memorial Supper" (The Baptist Way-Book, p. 11).



Victor M. Eskew

Clear reasoning would teach any one that if a person did not partake of the Lord's Supper he would be disobedient. And if disobedient, one does not have Jesus as the author of his eternal salvation.

But according to Mr. Bogard, a man must be baptized before he can partake of the Lord's Supper. He writes: "The new disciples were first to be baptized then taught to observe the other things which had been commanded. To partake of the Supper before baptism is to violate this law, and if we encourage any to thus violate the law of the Lord on this subject we shall be partakers of their sin. To invite unbaptized people to partake of the Lord's Supper is a sin" (Ibid.). Thus, Mr. Bogard makes baptism necessary for salvation!

One might ask how this is done by Mr. Bogard. Let us follow the thought all the way through. 1) One must be obedient in order to have Christ as the author of his eternal salvation. 2) Since the partaking of the Lord's Supper is a command to be obeyed (a statement from Mr. Bogard's pen), then the one who does not partake will not have Christ as

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

The Devil's "Sifter" No. 2

(Wealth)

Our Lord "laid the foundation of the earth" (Hebrews 1:10), and "made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). He "hath made heaven, and earth . . ." (Acts 14:15), and he "is lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24). Therefore by right of creation "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (I Corinthians 10:26, 28). "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:8), and he also reminded Israel that "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psalms 50:10). After Israel left Egypt, God instructed them: "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth . . ." (Deuteronomy 8:18). Before the list of animals [14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 she asses] Job had after his trials, we read that "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job . . ." (Job 42:12).

Accumulating wealth should not be our goal in this world; our chief aim should be to glorify God (I Corinthians 10:31). It is a serious blunder to think that "gain is godliness." "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:5-8). Those who aspire to become rich have many special temptations --the Devil seems to use wealth as a "sifter." "For they that will be rich" [A.S.V.: "they that are minded to be rich;," R.S.V.: "desire to be rich;," Confraternity: "seek to become rich;"] "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (verse 9).

Material wealth or goods, especially as having a debasing effect, is defined as "mammon." Jesus declared: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Satan knows that some people cannot pass the test of prosperity. He "sifted" the Rich Young Ruler in the sifter of earthly wealth, and he failed the test!

Be it remembered, however, that one does not have to amass a great fortune to be lost for covetousness. "The love of money" --any amount of it! "whether it is yours or another's! --is a root sin out of which many other sins grow (I Timothy 6:10).

The remedy for this situation is revealed by the Holy Spirit: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded" [R.S.V.: "haughty;," Confraternity: "proud;"] "nor trust in uncertain riches" [A.S.V.: "nor have their hopes set on the uncertainty of riches"], "but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;



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that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" [R.S.V.: "be . . . liberal and generous;," Confraternity: "giving readily, sharing with others"]; "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:17-19).

Satan tempts some to fraudulently acquire wealth, using embezzlement and other schemes as a "sifter." He "sifts" others in the sinful use of funds they already have. And many have not realized that the devil "sifts" them in regard to how much (or little!) they give to God and his work. It has been said that some members are so stingy that they will go to the judgment still owing for the BREAD and FRUIT OF THE VINE they used in the communion!!!

When YOU are in the Devil's "sifter" (Luke 22:31-34) may the realization that Jesus is praying for YOU -- that he cares how you pass the test!! -- help you to come out victorious!

Strong And Weak Brethren

Not all Christians are on the same level of spiritual maturity. Paul observes that "one man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs" (Romans 14:2). We read of "babes" in Christ (I Peter 2:2), and "carnal" minded Christians (I Corinthians 3:1-3). There are growing disciples (II Thessalonians 1:13) and there are "full-grown" saints, strong in the faith (Hebrews 5:13-14).

Often brethren fail to make allowances for this variance in maturity levels. Some expect new-born Christians to act like full-grown brethren. No tolerance is exhibited for the failures of the new convert. He is treated the same as the older disciple who knowingly and deliberately sins and rejects Christ. The damage done is of the same nature as that done to a little child who is expected to behave as an adult.

Another problem is that factions and divisions arise over matters of opinion. Christ is not pleased with such confusion in his family (I Corinthians 14:33). Congregations are destroyed, or left impotent. Souls are lost.



John Waddey

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The Providence Of God

Judah was punished with captivity because of her idolatry and other sins. God knew when a nation was defeated by another, the conquering people thought their god had been victorious over the god of the defeated people. Therefore, Jehovah inspired Isaiah to inform the people about their destiny. He first pointed out that their idols, created by their hands, could not know the future nor deliver them (Isaiah



Ray Hawk

40:18-31; 41:20-25; 42:23-25). Jehovah could deliver them IF they would repent and return to him. If not, he would bring a nation upon them to judge and punish them. When this came to pass they would have a written record from Jehovah, informing them that this would happen. He even told of a remnant that would return from captivity because a king named Cyrus would release them (Isaiah 43:1-15; 44:28-45:13). This took place without Cyrus' being manipulated by Jehovah against Cyrus' will. History informs us that Cyrus wanted the blessings of ALL the gods. He released all captive people under his control, including the Jews, to receive the blessings of each nation's god or gods. Jehovah, the only true Deity, foretold this event 150-to-170 years before it took place. It is sad that liberal churchmen try to discredit Isaiah by creating two "Isaiachs" — the original one, and Isaiah Number Two who lived (?) about 200 years later. According to liberalists, the original Isaiah wrote the first thirty-nine chapters, and "Isaiah Two" wrote chapters forty through sixty-six. "Isaiah Two" is a liar and the whole book is deceptive! If liberalists want to believe in such a god, that is their privilege; but all evidence points to one Isaiah inspired by the one Almighty God who knows the future.

It is also interesting that Daniel, while in captivity, told Nebuchadnezzar his dream, which none other knew, and gave the interpretation (Daniel 2:1-45). In that dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw four great kingdoms. Jehovah would set up an everlasting kingdom in the days of the fourth kingdom. Only miraculous inspiration could know those kingdoms and the correct sequence. However, those kingdoms came about in a natural way, not through miracles. Babylon was followed by the Medo-Persians; they were taken over by the Greeks; and the Greek Empire gave away to the Romans. During the Roman Empire, Jesus was born and established his kingdom (Daniel 2:44) on the day of Pentecost after his ascension (Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 2:1; Acts 2:1-47).

The prophet Isaiah foretold the destruction of Babylon (Isaiah 13:1-17). He indicated this would be accomplished by the Medes. Keep in mind that this prophecy was made more than 150 years before the event took place. Babylon did not fall due to supernatural events, but natural ones.

If God could make things happen then without the use of miracles, and through those events bring about the answer to prayer, he can do the same today. The only difference between now and Bible times, is that prophets could tell what was going to happen,

and we cannot. Once an event had taken place, those who lived through it could look back at scripture and know that God had foretold it. God has not foretold exact events for our day.

Even during the Babylonian captivity, prayers were offered by God's covenant people (Jews), praying for deliverance to take

place; but all who asked for it during their lifetime were disappointed unless they lived in the appointed day of freedom. God could not answer their prayers in the affirmative for that would have been against his will. He had told them they would spend 70 years in captivity. When one asked for a shorter cap-

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Strong And Weak Brethren

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Paul addresses the problem of strong and weak brethren in Romans 14 and 15. His instructions will be most helpful to us if heeded.

I. We are to receive the weak brother, but not to doubtful questions (14:1). We must accept him as our brother in Christ. Brotherly kindness is a characteristic of a true Christian (I Peter 1:7). The quality of that acceptance is seen in Romans 12:9-10: "Let love be without hypocrisy . . . In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." We must not reject a brother just because his opinions differ from ours. Only if his view makes void the word of God, should we refuse him (Matthew 15:6).

We must not however allow the weak brother to provoke arguments and strife, the "doubtful disputations" of (14:1) in the King James Version. This had happened in Corinth. Preference for particular preachers had become an occasion for strife and division (I Corinthians 3:1-3). When one becomes factious demanding his way and disrupting the unity of the body, we must "mark" (Romans 16:17) and "reject" him (Titus 3:10-11). Allowing such arguments and strife will disrupt the church, weaken her influence, and destroy the weak brother. Paul admonishes: "Destroy not with thy meat him for who Christ died" (Romans 14:15).

Rather than quarrel and bicker, we should edify the weak brother (Romans 15:2). Teach him the true doctrine. It is a preacher's responsibility to "put the brethren in mind of these things" (I Timothy 4:6). Teach him about our liberty in Christ (Galatians 5:1; II Corinthians 3:17).

II. We must learn to exercise the rule of tolerance. "Let us not therefore judge one another anymore; but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling" (Romans 14:13). This rule is binding on both the weak and the strong. We must avoid the danger of letting the weak brother control the church. To do so will stifle a congregation and kill it. Paul cites two examples of conflict between weak and strong brothers. "One man hath faith to eat all things; but he that is weak eateth herbs" (Romans 14:2). "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike" (Romans 14:5). Likely these conflicts were with Jewish converts who were clinging to their Jewish food restrictions and holy days.

There have been numerous cases of similar problems in the twentieth-century church in America. Some had scruples against using individual communion vessels. Others could not in faith participate in the class method of teaching. Some had doubts about churches cooperating in evangelism, and churches caring for non-Christians in benevolent matters. For some the issue was whether a church could support a "located

preacher;" for others it was eating in the church building. There have been tensions over the hymns we sing, and the Bible translations we use. Those who are strong in faith must not reject the weak brother whose conscience will not allow him to do a given thing. On the other hand, the weak brother must not despise the strong brother who can do so without problems. "Let not him that eateth set at naught him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him" (Romans 14:3).

III. When conflicts arise, we must seek for things which make for peace. If we allow ourselves to dwell on our disagreements, we will find ourselves fragmenting and disintegrating. We must concentrate on those things which we hold in common. In almost every case those who disagree do so in only one or two points, while sharing a common faith in most areas. If we will focus our interests on our common enemy (Satan), we will not have time to dispute on these opinions. A common enemy will always unite a family. Jesus pronounced a blessing upon the peacemakers, but not the agitators (Matthew 5:9).

IV. There are some questions that must be judged. If a brother's point of contention violates the Word of God, we cannot be silent. We must note the man who obeys not the Scripture and have no company with him (II Thessalonians 3:14). "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse" (Titus 2:10). One can be factious even about a matter of truth. "If anyone cometh unto you, and bringeth not (Christ's) teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting" (II John 10). Those guilty of shameful conduct must be put away from our fellowship (I Corinthians 5:1-13).

Our judgments must always be based upon the teaching of Jesus, since his word will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). We must not seek our own will, but the will of the Father (John 5:30). When we see a brother whose conduct produces the fruit of strife and contention we can conclude that he is in fact a factious man and should be confronted on such (Matthew 7:15).

Conclusion. As Christ pleased not himself, so must we learn to think first of others (Romans 15:3). Our love for our brethren and for the church must be stronger than our love for our opinions. We must accept the fact that contentions and factions are not God's way. Let us concentrate on those things which make for peace. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (Romans 15:1).

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

The Providence Of God

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tive period, he was not praying in harmony with God's will. Therefore God's answer had to be "No." Even if a person wanted his father to see his homeland once more before the old man died, and prayed fervently for the captivity to end before his parent passed away, God still had to answer that prayer negatively. Although some may have thought God was not answering their prayers, he was. The same is true today.

In Eve's time God had first promised the Messiah (Genesis 3:15). Later he made the promise through Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3). Those who prayed for the Messiah in 975 or 231 B.C. did not have their prayers answered in the affirmative -- because it was not God's scheduled time (Galatians 4:4). Simeon's

prayers were answered affirmatively, and God allowed him to live to see the Christ -- because it was the appointed time (Luke 2:26). Those who lived *before* that period and prayed to see the Messiah, did receive an answer to their prayers from God, as we sometimes do -- but it was "No. Wait."

Job was a righteous man. Satan did not think Job would remain faithful to God if God stopped protecting him. God allowed Satan to try, or test, Job. The man lost his children and livestock, and came down with terrible sores (Job 1:13-19; 2:7). Job's wife pleaded with him to "Curse God and die" (Job 2:9). Job himself wished for death, but he refused to turn against God (Job 6:8-9). During this period, any prayers for healing were answer-

ed negatively -- not because God did not hear, but because the testing period was not complete. Once it was, the healing and restoration took place (Job 42:10).

Sometime we wonder why our prayers are not immediately answered. We may never know the answer in this lifetime; but there is a reason. God continues to work his will through providence. He never answers prayers nor works against, or contrary to, his will (I John 5:14; I Corinthians 14:33). God's providence will always be in harmony with what he has revealed in the Bible.

—1490 Campbell Street, Jackson, TN 38305.

We Must Have Christ's Authority

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). "In the name of the Lord" means "by the authority of the Lord." Whatever we do, must be by Christ's authority if we are to please him. During this last dispensation of time God speaks to us by his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Christ speaks to us by means of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15; 8:6), so to act by his authority is to act by the authority of the New Testament.



Joe E. Galloway

Sometimes the statement is mistakenly made that we have Bible authority for such things as baptism, the Lord's supper, and singing, but that we neither have Bible authority, nor need it, for such things as our meetinghouses or songbooks. Not so! We must have authority for all that we do (read again Colossians 3:17). True, we do not have specific authority for some things. Some things are authorized generically. For example: the Bible specifically authorizes our assembling together (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 11:20). Although it does not specify the kind of meeting place, a meeting place of some kind is essential to the requirement that we assemble. We cannot assemble without it's being at some place! Since a place to assemble is implied in the specific requirement to assemble, and since the kind of place is not specified, we have generic authority to use a meetinghouse, or our homes, a rented store building or even to meet out in the open. The same can be said regarding songbooks. We are commanded to sing together (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Such necessitates a means for us to speak the words to a tune in unison. This can be done either by memorizing the songs beforehand or by using written songs. The Bible does not specify which means we are to use, so we are at liberty to use the method we think most expedient to carry out this command to sing together. Thus we have generic authority for songbooks.

Most of us at sometime have been asked why we do not use instrumental music in our

worship. The answer is simply that we do not have Christ's authority to use such! Had the New Testament merely told us to "make music," either vocal music, or instrumental music, or both kinds, would have been generically authorized since both are "music." However, the word of Christ is specific. It says we are to "sing" (Colossians 3:16). To use instrumental music in worship would be to add to the Lord's authorization, so would be to act without his authority!

Things necessary to carry out this specific command to sing are generically authorized (such as a means of getting the pitch and a means of staying together); but other kinds of "music" are eliminated by the specific command to "sing."

It seems more than coincidental for the warning that we must do all by Christ's authority to appear in the very next verse (v. 17) after this specific command to "sing" is given (Colossians 3:16)!

—218 Pinecrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.

Geritol Preaching

W. T. Hamilton

Have you got 'tired' blood? Feel run-down? No energy? Has your get-up-and-go got-up-and-went? If so, according to the TV commercials, you need GERITOL. Before that, it was

HADACOL. Before that, something else similar. And sometimes those tonics pep us up for awhile. They may be good for some people with some physical problems. But they don't replace food!!!

We have our valleys as well as our mountains, spiritually, too. And sometimes a good "Geritol" sermon really helps. Personally, I like to hear them. . . at times. I would hate to have a steady diet of them, however. They don't replace food!

For mature spiritual development I need food for my soul. I need "the sincere milk of the word" that I might grow (I Peter 2:2). As I grow older, I need the "strong meat" of

God's word (Hebrews 5:12-14). Once in a while a tonic helps; but it must be taken as a supplement to a good diet.

After all, the Holy Spirit told the elders to "feed the flock" (Acts 20:28). Not much is said about giving them pep pills.

—16026 Diana Lane, Houston, Texas 77062.

Baptists Make Baptism Necessary

Continued From Page 2

his Saviour. 3) According to the Baptists, one must be baptized before he is able to partake of the Lord's Supper (another admission by Mr. Bogard). Therefore, they make baptism necessary to one's salvation. For unless one is baptized, he cannot partake of the Lord's Supper. And if he doesn't partake he will disobey Christ. And the disobedient will not have Christ as the author of their eternal salvation.

Our Baptist friends need to do much examining before they condemn members of the churches of Christ for teaching that baptism is necessary to the salvation of one's soul. For their very teaching with respect to the proper candidate who may partake of the Lord's Supper causes them to make baptism necessary also. The words of Jesus are truly applicable to them. "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

—608 So. 4th St., Hayti, MO 63851.

Short Sermons

Two can play a game and both lose.

Flattery is a key that fits many locks.

Very little slander is able to prove itself.

All who are on the right side are on the same side.

Beware of the man whose main thought is to advance himself.

A life makes a pretty worthless package if it is all wrapped up in itself.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Wrong Assumptions - Wrong Conclusions

(NO. 3)

In two previous articles it has been my purpose to set forth the proposition that when one begins with wrong assumptions, not having carefully weighed the evidence in a study of an issue, he will be led to wrong conclusions. To say the least, it is dangerous to form some proposition, or assume some doctrine, and then turn to the Bible for "proof" of that idea. The Bible is not designed by God to merely provide man with fuel to fire up his own beliefs. We saw in one of the previous articles that the Sadducees assumed falsely in regard to the resurrection (Matthew 22). The "problem" they posed to Jesus was quickly and most masterfully done away with by Jesus' proper use of the scriptures. We, too, must be careful with our use of the Bible, lest we also be embarrassed as were the unbelieving Sadducees.



Jerri Manasco

Naaman is another excellent case where wrong assumptions led to wrong conclusions. The record of this man's folly is found in II Kings 5:1-14. Naaman, captain of the Syrian host, was a leper. Having received word of an Israelite prophet who could provide healing for him, Naaman took his journey to Samaria. Arriving at the house of the prophet, Naaman was instructed by a messenger sent out by the prophet to "wash seven times in Jordan" to be healed. Provoked both the fact that the prophet didn't personally appear, and also by the "utterly ridiculous" (!!) solution to his problem, Naaman uttered those famous

words, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out unto me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (II Kings 5:11). In further protest, he declared the rivers of Damascus to be better than the river Jordan. "May I not wash in them, and be clean?" he asked.

Naaman's problem lay in that common human frailty called PRIDE. "Behold, I thought" was his downfall!! Founded upon his own reason and without consideration of some other possibility, this man came very close to returning home a leper to die a leper. Had his servants not intervened with cool-headed advice, Naaman's life would have been miserable until the day of his death. Naaman was deeply offended by the apparent mockery to which he thought he was subjected!

Our generation needs to learn that the phrase, "Behold, I thought," though used countless times even now, is not a sound or rational basis for any action. Where God has given positive instruction, as he did to Naaman, we are not at liberty to become peeved because the teaching is out of harmony with our notions.

Jeremiah the weeping prophet had to experience the sad task of facing people whose minds were already made up concerning their lives and souls. This prophet had diligently warned God's people of impending desolation because of their sins. He was met with such replies as, "Why hast thou prophesied . . . saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant?" (Jeremiah 26:9). In verse 11 the princes and false prophets boldly said, "This man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." Jeremiah was accused of treason in these words; therefore the people assumed that as a treacherous man he ought to be slain! They assumed that their city

and nation were perfectly immune from any outside invasion. What Jeremiah said to them did not harmonize with what they wanted to believe. How often has this been the case in our times when a faithful preacher has been fired by the elders simply because he dared to declare the sins of those in the congregation!

It is not at all uncommon for members of the Lord's church to run from preacher to preacher to find one who will agree with their pet peeve, or endorse their sins. Especially is this becoming common on the question of marriage and divorce. Assuming that God doesn't want anyone to live alone even when an unscriptural divorce has occurred, some "Christians" will scout far and wide for a preacher who will assist them in their yearning for a sinful union. What Jesus said in Matthew 19:3-12 and what is taught in Genesis 2:18-24 is totally ignored in favor of one's own assumptions. The assumption is that if even ONE preacher says it is all right, then it must be all right to live in an adulterous marriage.

Brethren who enjoy "social drinking" will live on their assumptions, and find a preacher who is spineless enough to support their thinking. What God says, is replaced with a simple, "Behold, I thought." The sad thing is that in the judgment God will not be interested in what "I" thought but in what "He" has said!

People are often prone to become extremely angry and defensive when others refuse to accept their sinful circumstances. But it is my conviction that these folk are not really angry at one who has faith enough to stand for moral purity; they are angry (at least in some cases) with themselves for allowing themselves to be placed in a compromised position! The truth sometimes causes disturbances (Matthew 10:34-39). Actually it is not the truth that creates the problem; It is the reaction

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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Wrong Assumptions- Wrong Conclusions

Continued from page 1

of the stubborn heart to the truth that is at fault. Naaman could not in reality claim to be angry with the prophet. After all, no one had told Naaman what would be done for him! The only information he had was that he would be healed. The specifics of the matter were all concocted in Naaman's head!

Some alien sinners are heard to say that they think they can be saved without obeying God, even though the Bible puts obedience before salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Erring children of God are known to declare that they believe they can go to heaven, even in their sins, and that they don't have to confess their sins. The Bible says otherwise (Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; Acts 8:13-22). What is needed is for people to submit their "thinking" to the teaching of Jesus (II Corinthians 10:5) and revise our thinking if our "thinking" and Jesus' teaching do not match!

The Bible student will recall that when Naaman complied with the prophet's instructions, he was healed: "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II Kings 5:14).

Assumption gave way to obedience!

—Whitehouse Church of Christ, Rt. 2, Box 513, Haleyville, AL 35565.

Short Sermons

Some people are like buttons — always popping off at the wrong time.

More people get crooked from avoiding work, than become bent from too much of it.

The man who thinks the world owes him a living usually wants it a "loaf" at the time.



Flavil H. Nichols

The Devil's Sifter No. 3

Adulterous Marriages

The Bible makes it emphatically clear that "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). From creation God intended that a man shall "leave his father and his mothers, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). The divine purpose was that there should never be even one marriage broken up by divorce. "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away," or divorce (Malachi 2:16).

It is only natural for a normal person to seek companionship, for "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Satan sometimes uses this yearning for the fulfillment of social needs and physical desires as a "sifter," testing man's convictions, or the strength of his determination to follow the divine pattern for marriage.

Not every person is eligible to enter into a marriage contract. Only three classes of people are eligible in God's sight to marry. These are: (1) one who has never been married, but is mentally and physically developed sufficiently to be capable of fulfilling the responsibilities of marriage; (2) one who has been married, but whose spouse has died; and (3) one who has been married, but whose spouse committed fornication (or "adultery").

Parents, have you taught your children to listen to the Savior on the subject of marriage, just as they must respect his word on how to be saved, how to worship, or any other theme? The Devil may use the "sifter" of unscriptural marriages to catch many souls! With honest hearts let us turn and read what Jesus our Lord says on this subject.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ boldly preached: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:32).

Later in his personal ministry he again said: "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).

Mark recorded his words as follows: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she com-

mitteth adultery" (Mark 10:11-12).

Luke quoted Jesus as saying: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18).

Examination of these texts reveals that they are applicable to all parties involved. Look first at what Jesus said regarding one who divorces his/her spouse: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, . . . and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11-12).

Now consider what our Lord said about the one who is divorced ("put away"): "Whosoever shall put away his wife, . . . causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:32).

What about the third party who is involved in such second marriages? Jesus said, ". . . and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:32). Read again: ". . . and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

--Yes, I know that Christ gave ONE (and only one) "exception." But the EXCEPTION does not invalidate, cancel, or nullify the rule! Webster tells us that an "exception" is "a case to which a rule does not apply." God's rule is that second marriages are adulterous! Jesus says this rule applies to every case "except it [the putting away] be [done] for [her] fornication." Read it again: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9). Listen respectfully to the Messiah once more: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, SAVING for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery" (Matthew 5:32). "In Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female . . ." (Galatians 3:28); therefore the same principle applies where the husband is put away for his fornication. In other words, 'save' out those cases where a spouse (either husband or wife) was put away because of his/her fornication: all others who divorce a husband/wife, cause him/her to commit adultery.

The following arrangement by Bob Langston (Cape Fear church, Fayetteville, N.C.) is very plain.

SUMMARY: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication . . .

1. and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9);

2. causeth her to commit adultery" (Matthew 5:32);

3. and whosoever shall marry her . . . committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:32).

The 'burden of proof' rests upon any person

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“Is You Is Or Is You Ain’t?” “Who Can Tell?”

We are finding it ever more increasingly difficult to determine where anybody stands on anything. For years, many politicians have been very careful to find which way the majority leaned before expressing an opinion. Sad, indeed, is the situation when this same hesitancy characterizes some who claim to be Christians, and, even some who pretend to preach the gospel.



Edsel Burleson

Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scat-

tereth abroad” (Matthew 12:30). It is not difficult to determine how to be “with” Jesus if we will allow him to say what he means and mean what he says. He assured us, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

The story is told of a hunter who had raised his rifle and had taken careful aim at a large bear. When he was about to pull the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice: “Isn’t it better to talk than to shoot?” What do you want? Let us negotiate the matter.”

Lowering the rifle, the hunter replied, “I want a fur coat.” The bear replied, “Good, that is a negotiable question. I want a full stomach, so let us negotiate a compromise.”

They sat down to negotiate and after a time the bear walked away alone. The negotiations had been successful -- the bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had a fur coat.

This is Satan’s method exactly! He succeeds in getting men to compromise, and does so to the destruction of everyone who

listens to him.

During the Civil War, it is said that there was a man who was sympathetic to both sides. He lived in a border-line state. Finally, he decided that he would effect a compromise. He put on a mixed uniform, wearing the Confederate grey coat, and the Union blue trousers.

It seems all went well until he became engaged in a hard-fought battle; the Federals shot him in the coat, and the Confederates shot him in the trousers!

Take a stand on truth, and let others know where you stand. Paul said, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14).

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Church Discipline

Bud Causey

Discipline in the Lord’s church is like discipline in the home -- it is almost a thing of the past. Leaders of the Lord’s church should make it their business to keep up with the flock and know how they are living, encourage them in right doing, rebuke them in their sins, and teach them how to mend their ways. Then if they will not repent, they are to be further disciplined with the hope of saving their souls. I believe one of the greatest problems facing the Lord’s church today is lack of discipline. No school can operate without discipline. No home can remain an honorable home without discipline (Proverbs 29:15). Therefore, the Lord’s church cannot stand without discipline and still be the church God would have it to be.

What is church discipline? In general terms, it is the way the church trains its members to “walk in the light” (I John 1:7). Church discipline should have one goal in mind and that is to restore the erring soul, not to destroy it.

We should examine the command in Hebrews 12:6-9, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening God deal-eth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in

subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”

Also, look at the command in II Thessalonians 3:6, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” In the 14th verse Paul says, “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.” Also, Paul said “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

Exercising discipline is necessary for the following reasons: (1) The honor of Christ is sadly impeached when open sin is allowed among those who profess to be his followers. To make Christ appear as a minister of sin is a grievous offense. (2) The welfare of the offender himself is never to be lost sight of (Titus 3:10-12; Galatians 6:1-3). The wise, kindly, deliberate action of the church may save the erring one (James 5:19-20). And however humiliating and terrible the exclusion may have been, the door is always left open for return. The purpose includes his restoration and recovery; and if he repents and comes to a right state of mind, nothing stands in the way of his restoration to the fellowship. (3) The welfare of the church requires that the transgressors be dealt with. For sin is like

spiritual leprosy -- it can begin in a small place and if not stopped quickly, can spread to the whole body, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (I Corinthians 5:6).

What does the Bible teach us to whom we are to withdraw from? The answer lies “not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches” (I Corinthians 2:13).

Some of those whom we are to withdraw from are named. They are: One who commits a private trespass against another, but who rejects private or personal efforts to get him to repent (Matthew 18:15-17); those who cause divisions and offense contrary to the sound doctrine which ye have learned (Romans 16:17-18); those who are guilty of fornication and covetousness, those who are idolaters, railers, and/or drunkards (I Corinthians 5); those who walk not after the tradition which we received from the apostles -- and this includes sluggards and busybodies (II Thessalonians 3:6-15); those who teach other than the word, who consent not to wholesome doctrine; the proud and the ignorant; those who dote about questions and strifes of words; who produce envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds; those destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness (I Timothy 6:3-5); those who willfully miss services continually. The reason they should be withdrawn from is because they would not be following after the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:41-42).

When should the church withdraw? This depends upon several factors, such as: (1) How long have they been members of the church? (2) How much knowledge of God’s word do they have? Each case should be considered independently. But let me emphasize that the time to begin is now, because tomorrow may be too late. Discipline should be administered only after every effort has been exhausted, making sure the delinquent has received visits, encouragement, and that faithful brethren have prayed for and with

The Devil’s Sifter - No. 3

Continued From Page 2

who enters into a second marriage: --for our Lord warned that his rule is: second marriages are adulterous! One who CLAIMS his/her second marriage is not adulterous, should be amply able to establish that claim with facts, not by emotionalism, nor by per-

sonal desires or wishes. A RULE does not have to be proved; an EXCEPTION does.

Jesus warned Simon Peter that Satan wanted to “sift” him as wheat (Luke 22:31-32). Satan also wants people today (I Peter 5:8). Second marriages may be one of his “sifters.”

Continued on page 4

David's New Cart

In I Samuel four and five, the Philistines defeated Israel and captured the Ark of the Covenant. They carried it to Ashdod. God's anger was poured out upon the people of Ashdod; so they decided to send the Ark to Gath. The people of Gath could not escape from the anger of God; so they sent the Ark to Ekron. The people of Ekron rapidly realized the anger of Jehovah God, and sent the Ark to Beth-shemesh. Seeing the anger of God coming upon them also, they insisted that the men of Kiriath-jearim come and get the Ark. This was accomplished and the Ark of the Covenant remained some twenty years in the house of Abinadab.

Upon becoming King, David determined within his heart to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. God had given specific instructions regarding how (Emphasis mine, H. B.) the Ark of the Covenant was to be moved (Numbers 4, 7, 10). It was to be carried by staves and placed upon the shoulders of the men of the tribe of Levi, of the family of Kohath. David, instead of obeying the instructions of God, copied the blueprint of the new cart built by the Philistines (I Samuel 6:7), which they used to bring the Ark from Ekron to Beth-shemesh. David's new cart worked seemingly well for a time. The procession had reached the "threshing-floor of Nacon," when something happened! The Bible records that the "oxen stumbled," and Uzzah, put forth his hand to steady the Ark, so "God smote him . . . and there he died by the Ark of God" (II Samuel



Harold Bigham

6:6-7). The Ark of the Covenant was left in the house of Obed-edom, where it remained for three months.

Some Lessons From David's New Cart?

I. David was easily influenced by others. When the Philistines decided to move the Ark, they built a new cart (I Samuel 6). David patterned his after theirs. He was influenced by the Philistines! Today, we are also influenced by others (I Corinthians 15:33). The introduction of mechanical instrumental music into the worship was because of the influence of others. Let us be influenced by the Bible instead of being influenced by sinful man!

II. David wanted to improve on the ways of God. Instead of carrying the Ark by the way God specified, David had an attitude of "improvement." We need to realize "God's ways are much higher than our ways" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Denominationalism has adopted the "attitude of David" by following human creed-books instead of the Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17), advocating the "church of your choice" instead of the one church revealed in the Bible (Ephesians 4:4), and by inventing all "types of improvement for the satisfaction of their own worship" instead of the five avenues of Biblical worship (John 4:24).

III. David had a lack of respect for divine authority. David did not respect the authority of God by building his new cart. We must respect the authority of God at all times (Matthew 15:8-9). Let us not be a "Naaman" with the statement of: "Behold, I thought" (II Kings 5). Let us "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent" by "speaking as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

IV. David apparently thought that the "HOW" made no difference, so long as the job was completed. We must be mindful of the how when God tells us how to accomplish the task! In the construction of the ark, Noah

was told to use Gopher wood. He obeyed the "how"! In the area of music in the worship, God gave us the "how"! He told us to sing, and authorized only singing (Ephesians 5:19). We must not allow what God condemns; and we must not condemn what God allows. We must not make laws which God did not make, and we must not break laws which God has made.

Let us learn from the mistakes of others (Romans 15:4) and never build a "Philistine Cart"!

—P.O. Box 544 Bay Springs, MS 39422.

Is America Secularly Educated? Or Biblically Uneducated?

Timothy Richburg

People are spending much time getting a good education. Many are doing so to get a better job, to make more money, or some perhaps so they can be highly respected. Many have spent so much time in getting a good secular education they have neglected getting a good Biblical education. Woodrow Wilson, our 28th president, who was a graduate of Princeton University, Virginia Law School, and Johns Hopkins University, said: "Man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of a knowledge of the Bible." Here is a man who was very secularly educated. Notice: he said one is deprived of "the best" by not being Biblically educated.

About a year ago in the Gospel Advocate a poll showed how much Bible knowledge "church going" people have. Less than half in this poll could name three of the Ten Commandments! Only half of those who attended church could name the four gospels. (Notice these are people who attend church!) Less than half knew who delivered the sermon on the mount. One in eight teenagers read the Bible daily and thirty-one percent could not remember when they read the Bible last. It is a crying shame that people are so Biblically uneducated!

The inspired apostle Paul told Timothy to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). We are to give diligence to know what God has said in his word. Recently in a Bible class, a brother in Christ stated that his brother-in-law, who holds a Ph.D., was asked to give thanks for a meal. His prayer was, "God is great, God is good, let us thank him for our food." While we do not question the man's sincerity, it does prove our point. Many are Secularly educated and Biblically uneducated!

The Bible says, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat for hither to ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now ye are able" (I Corinthians 3:2). Paul said these people should have been able to eat meat, but were still on milk.

Brethren, let us be Biblically educated so we can be able to give an answer to those who ask us a question. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

—Rt. 1, Box 75-B Selma, AL 36701.

Church Discipline

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him.

What are some objections to withdrawing fellowship? 1. Some say we do not have the right to judge. But listen to the apostle Paul "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do ye not judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Corinthians 5:12-13). --Yes, Jesus says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). But a close study of the entire context shows that Jesus was talking about a man with a beam in his own eye while trying to get the mote out of his brother's eye. What then is the teaching? Remove the beam from your eye, then you can remove the mote from your brother's eye.

2. Another objection is: No one is above sin (Romans 3:23); so we cannot administer discipline. No Christian can live on this earth without sinning. KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SINS OF WEAKNESS, VERSUS WILLFUL SIN. The Bible teaches that the Christian does not live in sin if he walks in the light. "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). In this narrative, the Greek word for "cleanseth" is "katharizel," which is a verb meaning a constant process.

3. The third objection is that it will hurt the church. Don't believe this for one minute! Because if church discipline is administered as God commanded, in love, it will not tear up, but rather will strengthen.

Concerning church discipline, brother Thomas B. Warren said: "Churches which fail in this point will fail in their mission of saving souls by holding forth the word of life. Failure to purge out sin leads to toleration of sin, and toleration of sin leads to a love of sin, love of sin leads to practice of sin. And this Christ will not tolerate."

I believe brother Warren summed it up, don't you? -- that TOLERATION OF SIN LEADS TO LOVE OF SIN? As the church, we should have an active discipline program; and we will if we love the brethren. Remember, withdrawing is as much a command as Acts 2:38 or Mark 16:16. So I exhort you to keep ALL the commandments of God, including II Thessalonians 3:6!

—Whitson Place Church of Christ, Rt. 3, Box 205A, Berry, AL 35546.



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Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 13

Wrong Assumptions - Wrong Conclusions

(NO. 4)

This is the final installment in this series concerning how mankind often follows pre-conceived notions rather than solid truth. We will be considering the case of Moses, and his failure to grasp God's methods of operation. Let it be clearly emphasized that no man is capable of out-thinking God -- since God's ways and thoughts far transcend our own (Isaiah 55:6-7).



Jerri Manasco

Moses, as we sometimes do, seemed to have had in his mind how God should accomplish his will; but God has his own approach that works quite nicely.

Moses had been commissioned by the Lord to go into Egypt and lead the oppressed Israelites from their captivity. God provided Moses with the assurance, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land . . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:7-10). After some interesting discussion with the Lord, Moses finally went about his work. He and Aaron would bring Israel out of their bondage!

Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh with the Lord's ultimatum: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go . . ." (Exodus 5:1). Pharaoh's response was short and direct: ". . . I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Not only would he

not let Israel go, but the Pharaoh increased the tasks of the children of Israel, demanding that they provide their own straw for bricks, and not diminish the total quota of bricks.

The expectant Israelites were crushed by Moses' apparent failure. Seeing their burdens now made heavier, Israel fires harsh criticism toward Moses, blaming this obedient servant of God for their renewed difficulties (Exodus 5:20-21). Moses himself seemed to have been dismayed at the outcome of his mission, and returned to God, asking, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all" (Exodus 5:22-23).

Moses' anxiety was caused, not by real threats, but by his assumption as to how things would be! God had a purpose in mind that only he knew how to work out effectively. God had previously cautioned Moses that Pharaoh would not let Israel go as easily as Moses and Israel might like to think (Exodus 4:21). The Lord did not promise instant success: that was Moses' idea! Egypt would truly be brought to its knees, but only after God demonstrated his mighty power. After a series of plagues which increased in their intensity until the wail of death was heard in Egypt, the Pharaoh almost forced Israel to leave the land! God's way worked.

Unfortunately we have learned little since the days of Moses! Countless elderships, preachers, and personal workers feel a deep sense of failure if their efforts are not attended by instant results. Preachers sometimes feel they have utterly failed in a gospel meeting if the aisles are not flooded with visible responses. The Lord has given us a commission to preach the gospel and baptize those who believe it (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:15-41; 8:12). However, the

Lord has not said that we are responsible for whether or not people believe the gospel! The gospel is like seed (Luke 8:11). It must first be planted; and then, depending upon the soil into which it lodges, the fruit will be forthcoming (Luke 8:11-15). God does promise success with the gospel; indeed the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 3:6; Isaiah 55:11). But like Moses, we must go forth with the message God has given, and live in faith that our efforts will be rewarded in due time.

There are some who, for one reason or another, have reached the conclusion that the Christian life ought to be trouble-free. When they find this is not the case, they may make one of two fatal assumptions: (1) God is not offering what he promised; or, (2) they feel that they are not part of God's chosen! The truth is: God does not promise a life free from trouble for the Christian. In fact, the Christian may expect right the opposite (II Timothy 3:12), with the assurance that if he is faithful, he will be rewarded (James 1:12). What God does promise is that no man will be made to suffer extraordinary affliction beyond what he can bear (I Corinthians 10:13).

The assumption of some that when made free from sin, one is also delivered from physical sickness, can lead folk into infidelity when that promised soundness of health does not materialize. Timothy must have had some kind of ailment (I Timothy 5:23). Paul also had a "thorn in the flesh." Another faithful brother was sick TO THE POINT OF DEATH for his fervent service to God (Philippians 2:25-30). To assume that spiritual pardon leads to physical healing, will also lead you to the conclusion that you ought to reject the Bible -- because it tells of godly people who suffered physical sickness. It is error to make such an assumption.

As he did with Moses, God assures us that he

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Wrong Assumptions- Wrong Conclusions

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is genuinely concerned with our problems. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). The Christian has an avenue opened to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16). You need no "assumptions" to build your life on that. Live for the Lord in faith that God sees and knows us in our triumphs as well as in our sorrows. Hold fast to the grand admonition: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for IN DUE SEASON we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Moses would have been spared much anxiety if he had considered that possibility.

—Whitehouse Church of Christ, Rt. 2, Box 513, Haleyville, AL 35565.

The Unmerciful Servant

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord



W. Edwin Kearley

Continued On Page 4

The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Individual Responsibility Toward A Revival

Brother Willard Collins, President of David Lipscomb College, will be with the Sixth Avenue church for a series of sermons March 30 - April 3. As we anticipate this series of sermons, I think of individual responsibilities toward the truth that shall be preached.

The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). It will save the alien sinner (Mark 16:15-16). It will build up the church (Acts 20:32). And it will also strengthen individual Christians (I Peter 2:2).

God purposed that men --mortal, fallible, faltering men -- who have been taught the gospel shall teach others also (II Timothy 2:2). Brother Collins is well aware that the "glorious gospel" (II Corinthians 4:4; I Timothy 1:11) of our dear Savior is worthy of --yes, fully deserves! --a far better presentation than any man shall ever be able to give it. But we confidently believe he will do the very best that he can do -- and he is one of this generation's great preachers. He will preach the gospel in its ancient simplicity, purity, and power.

In return, he might fairly solicit the hearty cooperation of every member at Sixth Avenue. Here are SEVEN ways you can help immeasurably in this short revival.

1. Pray for the services. Every time you think of these joint efforts of ours, pray in behalf of the speaker, and for the hearers. Before the "throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:15-16), mention by name those whom you would like to see obey the gospel.

2. Attend each service, if possible. Plan ahead that you will come. Clear your calendar of anything and everything that conflicts with this meeting. After all, in the judgment day, what else will really matter?

3. Bring your whole family. You love them most, don't you? What else is as important to them as Christ's gospel and his church? If you do not INSIST that they come with you, how will they know you think these services are vitally important?

4. Fill a pew each night. Invite every person you contact to attend. Be a booster of this revival! Talk it up! Tell each person you see on a daily basis that you want HIM/HER to come and sit with you each service. I venture a guess and if each family at Sixth



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Avenue filled a pew, the house would not hold the crowd!

5. Personally and enthusiastically participate in the worship. Sit near the front to make the worship in song as good as possible. Sing each song as if you were being paid five dollars a line! Think through each prayer, and make it your very own by saying "Amen" [aloud if you wish (I Corinthians 14:16), but at least in your heart] at the close of it. In this way you 'sign your name' to the praises, thanksgivings, and petitions expressed in the prayer. Really listen to the sermon, taking notes if you like, so you can later recall the truth presented for your own profit, and to share with others.

6. If you need to publicly respond to the invitation, do so at the very first service. The restoration of an erring child of God is just as precious as the conversion of an alien sinner --for both are lost (James 5:19-20). This will bring you to Christ's cleansing blood (I John 1:7-10); and your early example may encourage someone else also to obey the gospel.

7. Speak to all others who attend, if possible. A friendly spirit is contagious, and makes visitors feel wanted and welcome, so they will want to return. Apply the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), and treat each visitor as a guest of honor.

These seven steps will almost certainly guarantee a good meeting. But if you forget all the last six, be sure to do number one: PRAY for the meeting. If you do this sincerely, earnestly, it will be hard for you not to do the other things in this list!

I am eager for brother Willard Collins to be with us, and look forward to shaking hands with each one of you and all the visitors you can bring. I am praying that God will add the blessings to our sincere efforts, and will give us "good success" in the great cause which we mutually love.

Short Sermons

Some folk's minds are like concrete: all mixed up and thoroughly set.

"Enough" is what would satisfy us if the neighbors did not have any more.

He who appears before an audience without preparation should disappear without delay.

You've got to keep on growing:
One inch won't make you very tall.
You've got to keep on doing:
One little deed won't do it all.

The Silence Of The Scriptures

In the context of recent "Unity Meetings" we are again being told that the "silence" of the scriptures means nothing. According to people in the Christian Church we are at liberty to use instrumental music in worship since the New Testament neither commands nor condemns its use. Some within the church of Christ are swallowing this line



Ron Harper

of reasoning. In this article we would like to discuss whether or not we must respect the silence of the scriptures. By that we mean: "Must we refrain from doing what the New Testament does not authorize?" This point must be made clear; for people in the Christian Church would have us to believe that they respect the silence of the scriptures. In other words, they would not condemn doing anything the Bible does not condemn.

First, let us see that our friends in the Christian Church are not consistent with their interpretation of the silence of the scriptures. Concerning instrumental music in worship their attitude is: "The New Testament does not condemn it; so we do not condemn it." Would that apply that interpretation of the silence of the scriptures to other items of worship? We think not. Take, for example, the matter of the Lord's Supper. In the New Testament we are authorized to use unleavened bread and grape juice (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:23-29). Because those two things were used by the Lord when he instituted the Lord's supper, we use them in the worship of the church.

When people in the Christian Church eat the Lord's Supper they use those two items. To my knowledge they use them because that is what the New Testament says to use. They do not use other items in addition to these two because there is no authority in the New Testament for anything else. However, by applying their interpretation of the silence of the scriptures as used in connection with instrumental music, there might be several things we could add to the Lord's Supper. This writer has never been all that fond of the taste of unleavened bread, especially the "store bought" kind most congregations use. In our opinion strawberry jam could do much to improve the taste of the bread. By applying the same interpretation of the silence of the scriptures people in the Christian Church use in connection with music in worship, I am at liberty to start using jam with my unleavened bread!

I have a strong idea that most people in the Christian Church would oppose the spreading of strawberry jam on the communion bread for one reason: It is without Bible authority! It is a fact that one in the "Christian Church" is on record as opposing additions to the Lord's Supper for that very reason. In the January, 1986, issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, brother Roy Deaver answers a letter written by a minister in the Christian Church. This minister, in replying to a previous article by brother Deaver, opposes adding steak to the Lord's Supper for the following reason: "In the Lord's Supper we are to use the unleavened bread, symbolic of His body, and the fruit

of the vine, symbolic of his blood; that is how the Lord instructed us" (*Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 17 No. 2, p. 10). He opposes the use of steak on the Lord's table because God has not authorized it. Does this not show a glaring inconsistency in their interpretation of the silence of the scriptures? They say: When it concerns instrumental music we cannot condemn what the Bible does not condemn; but when it concerns the Lord's Supper we cannot do what the Bible does not authorize! That is their reasoning, and it is inconsistent.

How do we interpret the silence of the scriptures? Are we allowed to do, in worship, what the Bible does not condemn? Is it wrong to do what the Bible has not authorized? Fortunately we have Biblical precedent. The seventh chapter of Hebrews discusses why the law had to be done away, replaced with the gospel. Jesus Christ is our high priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:15, 17, 21, 26-28). If Jesus is our high priest the law had to be replaced with the gospel for this reason: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Hebrews 7:14).

In the Old Testament God authorized men from the tribe of Levi to be priests. In fact, the Old Testament was quite specific: The priests were to be taken from the tribe of Levi of the sons of Kohath (Numbers 4:1-3). Nowhere did God ever say "a man from Judah shalt not be a priest." Jesus, though, could not be a priest under the law of Moses. Why? Because Moses was silent about placing a man from Judah in the priesthood. Notice again, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Emphasis mine, R.H.). God gave no authority for a man from Judah serving in the priesthood. According to the interpretation some give to the silence of the scriptures, Jesus could have been a priest. God never said "A man from Judah shall not be a priest." According to scripture Jesus could not be a priest under the law, however.

This scripture is very relevant to the matter of instrumental music. We see from it that the silence of the scriptures does indeed mean something. We are not allowed to do that for which there is no authority. This principle applies to the Lord's Supper as well as to any other act of worship.

Often, as a last resort, we are told, "You people in the church of Christ use song books, pitch pipes, and microphones; and they are without authority." Before discussing whether or not the use of song books, pitch pipes, and microphones violates the silence of the scriptures, notice one thing: This statement does not justify or defend instrumental music in worship. In fact, it admits that it is without authority. Does the use of song books constitute a violation of the silence of the scriptures? An example from the Old Testament will help us answer: In Genesis 6 God told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood. Noah was at liberty to use a hammer, saw, or any other tools expedient to building an ark. If Noah used a hammer he was still building an ark of gopher wood. If, however, Noah used oak (in addition to gopher wood), he was not doing what God said. He was not building an ark out of gopher wood; he was building it out of gopher and oak. The hammer would be an expedient, while oak would be an addition.

God has told us what kind of music to make in

worship: singing (Ephesians 5:19; Col. 3:16). If we sing from memory, we are making only one kind of music, the kind God said to make. If we sing with a book, we are still making only one kind of music, the kind God said to make. If, on the other hand, we sing and play an instrument, we are making two kinds of music. One of them is an addition to what God said to do. When one sings from memory, he is only singing. When one sings from a song book, one is still only singing. When one sings and plays, he is singing plus he is also doing something else! As the hammer is an expedient, so is the song book. As the use of oak in the ark would constitute an addition, so does the use of instrumental music in worship.

Preachers, you need to go back to your files and dig out those sermons on how God authorizes something. You need to begin again to preach the difference between what is an expedient and what is an addition. This age when this is such a great controversy is no time to fail to recognize the need of preaching on these topics.

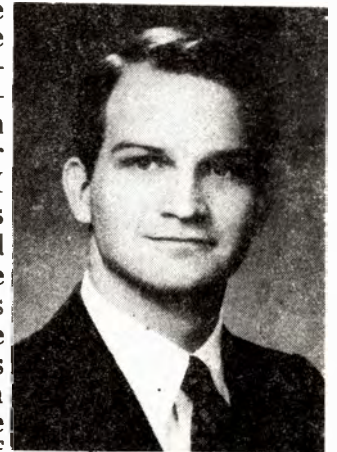
We call on people in the Christian Church to give up the use of instrumental music. If you would oppose using steak, or jam, on the Lord's Table because they are without authority, then apply the same principle to all acts of worship. If you are going to insist on using instrumental music because it is not condemned, then why not be consistent and allow anything that is not condemned? Be consistent in whatever interpretation you give to the silence of the scriptures. You cannot have it both ways.

—1115 Minerva Drive, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130.

Be Of Good Cheer

About one hundred years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous French politician made the following observation concerning our nation: "Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret to her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." A lot of water has run under the bridge during the past century and we are now forced to concur with the Frenchman's conclusion. In many respects, America has ceased to be great; in most respects, she has long since ceased to be good. And the latter has to be the cause of the former; for long before Alexis de Tocqueville, Solomon observed, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Has America ceased to be good? The answer, though painful, ought to be obvious. According to columnist Jack Anderson, modern America "is in a class by itself." He continues, "Never before has so large a share of the population indulged in an orgy of self-pampering, overdosing, loafing, sponging,



Dalton Key

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Be Of Good Cheer

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splurging, cheating, shoplifting, looting, philandering, even murdering. That's what the statistics show." This sounds a lot like the sordid conditions, the "perilous times," described by Paul in II Timothy 3. The apostle concludes his dismal description by warning, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:12). From all appearances, evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse; deceived themselves, they slither about deceiving others.

The Christian in the world is becoming more and more like Lot in Sodom. According to Peter, Lot was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (II Peter 2:7, 8). Lot's soul was vexed from day to day with

their unlawful deeds "in seeing and hearing." -- And he didn't even have a television set! The twentieth century Christian, deluged from every side with sin, sin, and more sin, has much in common with "that righteous man," Lot.

And yet, as Christians, we need not be filled with gloom. Despair? Never! We have the solution -- we have the Savior. While on earth, Jesus reassured his disciples by saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Tribulation may come, yea it will come. Sin will abound while evil men wax worse and worse. Yet, in spite of all this, Christ encourages, "Be of good cheer."

The world seems bent on self-destruction. It seems content to go to pot, both literally and figuratively. Which makes us all the more thankful our home is not confined to this

sphere. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19). Were there no more to life than flesh and blood and sorrow and death, I'd as soon leave life; but there is more! As Christians, our home is in heaven (Philippians 3:20, ASV). We look forward to Christ's return, when he will take us back with him to the heavenly home which he has prepared for us (John 14:1-4). We anticipate "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (I Peter 1:3).

Christian brother, Christian sister, don't lose heart! The same Bible which warns of distress, also promises victory: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4).

—P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

The Unmerciful Servant

Continued From Page 2

commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:21-35).

This parable was spoken by our Lord in response to Peter's question concerning forgiveness (verse 21-22). As we read, our attention is captured by several statements: First, we have the helpless debtor (verse 23-25). He was in debt and could not pay. He was a true representative of the human race. Man has sinned against God. The act of sin makes him a debtor to God. The immensity of the debt makes payment impossible. Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Jesus stated, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

Unforgiven sin has eternal consequences. In Jesus' preview of the judgment, he said to those who had not fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, never took in the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick, nor visited those in prison: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46).

Let us now notice the merciful king. "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him saying, Lord, have patience with me, and

I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (verse 26-27). The king's heart was touched with the misfortune of the debtor. Being "moved with compassion," he bestowed two favors: He "released him." God releases us from cruel bondage of sin (Romans 6:17-18) when we make the proper approach. In the parable of the lost son, when he found himself penniless in the hog pen, he realized his sin -- and resolved to go to his father's house and ask to be a servant, and not a son. "He arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him: and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:20-24). The lesson is: the Father of heaven will run to forgive the penitent, obedient individual! Paul tells of God's forgiveness under the Christian age: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

He "forgave him the debt." Every sinner, regardless of the weight of guilt, is forgiven when he believes and obeys. Those guilty believing ones on Pentecost were told, "... repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). This is still the answer which must be given to the penitent believer.

When God forgives, he forgives completely and forever. The Hebrew writer quotes Jeremiah's prophecy and applies it to the Christian age: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12).

WE ARE ALL SINNERS AND NEED THE MERCY OF OUR GOD.

May we study the contrast between the treat-

ment received and the treatment given by this debtor (verse 28-30). He was forgiven the enormous sum of about one million dollars, yet refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed the small sum of about 17 cents!

The fact that God has forgiven us an enormous debt should teach us to be forgiving toward our fellow man. Many men pray for mercy, while their hands are on the throat of a brother! To some people, mercy is a wonderful thing ONLY so long as it is coming their way. Said Shakespeare: "We do pray for mercy; and that same prayer doth teach us to render deeds of mercy."

Consistency thou art a jewel! We must work at being consistent in our actions. The parent must work at being consistent in disciplining his or her children. The worker must be consistent in his dealing with his fellow workers. He must not expect to be treated "special," while his fellow worker gets all of the rough and hard work.

Now may we notice the fate of the unmerciful servant (verse 31-35). The inconsistency of the servant aroused the emotions of the fellow servants. He was called before his lord for a reckoning. There he was rebuked and delivered to the tormentors.

The mercy of the Almighty is bestowed in vain unless we allow it to create within us a heart of compassion. The best evidence in our lives that God has forgiven us is the fact that we forgive others. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). No one can expect to receive mercy, when he is unmerciful in his dealings with others.

Jesus said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). Lip-forgiveness will not please the Father -- it must be "from the heart" (Matthew 18:35).

Someone has said:

Tis not enough to weep my sins,
'tis but one step to heaven;
When I am kind to others,
then I show myself forgiven.

—103 E. Lena Ct. Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Short Sermon

When you feel like you ought to explain your conduct, it is a good sign that you are doing wrong.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 14

A Convict Wrestles With God's Amazing Grace

Joe Moran

Hi! I'm Joe Moran, and I hope and pray that my message will help you and all who hear it.

I abducted a physician from his home in 1983. Later I was arrested, convicted, and received a twenty-year prison sentence.

But my life of crime began many years prior to that incident. I was born and reared in a poor family. I got involved in crime at an early age. First, I started stealing food for the family because no one would help us. Many mornings we ate corn-meal gravy and cornbread for breakfast.

My childhood was very rough. My father was an alcoholic. My mother was a good woman who believed in God, but it seemed that the harder she tried to do right the worse things became. I was constantly in and out of juvenile court and reform schools. That is why I never had time for God. I was too busy "doing time." From 1957 to 1983, I was arrested 65 times on charges ranging from petty larceny, burglary, robbery, assault, to murder and possession of drugs, fraud, bad checks, and aggravated kidnapping.

But I am a changed man today! I am not the same person I was when I was placed in jail in 1983. While locked behind bars, I took a very serious inventory of my life. I didn't like what I discovered because I didn't like what I had been. There are no windows in the jail. I had the feeling of being locked in a submarine under water. Sometimes those conditions will prompt an individual to look at the world inside himself.

So here I was (and still am at this writing) in jail, in Gallatin, Tennessee, charged with aggravated kidnapping, robbery and auto larceny. Being a dope addict, I was also behind bars with a \$500.00-a-day "monkey" on my back, knowing I had no way of getting any drugs. The first ten days were like a hell

on earth for me. With tormenting sensations, I was hot one minute and cold the next. My bones ached so bad that I wished I could die.

On Sunday I looked out my cell door and at the far end of the corridor in my cell block I saw two men from the free world conducting a worship service with my fellow inmates. Mr. James Henry was leading singing and Mr. Burnice Westbrooks, a minister, was preaching. I was hurting so bad that I could hardly stand it. One of the songs they were singing was:

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound!
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I'm found;
Was blind, but now I see."

I reasoned within myself, "Could those thoughts be applicable to me?" Then I heard the minister preach that God loves us -- regardless of how big, or small, our sins may seem to us. He said that even if you are locked up physically you can be free spiritually, because Jesus had said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). He lovingly pointed out that Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended back to heaven and established his church that we read about in the Bible. With kindness he emphasized from the scriptures that if we want to go to heaven, we need to believe, repent of our sins, confess Christ as God's Son, be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, and live a faithful Christian life. With those thoughts in my mind, this convict began to wrestle with God's amazing grace.

For several weeks I listened and observed those worship services from a distance at the other end of the corridor in my cell block. I would say to myself, "That's not for me. Here I am a large (300 pound!) man; I can't let

them know that I want to be up there in those worship services." I was afraid of what others might say to me. So I stayed in my cell for about four months before attending any of the worship services with the group.

Finally, when I did attend the worship service being conducted in my cell block, the group was singing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." They also sang about "Jesus and The Old Rugged Cross," and how "The Way Of The Cross Leads Home". I sat there and I knew I was lost! I also knew that those songs and the gospel message fit me. I was lost--on the wrong side of the cross -- in darkness -- realizing that it could be possible for me to be on the other side of the cross, in the light, and enjoy the salvation paid for by God's dear Son.

The more I listened to the gospel the more I wanted to hear and study. I was searching; but secretly I didn't want anyone to know it. Eventually, however, I started attending the worship services in my cell block every Sunday. I sang with the other inmates, meditated on the prayers, and searched the scriptures. Since the winter of 1983 until the writing of this true story, I have completed two one-year Bible correspondence courses and received certificates of completion for this work. One course was from the Hartsville Pike Church of Christ; the other, from the Madison Church of Christ.

I am glad I chose to do those studies. Through those lessons, and the Sunday worship services in my cell block, the gospel touched my heart and opened the way for Jesus and his truth to come through. Through my love for the Lord and my obedient response to his gospel, he has forgiven me. I have found myself, and the Friend of life. As a new person

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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A Convict Wrestles With God's Amazing Grace

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in Christ (I Corinthians 5:17), I have found salvation and peace of mind.

I hasten to add, however, that my spiritual new birth into Christ and his church did not happen without a lot of inner struggles. You gathered, no doubt, from this brief sketch of my life that I was not a religious-minded person. But I'm thankful that through a diligent study of the gospel, my heart was softened toward Jesus. The proverbial "beam" or "log" was moved from my eyes so that I can see the way I was living was wrong. I recognized I was lost! I needed a Savior!

I want to thank those who have taken an interest in my well-being for being patient with me. It has taken a long time for me to step forward and start aiming my life in the right direction. For so many years I was a very hard-hearted person. Regarding my conversion, I just wanted to be sure that when I made a decision to live for Christ that it would be the right one for God's sake and mine.

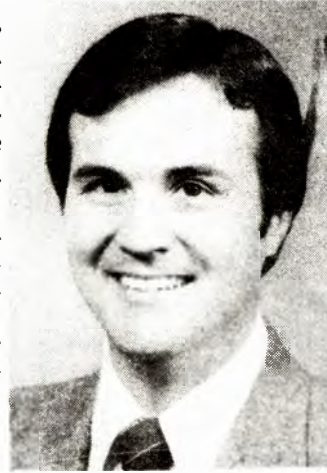
I am very remorseful for the wrongs I have done. I hope the physician I wronged will find it in his heart to forgive me for my actions against him. I thank God he wasn't seriously hurt. I never intended for him to be hurt.

So many have encouraged me to live right. I appreciate everything everyone has done for me! I ask Christians everywhere to pray for me that I may remain strong in Christ.

I want to live God's way now. My attitude is expressed in the title of the song, "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow." Thankful that I am no longer a junkie, I have put my old ways behind me, and a new creature through Christ has emerged. I am glad that I was arrested: -for, like the prodigal son, I have found myself. I know who I am and what I want to do with my life. I want to help other people. One of my goals is to conduct semi-

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A Zeal For God



Dan Winkler

INTRODUCTION

"Zeal" is defined as "eager interest and enthusiasm" (Webster's New World Dictionary, p. 1698). The New Testament word translated "zeal" means "to burn with zeal . . . to be heated or to boil" (Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 271). The Bible defines zeal as a state of being consumed by something (John 2:17; Cf. Ps. 119:139, KJV).

Christianity is to be a life of zeal for God (Titus 2:14). Christians are to be zealous of that which is good (I Peter 3:13 ASV). The commands to be good, be pure, or be right, are easily understood. Yet, the same Bible teaches man to be zealous. Man is to be zealous "of that which is good." To obey God one must do what he says, as he says, for the reason(s) he says. Therefore, man's zeal must be for that which is good!

As with any work that places demands on lifestyle and time, the Lord's work [the most important work of all] is performed by two types of individuals. (1) There are those who are interested and motivated to support the Lord's work. (2) There are also those who are indifferent and melancholy when it comes to the Lord's work. Each Christian should scrutinize his own heart and life with the question, "Which of these two attitudes do I possess?"

From Paul's words in Romans 10:1-3 consider three lessons relative to zeal that will serve to encourage an excited and energetic support of the Lord's good work.

I. ZEAL IS READILY SEEN

Like the sun, zeal is self-evident. Man does not have to question the sun's presence when he awakens in the morning. The light of day gives evidence of its existence. Even so, when one is fanatically consumed by a purpose, when he is eaten alive with zeal, such will be very apparent.

(1) Consider some examples of zeal's self-evident nature. Paul said of his kinsmen in the flesh, "I bear witness that they have a zeal" (Romans 10:2). Paul's kinsmen provided him with evidence of their fervor (Cf. Acts 21:20; Galatians 4:17). There is also the example of Jesus (John 2:13-17). When did his disciples remember the Messianic prophecy, "Zeal for my Father's house hath eaten me up"? After he had cleansed the temple. He provided them with evidence of his fervor. They saw hands of determination weave a scourge of cords. They saw arms of justice sling that scourge of wrath and drive out livestock that otherwise littered the house of God. They saw shoulders of indignation overturn the tables of selfish mercenaries taking advantage of the poor. They heard the voice of divine vengeance cry, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

(2) Zeal should be an apparent factor of the Christian's life. Christians are to present their bodies as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God," proving "what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2). In doing so, they will be diligent, rather than slothful, "fervent in spirit; serv-

ing the Lord" (Romans 12:11). Others should be able to recognize the Christian's zeal for God by the lively jaunt of his march, the radiant smile of his countenance, and the fervor in heart that drives him to obey and serve God regardless of the cost or consequences. Like Jehu said to Jehonadab, the Christian should be able to say with others, "Come with me, and see my zeal for Jehovah" (II Kings 10:16).

II. ZEAL IS CHANNELED

Like electricity, zeal follows a channel. Electricity follows conductors such as wire or cable from a point of origin to a given destiny. Even so, zeal flows from the origin of one's heart down given channels of interest. Zeal is never presented in scripture as inactive and neutral. It is always doing something for, to, or against something or someone!

(1) Consider some examples of zeal being channeled. Again, Paul said of his kinsmen, "They have a zeal 'for God'" (Romans 10:2). One could also consider the examples of Jehovah (Isaiah 9:7; 37:32; 59:17; Ezekiel 5:13), Jesus (John 2:17), Phinehas (Numbers 25:11, 13 KJV), Saul (II Samuel 21:2), and Paul (Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:6) to see that zeal is channeled. It has been said that a "fanatic is one that cannot change his mind and will not change the subject." Such a statement indicates the fact that zeal is channeled.

(2) Zeal must be channeled down proper avenues in the Christian's life. There are improper channels of zeal which may consume the Christian's life -- such as, athletics, vocations, recreational pursuits, and the traditions of men. Though nothing is inherently wrong with properly exercising one's self in these given areas, they must not be the main channel down which the Christian's zeal flows. They must not be the cornerstone of the Christian's priorities! God's people are to be zealous of "good works" (Titus 2:14; I Peter 3:13 ASV). Some of the good works that should act as the conductors of zeal in the life of a Christian would be the edification of his brethren (I Corinthians 14:12), the support of sound gospel preaching (II Corinthians 7:7), sacrificial giving (II Corinthians 9:2; Cf. 8:1-5), serving the Lord (Romans 12:11), prayer (James 5:16), and brotherly love (I Peter 1:22). All have experienced the flame of adrenalin rushing through their veins; it has simply been channeled in different directions. Christians must learn to channel their fervor down paths of righteousness and efforts of good works.

III. ZEAL MUST BE GOVERNED PROPERLY

Knowledge without zeal is a living corpse! On the other hand, zeal without proper knowledge is a volcanic glacier erupting in one sporadic belch after another, covering the church under the lava bed of confusion, instability, and a righteousness of man rather than God. Zeal for God must be governed by God.

(1) Consider some examples of this principle. The zeal of Paul's kinsmen was "not according to knowledge" because "being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2-3). Note: their zeal was not according to knowledge because it was governed by "their own" standard rather than God's. Though Paul was once a part of the same disposition (Galatians 1:13-14, 22-24), after his conversion

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Jesus' Prayer For Unity (John 17:11, 20-23)

As one looks at the division in the religious world of today and the lack of concern about it, he might be made to believe that such division is pleasing to the Lord. If it is, now does one account for Jesus' earnest prayer for unity as recorded in John 17:11, 20-23?



Thomas W. Weaver

Let us give serious consideration to this prayer as we are guided by six pertinent questions:

(1) Does Jesus want unity? (2) To what degree does he want believers to be one? (3) Is this unity possible? (4) What is the basis for such unity? (5) What are the results of this unity? (6) What can I do to promote this unity?

Consider question No. 1: Does Jesus want unity? If one has taken a careful look at Jesus' prayer, the answer is very obvious. If Jesus does not want unity, why did he pray so earnestly for it? Remember he prayed "that they all may be one."

Jesus surely knew that the prophets spoke about a united kingdom of heaven, not a divided kingdom. In Isaiah 2:2 we find these words: "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established." Here we read of God's "house," not "houses." A corresponding scripture (I Timothy 3:15) says, "that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the

living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Both the "house of God" and the "church of God" are singular, as also in the "pillar and ground." Daniel by inspiration wrote, "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44). This too is singular. A similar New Testament passage (Mark 9:1) has Jesus saying, "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." Singular again! Jesus promised, "upon this rock I will build my church," not "churches." Through the inspired writers Jesus begs believers to be one (I Corinthians 1:10): "Now I beseech you, brethren, through 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 perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Consider such a powerful plea for unity: "Speak the same thing," "no divisions," "perfected together" in the "same mind" and in the "same judgment!" No wonder that in verse 13 the searching question is asked, "Is Christ divided?" No person who honestly examines such stress on unity can possibly believe that Jesus is pleased with anything less than perfect unity.

Next, let us look at the second question: To what degree does Jesus want believers to be one? Does today's rampant division approach his desire? Jesus prayed "that they may be one, even as we are . . . that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us." It is evident that so-called Christendom is as far from this degree of unity as is the east from the west. Does anyone believe for a

moment that the slightest division exists between the members of the Godhead? Can the following conversation between God the Father, and Christ the Son, be imagined?

God: It makes no difference as to church membership.

Christ: I purchased the church with my blood. God: One church is as good as another.

Christ: Only those who are members of the church for which I died shall be saved.

God: Mechanical instruments of music are all right in Christian worship.

Christ: Mechanical instruments of music in worship are an abomination to me.

God: To think that water has anything to do with remission of sins is foolishness.

Christ: Baptism in water for the believing penitent is absolutely essential to an alien sinner's salvation.

How utterly impossible it is to imagine such chaos in heaven! We find it on earth; but we must know that division grieves the heart of Jesus and that no division exists in heaven. If the Godhead were as divided as we are, no decision could have been made as to which member of the Godhead would come to earth; and if he did come, what he would do after he came. Furthermore, one could hardly expect the Godhead to agree on what should be the answer to a prayer. Are we not happy that God and Christ are one? And we are to one "as" they are one!

Our third question is: Is this unity possible? Is it possible that we may be one to the degree God and Christ are one? Many seem to think such unity is utterly impossible. If one thinks that such unity is impossible, then he is obligated to explain why Jesus prayed for it and pleaded for it through the inspired writers. We know Jesus would not have prayed for the impossible; nor would he have taught us to be one. If unity is not possible, why do we find it so evident in the early church? Its unity is expressed in these words: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common . . . continuing steadfastly with one accord, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:44-46). Again "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32). Their being so united is positive proof that Jesus was praying for the possible, not the impossible.

The next question is: What is the basis for this unity? Since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), it is evident that the word of God is the only basis for unity. Does God's word contradict itself? We know it cannot, and does not. A good example for unity upon what God has revealed is found in Matthew 16:13-17: "Jesus asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? and they said, Some say John the baptizer; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed are thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." On the basis of what man thought, we find division; on the basis of what God had revealed, we see perfect unity. All who accept God's word as the absolute and only authority will find unity, not division. No one can possibly say that God's word causes division.

Our fifth question is: What are the results of

A Zeal For God

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he wished only to be found in Christ. He wrote, "I count all things to be loss . . . that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own even that which is in the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God through faith" (Philippians 3:8-9). His desire was to live by the righteousness of God. Before doing so, like his brethren, his zeal was not according to knowledge (Cf. Acts 26:9).

(2) Zeal in the Christian's life must also be governed by the will of God. Tragically, there are those who have stirred up contention and confusion among God's people out of a zeal not according to knowledge. For example, there are some who measure the faithfulness of others by the standard of their own special interest [a pet project, a favorite command, etc.], to the neglect of other matters equally important. Then too, there are those who measure the faithfulness of others by their own "opinionated" study. In addition, there are those who burn like a candle at both ends only to phase out into the oblivion of indifference. There are also those who deem themselves zealous because they attend worship services regularly and know enough Bible to quote a verse or two but, though such is commendable, they never lift a finger in cooperation with and support of all other "good works." Indeed, zeal for God must be

governed by God!

CONCLUSION

In his little workshop of Cremona, Italy, Antonio Stradivari applied the art of making violins. Prior to his death on December 18, 1737, he labored under a principle that has remained valid for more than two hundred years: "Other men will make other violins, but no man shall make a better one." Such fervor!

Isaiah's prayer to God voices an excellent question to ponder, "Where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts?" (Isaiah 63:15). The epitaph on a tombstone reads: "Here rests a man who never rested here." In keeping with a "zeal for God" according to knowledge, may such come to be said for each member in the church of the Lord.

—P.O. Box 166, Huntingdon, Tennessee 38344.

Short Sermons

Two can play a game and both lose.

Flattery is a key that fits many locks.

Very little slander is able to prove itself.

All who are on the right side are on the same side.

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The Power Of The Powerful Word

Mankind is lost in sin. A truth we must not forget is stated by Paul: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The history of man reveals a history of sin. Even those who have given their lives to Christ are guilty of sin. The apostle John said: "If WE" (including himself) say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10).



W. Edwin Kearley

Therefore men need a savior. God has left us an instruction manual from the Savior. Paul said, "For the grace that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teacheth us . . ." (Titus 2:11-12).

Is this manual powerful enough to do the job? The Psalmist said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalms 19:7). Of the word Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). The writer of Hebrews stated, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). There is no area of man's activity which God's word does not direct. Peter tells us God's word lives: "The word . . . liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23).

An emotional response should be evoked in us because the word of God does so much for us! We should exclaim with the Psalmist, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy command-

ments hath made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are even with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from judgments: for thou has taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding: Therefore I hate every false way" (Ps. 119:97-104).

Only the pure word of God is powerful enough for God's use. The doctrine (or teaching) of Christ must not be changed. John informed us: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). The teacher or preacher who teaches or preaches doctrines not authorized by Christ cannot expect to be pleasing to God. Those who support doctrines not authorized, are likewise condemned (Galatians 1:8-9).

WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD DO FOR US?

(1) It gives life. Jesus affirmed, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; . . . the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Paul wrote: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10).

(2) The word converts the soul. Jesus said of the Jews, ". . . 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).

(3) The word saves. Cornelius was told by an angel to "send to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14). James taught: ". . . Receive with meekness the engrated word, which is able to save your soul" (James

1:21).

(4) The word produces faith. Paul stated, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

(5) It procreates the new life in Christ. James records, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1:18). Paul said to the Corinthians, ". . . I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Corinthians 4:15; see also I Peter 1:23).

(6) The word cleanses us. Jesus said, "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken" (John 15:3).

(7) We are sanctified by the word. Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

(8) The word of God enables the Christian to make spiritual growth. Peter encouraged, "As newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2).

EACH INDIVIDUAL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HOW HE HEARS. James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Some are babes (I Peter 2:2) or "dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11), and others are able to digest "strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12).

Every person needs to become a Christian. Every Christian is expected to grow spiritually (I Peter 3:18). Some early Christians were rebuked for their lack of growth. In Hebrews 5:12 the writer states, "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 . . ."

May the truth be taught without addition or subtraction (Revelations 22:18-19). Preachers must not shun "to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Hearers must hear in view of eternity. We must have ears and hearts receptive to the word of God.

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Jesus' Prayer For Unity (John 17:11, 20-23)

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the unity for which Jesus prayed? More than once in Jesus' prayer he said, "that the world may believe that thou didst send me." The early church was united. Did their unity encourage belief? or unbelief? Surely it promoted belief, just as Jesus knew it would. The church began in Jerusalem with about three thousand (Acts 2). Soon it increased to about five thousand (Acts 4:4). "The number of the disciples was multiplying" (Acts 6:1). In Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." One important factor in this growth of the church must have been the unity of believers. In verse seven (just quoted) we have the basis of unity again: ". . . were obedient to the faith," not "faiths." So mighty were their united efforts that in less than a century the gospel had been "preached in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Yes, Jesus was right in knowing that unity would promote belief! By the same token, division promotes unbelief.

Our sixth and final question is: What can I

do to promote unity? After a careful study of Jesus' prayer for unity, no one could profess to love him and not desire unity. What can I do? Jesus prayed for unity, and so can I. Jesus worked for unity, and so can I.

This combination of prayer and work is illustrated in Nehemiah four, where we read of the great success in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem despite great obstacles. The people

had a mind to work, and they made their prayer to God.

Finally, in addition to working and praying I can be a diligent student of the word of God, the only basis for unity. I can reject every human teaching, for that destroys the unity for which Jesus prayed.

—50 Ranch Drive, Montgomery, AL 36109.

A Convict Wrestles With God's Amazing Grace

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nars in churches and schools for parents and young people on the dangers of drugs, and the pitfalls of crime.

The most joyous day of my life was February 13, 1986, when I walked the last mile of the way and was baptized into Christ. Please don't procrastinate as I did. Don't put Christ

off -- put him on. Wear him everywhere you go. Let him be your shield against all evil, your King of kings, your Lord of lords, and your hope of salvation. With Jesus Christ you won't ever have to walk alone!

—Sumner County Jail, 117 Smith St., Gallatin, TN 37066.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

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Ship-Wrecked Faith

From scattered quarters we hear brethren assailing the pioneer preachers of the church, and asserting their freedom and liberty from "brotherhood" thinking. Some pseudo-intellectuals have felt they have some "new" concept and insights to share with us. When rejected, several of them have renounced the church of Christ. Some have completely lost their faith, while others have joined denominational churches.



John Waddey

While thumbing through the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1855, I found an article entitled "The Fall of Mr. J. B. Ferguson." Ferguson was a preacher for the church in Nashville from 1847-1856. "He was both eloquent and brilliant and he knew it. Flattery fell abundantly on his head, and he grew vain and proud, losing at the same time his spirituality" (Earl West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. I, p. 261). Eventually he left the church, and died an apostate.

The following words from Ferguson's apology remind us that his kind are yet with us: "... in March, 1847, (I) as pastor, took charge of that congregation. During the five succeeding years the most flattering success attended our ministry." (Those of his stripe usually feel the need of telling the world of their greatness and success.) "... We defined our position upon their charges of heresy and infidelity by showing our independence of all Church creeds, written or unwritten and our views upon Unitarianism, Universalism, and Spiritualism ..." (Through the years, a certain type of men have protested an unwritten creed in the church, especially when charged with heresy!) "I speak plainly: man

was not made to be subservient to religious or any other associations, and when they prescribe his native integrity by rules fit for hideous brothels, it is better for religion and morality to break up. Politic movements in religion are criminating and desolating scourges of the world. Every man that enters this house is my brother, let him be more or less worthy." (The complaint of "mind-control" and "political power" in the church is still a favorite smoke-screen of those walking the path of apostasy. Seamy adjectives to describe one's revulsion to the rules of the church is still a favorite mode of expression. It is proper to say that then [as now] the only rule for the church was [and is] the word of God. Hence, he says it was "fit for hideous brothels.")

"The dome of God's Temple includes all mankind, and there is no door into or out of it, NO ACCESSIONS OR EXCLUSIONS, and no knocking for admission into it. We go in and come out without our choice; for whomsoever God creates and vivifies, He, and not man, admits." (In his broadmindness, he claimed religious brotherhood with all mankind, regardless of their faith or practice.)

"Thanks that a common end and destiny awaits us all. . . . We would plant no dissension by stirring up 'Divine Wrath;' we would not stir up the offensive acts of old comrades to contaminate others. . . ." (His type always pleads innocent to schism after they have wrecked the church about them.)

"... the world is my church; mankind are its members; forms are the rites of the heart. If I comply with your ordinances, or if I do not, you perceive clearly my position. I once admitted your ceremonials, but now they are dead; your organization ceasing to act, is not nominally, but really dead, under my teaching in this house." (He was certain the church of Christ was on its death bed. After all, he was leaving! Would he not be chagrined to see the church today? No doubt, he would be disappointed.)

"The human mind is bursting the shackles

of a superstitious tradition favoring religious dogmatists." (Over and over we hear this type of disenchanting preacher predict that every "intelligent" person will reject the restoration concept. Really that is but the fond wish of his imagination).

"In our day, God is rearing up a temple whose sunlight will teach you to know, be free, be candid, be a man; and think, feel, and act for the day in which you live." (He called for a movement in new directions that would be RELEVANT to 1855! That seems vaguely familiar, does it not?)

"I know religiously but one church -- the world of intelligences constitute my church, and the human race are its members, whether appearing as men or as angels, and its only ordinances are the dictates of the heart." (Human wisdom and conscience were set above all other authority!)

"We are free to serve any society seeking our labors of their own accord. We pay no servile respect to the doctrines of antiquity -- even 5,000 years consecrates the Bible no further than the truths developed in such books." (He felt to share his ministry with denominational churches and not limit it to narrow confines of one church! Do you suppose he called it "dialogue"? He refused to be bound to the doctrines of the old paths of the first century.)

"Even Mr. Campbell, who worries his disciples of the "Reform of the 19th Century" with the flippant heraldry of faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. . ." (It is remarkable the way this element always attacks great men of the past when they reject a doctrine. I wonder why they do not attack the Scriptures these pioneers preached? But that would be too obvious!)

"What heathen idolatry can be compared with such absurdities, such blasphemous teachings?" (When he viewed the brotherhood's affirmations on the reality of Satan and Hell, and their

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Satan Has Done It Before

Adron Doran

The apostle Paul wrote a second epistle to the Corinthians to express his concern over matters facing the Church. In chapter eleven, he said that he was not merely indulging his "folly," but was pointing out certain things of which saints should be aware. He wrote: "I fear . . . your minds should be corrupted . . ." (II Corinthians 11:3). He based his fear on the knowledge that "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty." Since satan corrupted Adam and Eve, in far away Eden, four thousand years before, he certainly could do the same thing in Corinth. Hence, this warning by the Holy Spirit.

We ought to be sensitive today to the subtle approach, the crafty manner, and the corrupting influence of the devil in the affairs of the church, and in the classrooms of our Christian colleges and universities. Satan won a signal victory when the corrupting influence of instrumental music and the destructive influence of missionary societies were introduced into the congregations of the Restoration Movement. The practices of open membership, ecumenicalism, humanism, and sectarianism followed closely behind, to which many disciples succumbed.

One of the most subtle of satan's attacks against the Restoration came in his efforts to fill the pulpits, the elderships, and the pews of congregations with men who had been exposed to the teaching of higher criticism and the theory of evolution, as facts, in the schools, colleges, and universities of the brotherhood. During the lifetime of John W. McGarvey, Isiah B. Grubbs, Charles L. Loos and Robert Graham, (the "Old Guards" at Kentucky University and the College of the Bible), the classrooms were free from the teaching of "liberalism" and "evolution." But no sooner had they passed away than the serpent began to manifest his subtle ways.

A liberal president was named by the joint boards as the chief executive officer of both Transylvania University and the College of the Bible. He moved quickly to employ four new faculty members who had been trained in the "New Theology." Only Hall Laurie Calhoun was left, in the College of the Bible, who represented the "Old School" of teachers and administrators. However, many of the more mature students saw the corrupting influences of "destructive criticism" and "evolution" in the classrooms -- and protested!

The first public charges were filed in a letter written by a student, Benjamin Franklin Battenfield, on March 12, 1917, and mailed to three hundred Christian ministers, accompanied by a petition to the Board of Trustees, signed by other students. The plea of the students to the Board was for an impartial investigation into their charges that the University and the College had come under the control of "destructive" and skeptical critics. The students contended that members of the faculty claimed to be "hard evolutionists," taught that the "first chapter of Genesis is poetry," called Jehovah "the tribal God of the Jews," and accepted "The Pithecanthropus Erectus as the 'missing link' between man and the lower animals." One of the professors was accused of believing theistic evolution, and of denying the physical resurrection of the body of Christ.

On March 24, 1917, Dean Calhoun released a

statement to the Christian Standard, in which he said, "In response to certain inquiries which have come to me, . . . candor compels me to state that for more than a year, I have been fully convinced that destructive criticism was being taught in the College of the Bible."

President R. H. Crossfield and the accused faculty mounted a counter attack against the charges and the individuals who made them, but to little or no avail. However, on May 2, 1917, the Board of Trustees met to investigate the Calhoun-Battenfield charges. After fifteen sessions, the Board voted to completely exonerate the accused faculty, declaring that their teachings were in harmony with the best traditions of the Christian Church. The findings were a complete cover up and a perfect whitewash. The final report of the Board stated, "The Board believes that the disposition to preserve the good of the past, combined with the ability to improve the task of the present should be the underlying principle to its trusteeship of the institution." The faculty was given a "clean bill of health," and the University and College continued in a liberal vein. Calhoun resigned the deanship of the College of the Bible and, along with the head of the chemistry department of Transylvania University, joined the faculty of Bethany College. Calhoun served as a professor at Bethany until he detected the same corrupting influences invading Bethany, which had gained control of the College of the Bible. He left Bethany, severed his connections with the Christian Church, and joined N. B. Hardeman as Associate President of Freed-Hardeman College in 1925.

It is altogether possible for the "Firestorm in the Bluegrass," which swept the College of the Bible, in 1917, to sweep the campuses of our Christian Colleges and Universities today. It can happen in what may seem to be an innocuous effort to contrast the theory of evolution with the facts of creation in a biology class. The devil will do his best to confuse the effort, and will seek to turn it to his advantage. He did it before; and we must not permit him to do it again

—8605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40222

Short Sermon

Honor your parents and your children will honor you.

A ladder is of no value unless you climb it.

How you use today determines how tomorrow will use you.

A single track mind is all right if it is on the right track.

An unfailing mark of a blockhead is a chip always on the shoulder.

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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

Acts 26:25



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

FLAVIL H. NICHOLS . . . Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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Ship-Wrecked

Faith

Continued From Page 1

denial of the possibility of communicating with the righteous dead, he grew white with rage. This reminds us of the way some of our present day prophets react to our stand against modernism, denominationalism, and the like!

"The Pentecost of the 'reformed church' is a penitence due to demons. My church will yet love those who deliver it from separating strife and narrow bigotry." (The great growth of the church was, he charged, because people were afraid of the devil. Come to think about it: I still hear some complaints about preachers preaching sin, death, judgment, hell, and the devil. Perhaps they sprouted from his stump!)

"In spirit communion, we heard the voice of the Lord God, as did the fabled Adam . . ." (He thought God was talking directly to him. For those who feel the Holy Spirit speaks to them, he should be a welcomed guest. And there is the FABLED Adam! The liberal who views the first 12 chapters of Genesis as "fable" has nothing new . . . he is 113 years behind J. B. Ferguson.)

"We must learn to know man in one brotherhood, though in many families . . ." (He had decided that there were Christians in all the denominations.) All the above quotations are from *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1855, pages 636-640).

The man whose words we have considered came to Nashville and found a congregation of some 600 members. In 10 years, "the church was wholly broken up, and disbanded; so that when a call was made by a few who desired to renew the worship according to the old faith, . . . only fifteen or twenty at first responded to the call" (J. E. Scobey, *Franklin College*

Continued On Page 3

The Importance Of The Lord's Supper

The Lord's supper is a very important part of worship to God. It is the highest point in the worship service. After waiting in Troas seven days, Paul and his company met with the church. Luke records: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). Their activities on the first day of the week centered around the observance of the Lord's supper.



W. Edwin Kearley

Why does the Lord's supper take such an important place in Christian worship? As Jesus and the apostles were eating the last passover feast before his death, "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). When Jesus took the fruit of the vine (verse 29) and the unleavened bread and said, "This is my blood" and "body," he was using metonymy. This figure of speech is the rhetorical use of one word for another that it suggests, as the container for the thing contained.

The fruit of the vine represents the blood of Christ, and the bread represents his body. The Lord's supper is a fitting memorial of the life and death of Jesus.

Paul taught the church at Corinth the purpose of the Lord's supper. He said, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

This memorial is one which all can afford. Marble and granite are very costly materials. The fruit of the vine and unleavened bread can be purchased or grown by the very poor. (However, it takes continual effort). It keeps the sacrifice of Jesus fresh in our hearts.

The observance of the Lord's supper proclaims to our fellowman our faith in the death of Christ. The partaking of the supper announces our faith in the second coming of Christ.

When we forsake communing with our fellow Christians and with Christ, we tell the world (and especially our family) our lack of faith.

Jesus promised, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). When we forsake the assembly, we 'stand up' the Son of God.

May we say with David: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1).

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

"BLT" Should Head The Menu

A favorite sandwich of many folk is a "BLT." To almost everyone bacon, lettuce, and tomato is an excellent combination for a tasty treat. The "BLT" we refer to now is also an excellent combination that will produce beautiful results: Believers Laboring Together!

Believers means those who, without reservation, accept the instructions of the Master. Laboring is fulfilling, to the degree each individual is able, the tasks that are his from the Master. Together sees each complementing the other by assuming his particular role and realizing his is but a small part of a great effort to obey the Master.

No effort put forth to the glory of God will return void (Isaiah 55:11); but how much greater will be the results when there is "togetherness" in those efforts. Paul said, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's



Edsel Burleson

husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (I Corinthians 3:8-10).

There is always strength in "togetherness." Once a woman hired a man to prepare an old barn for use. In the process, he performed several dangerous tasks. He killed a deadly snake and a poisonous spider, and then he coaxed a huge bull into a stable. One last duty, however, he refused to perform because he claimed it was too dangerous. This task: removing a hornet's nest. Surprised at his fear, the lady asked, "Why?" "You have done everything else I have asked?" He replied, "Madam, I ain't afraid of snakes, or bulls, or spiders; but I is terrified of hornets. 'cause they is organized!"

Sometimes one considers himself a part of the action because he happens to be around, or near, when the task is performed. An elephant and a flea walked side by side across a bridge. When they reached the other side, the flea said, "Boy, we sure did shake that bridge!" Too many times, we, as the flea, have had very little to do with the end result. May we each determine that when we say "we," we mean "we" did it.

One of the greatest problems in many churches today is willing workers: a few are willing to do the work, and the rest are willing to let them do it!

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Ship-Wrecked Faith

Continued From Page 2

And Its Influences, pages 45-50). Moreover, he led many other congregations off with him. True to his colors, he soon went into Universalism, and finally quit preaching altogether. He died in obscurity (H. L. Boles, *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers*, page 190).

Had not Alexander Campbell publicly exposed Ferguson's error, likely he would have swept the greater part of the southern churches down the road of apostasy with himself.

Several lessons are obvious: 1. We must constantly try the spirits (I John 4:1). We must take heed what we hear (Mark 4:24). No matter how highly respected a preacher may

be, our faith must go beyond him to God's word.

2. Public exposure of doctrinal error is the only way to stop a false doctrine that is being publicly promoted (Romans 16:17).

3. The defense J. B. Ferguson made is heard now in some areas. Perhaps a similar sickness has affected those who show similar symptoms.

4. Now, as then, when Satan cannot defeat us by our enemies, he will attempt to subvert us from within.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom" in Christianity as in democracy.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Short Sermons

Beware of the man whose main thought is to advance himself.

A life makes a pretty worthless package if it is all wrapped up in itself.

The man who does not know what is best for himself can always tell you what is best for you.

The principal reason why it is easy to go to the devil is that he will meet you more than half way.

When a man is doing a great work, he does not feel the necessity of always blowing about it.

Abandoning Truth

There are brethren today who view truth as a commodity that can be whimsically traded, much like a broker would barter for a bushel of corn. These folk are all for truth as long as it does not interfere with their desires, or as long as it does not cause an uproar. I have known of brethren who understood and upheld what the Bible teaches concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage -- until their children themselves were unscripturally divorced and unscripturally remarried. Then, all of a sudden they develop a sort of doctrinal amnesia or a befuddled haze of thought that causes them not to be sure that Matthew 19:9 really means what it says.



Raymond Allen Hagood

The end result of this kind of attitude is a wholesale abandonment of truth in exchange for a pacified conscience. Folk "feel good" and are happy all the way to hell! What people have conveniently forgotten is that when we have lost our dedication to truth, we have lost everything. We become no different than the denominations around us. This should, of course, make some of our brethren happy: for they, in essence, have been saying for some time that the church is nothing more than a sectarian denomination anyway.

Solomon said in the long ago, "Buy the truth,

and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). When we purchase something, this involves the idea of exchanging something of value to us for something of even greater value. In Matthew 13:45-46 we see this principle acted out: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Most people would consider freedom to be one of the most valuable things in life. Men and women have viewed freedom on such a lofty plane that they have been willing to give their lives for it. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Our Lord knew that obedience to truth is the only true avenue to genuine freedom.

Solomon knew that truth is the most valuable thing that a person could ever possess. Therefore, his conclusion is that nothing is worthy

of exchanging for truth. Truth is the ultimate pearl that, when obeyed, supplies the ultimate freedom. Only a fool would sell truth for an alleged happiness or an alleged peace. True happiness and peace come only through doing the Father's will. We can only obey the Father's will if we honor and obey his truth.

Before we sell out truth, we ought to know full well the consequences. Paul said that some "perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

What is to become of the Lord's people if some among us continue to forsake God's truth? Will not their end be that of all traitors? Will not they, too, find their place in the field of blood?

—Rt. 1, Box 110, Indian Mound, TN 37079.

"You Do And I'll Quit!"

Edsel Burleson

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

It seems almost an endless struggle in the church to keep as many people coming into the fellowship as there are going out. The Pennsylvania Dutch slogan, "The hurrier I go, the behinder I get," is so very appropriate, sadly, to most congregations. Seemingly, many folk are ready to "Quit the church"

the moment anything conflicts with "their" way.

Someone told of a lady who hired a new maid to work in her home. The first day she noticed something very peculiar about the maid. She worked all day with her hat on. At last, the lady of the house could hold back her curiosity no longer, so she asked, "Why do you always wear your hat?" The maid replied, "Well, I want to be ready to quit any time you say anything that might hurt my feelings."

It is so easy to follow the course of least resistance. To many, the simplest solution to a problem is to walk out. It is the person who keeps on with a task who will be rewarded. Paul told the Galatians, "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

A preacher asked a man why he had quit attending the services. His reply, "They haven't treated me right over there." The preacher asked, "Then why don't you go home and beat your wife?" His startled answer, "My wife hasn't done anything against me."

"Well," said the preacher, "has the Lord done anything against you?"

Someone has written:
When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won if he had stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow
You may succeed with another blow.

"Success" is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you are hardest hit
It's when things seem worst that you MUST NOT QUIT.

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Sin, Our National Disaster

A catastrophe of horrible proportion was etched into the memory of thousands of Americans on January 28, 1986 when Challenger exploded before our eyes just seconds after lift off. Surely all who witnessed this tragic happening grieve for the lives of our fellow Americans who lost their lives in a gallant effort to make our way in the world an easier one, and for their loved ones who were eye witnesses to the burning inferno in the sky that spelled certain death to those they cherished. It was immediately identified by Americans -- from the President to the lowest rank among us -- as a national tragedy.



R. W. Gray

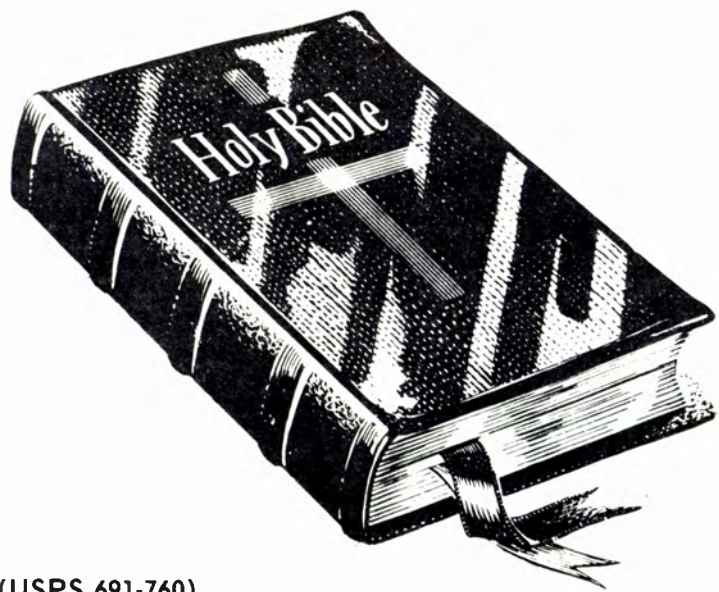
Far be it from us to minimize the enormity of this tragic event. But we must insist that this and similar tragedies are not our most serious disasters. The loss of honor over the immorality that pervades our land, coupled with an anti-religious mind-set of our people, is America's greatest disaster! We will survive the day-to-day mishaps in scientific discoveries and space exploration; but America will perish if she does not find her

way back to God and his word! We are on a collision course with the consequence of godlessness; and if we do not perceive the inevitable, and change our direction, we are destined to die as a nation, and to perish in eternal hell. The ancient psalmist wrote: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalms 9:17).

Like ancient Israel, America has lost sight of her source; the stream has become polluted to such a degree that all who drink will come to know "there is death in the pot!" The "isms" and the "ists" in religion [which should become the "was-ums" and the "wasts"] have not found the solution to America's sin problem. Nor have we, a people dedicated to the Book, lifted our voices aloud against the forces of evil in our land. Perhaps we have failed to perceive the enormity of the problem. Do we not know that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places?" (Ephesians 6:12). Have we, too, failed to array ourselves with the whole armour of God? Is this the reason we have failed to stand in a day of evil? (Ephesians 6:13).

While we vacillate between two opinions, trying to decide whether we will follow God or idols, the world around us is going to torment! The time is late! we must "awake to righteousness, and sin not" for time is running out! (I Corinthians 15:34).

—Rt. 3, Box 306 Bremen, GA 30110.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 16

Cults, Critics, And Control

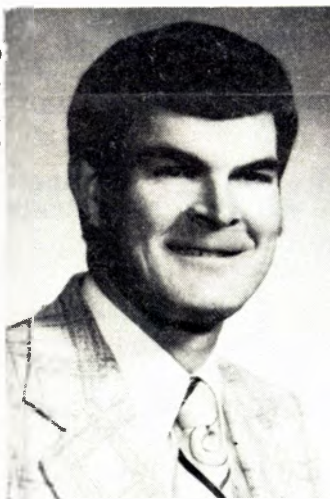
Introduction

When Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, he mentioned gospel preachers who "indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife . . . the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Philippians 1:15, 16). Judaizing teachers tried to discredit Paul and the churches he had served (I Corinthians 9:1-2). They tried to form a cult, based upon the law of Moses (Acts 15:1). They wanted to gain control of the new movement called the "church" (Galatians 5:1-8). Even Paul was influenced by this thinking. After all, did he not "purify" himself and other sacrifices according to the law (Acts 21:20-28)?

If brethren could create cults in the first century, they can do so today. If gospel preachers could become critics of one who did not merit their criticism, such can happen today. If Judaizing teachers could attempt to gain control of the church by trying to discredit a valid teacher, the same can happen today.

Critics

The critics of Paul liked to think of themselves as "sound in the faith" ("they are all zealous of the law," Acts 21:20), whereas Paul was accused of teaching "the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs" (Acts 21:21). They were the 'saviours,' whereas Paul was the 'liberal,' out to destroy the faith of their fathers. I suppose if Paul had objected to their charges,



Ray Hawk

they could have prejudiced their audience against him by saying he did not like criticism, but enjoyed being a critic. If Paul had denied their accusations, they could have implied that he protested too much to be so innocent. If Paul had tried to explain himself, his efforts would have been fruitless; for how can one be innocent when his critics have already been his judge, jury, and executioner? Several years ago my mouth dropped open in amazement as men whom I have respected charged another brother with statements he had never made. I could not believe my ears. Here were men who had heard exactly what I had heard. However, they read into this brother's speech things he had not said, and then accused him of those statements they thought he had made rather than what he actually had stated.

If those first century preachers were anything like some today, they were experts at reading into Paul's statements what the apostle did not mean nor actually say. They were masters at reading between the lines. Can you imagine what they would have done with Paul's expression, "I robbed other churches" (II Corinthians 11:8)? If there had been bulletin editors and brotherhood journals in the first century, some of them would have crucified Paul, without a trial, with the above statement! I can just see the headlines. "PAUL ROBBS CHURCHES!" If Paul had objected by saying that is not what he meant, these brethren would have assured him and others that they knew more about what Paul meant than he did. They would have thrown the expression "robbed" into the apostle's face and rubbed it in with verbal pleasure. I can just hear their proud and profane argumentation: "You did use the word, 'robbed,' did you not? We did not put the word into your writing; you did. You used it, not we. If you used the word 'robbed,' what else could you have meant other than what you said, and we know you said what you meant! YOU ROBBED CHURCHES! You

need to repent because YOU are the ROBBER, not we!"

These brethren, I am sure, would have given Paul a step-by-step course to follow before they would have accepted him back into their fellowship. Anyone else could have come saying, "I have said and done things I should not have," and they would have accepted it. Not so with those they have branded. Of course Paul did not need to repent, because he was right; and they were wrong, especially in ATTITUDE. Where is our love and compassion for one another when one brother tells another who has placed his hand upon his shoulder, "Get your hand off me! Don't touch me"?

Paul asked, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). If a brother is in error, our words toward him should not be hateful, but "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" and "count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (Galatians 6:1; II Thessalonians 3:15). When I left the Methodist ministry, my fellow preachers avoided and would no longer speak to me. I have seen brethren who not only refuse to speak to another, but if they did, they had something hateful to say to him. Even if such were right doctrinally, they are wrong in attitude.

What is interesting is that Paul did not take wages from Corinth. He sought their good, whereas these "sound gospel preachers" did not have Corinth's concern in mind: only their own. If they criticized Paul for taking wages, yet did what they charged him with doing, they were inconsistent. This would have put them in the same league with some today. Some practice what they condemn. Others criticize actions which later they engaged in and then excuse. These are the brethren who made jokes about the death of Ira North and praised brother Guy N. Woods to his face.

Continued on page 2



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Cults, Critics, And Control

Continued from page 1

but to his back shook their heads and said he had "sold out." Some are now courageous enough to say in print what they used to say cowardly behind his back. Brother Woods was a great man while serving with brother North and he still is! Brother Woods has not changed; apparently his critics have. He is in the middle; they are to the right.

Cults

Those who accused Paul considered themselves 'sound' (healthy in faith), when in reality they were sick. If anything, they were the cult makers. They "promise them liberty," but "they themselves are the servants of corruption" (II Peter 2:19). They could accuse Paul of not keeping the "customs" (scriptures), when in reality they did not understand the nature of the law (Acts 21:20-21; John 5:39). They were like the Pharisees who "compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). How sad that some good people were caught up in the Judaizing fervor! The same happens today.

When one preacher, bulletin, or journal editor can suggest that another gospel preacher is "unsound," and have forty, fifty, or two hundred other preachers to believe him, without any investigation, then you have a cult leader and his cult following. These followers will swallow -- hook, line, and sinker -- anything their cult idol says, as if it were the gospel. They never think of asking the suspected "liberal" his view, for this would put them under suspicion, make them appear to be compromising, jeopardize their standing with that editor, and put them out of fellowship with the cult. To be separated from the cult, in their eyes, is to be separated from God. Since they believe it is impossible for their leader to lie, it never enters their mind to question his pontifical edicts. The cult follow-

Continued on page 3

Heaven's Exhortation To Holiness

Mike Winkler

There is a borderline between the church and the world. One who seeks to stay just as near the world of sin as possible and still follow in the footprints of Jesus has an inappropriate concept of discipleship. The apostle Peter exhorts all Christians of every generation to be holy (I Peter 1:13-21). It will be our objective to examine Peter's admonition and to see how and why it should be heeded.

THE DIVINE ADMONITION TO BE HOLY -- v. 15

The inspired penman writes: "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (I Peter 1:15). The term "holy" (Greek *hagios*) conveys the meaning of that which is dedicated to God. Contextually, the apostle is calling for his readers to separate themselves from a life of habitual sin and worldly defilement. Elsewhere, the apostle Paul exhorts Christians to separate themselves from the world and its practices, perfecting holiness in their lives (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1). Too, the apostle to the Gentiles exhorts Christians to holiness, identifying it as "the will of God;" for "sanctification" is from the same Greek word (I Thessalonians 4:3, 7).

The apostle Peter, having encouraged his readers to live a life of holiness, further identifies the standard or pattern for that holiness as God himself, in saying: "as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy." The divine pattern is in direct opposition to man's subjective desires and pleasures (v. 14).

(1) "Gird up the loins of your mind" - v. 13 - The apostle Peter in this simple admonition is encouraging his readers to collect all improper thoughts and feelings and refrain from them so that their journey to heaven will not be impeded. Similarly, the apostle Paul in writing the Philippian church exhorted them to "think" on things which are proper and acceptable to God (Philippians 4:8). Remember, one can spill from his bucket only that which it contains.

(2) "Be sober" - v. 13. The verb "sober" (Greek *nepho*) means to be self-controlled. In Classical Greek *nepho* is used figuratively, indicating a complete clarity of mind and its resulting good judgment. Syntactically, our verb is a present active participle suggesting this attribute should persist and continue in the Christian's life. Elsewhere, Peter encourages self-control or sobriety in the Christian's confrontations with Satan and sin (I Peter 5:8; See also I Peter 4:7; I Thessalonians 5:8).

(3) "Do not fashion yourself according to former lusts" - v. 14. The apostle in this exhortation is contrasting an outward lifestyle with an inward change, outlined in v. 13. The former lifestyle Peter is referring to is identified in I Peter 4:2-3 as one patterned after the world. Similarly, the apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesian brethren "not to walk as other Gentiles walk . . ." but "put off the former conversation, the old man" and "be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:17-32).

THE MOTIVATION FOR ACHIEVING HOLINESS - v. 17-21

(1) Our redemption - v. 18-21. The term "redeemed" (Greek: *lutroo*) means, to be set free or liberated by a ransom payment. The redemptive payment is identified by the inspired apostle as "the precious blood of

Christ," and is in contrast with the empty monetary commodities of this world (v. 18-19). Jesus, in his earthly ministry, proclaimed the purpose of his incarnation as being redemptive and ministerial in nature (Matthew 20:28). Elsewhere, the inspired word suggests that the redemptive work of Christ achieved for man his (a) justification before God, Romans 3:24; 5:9; (b) reconciliation to God, Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20; and (c) forgiveness of God, Matthew 26:28. Contextually, the apostle Peter states that Christ's redemptive act was to produce both a "faith and hope" in God (v. 21).

(2) The Judgment - v. 17. According to the inspired penman, the nature of God's divine judgment will be (a) impartial or "without respect of persons," Colossians 3:25; Ephesians 6:9; and (b) just or "according to every man's work," II Corinthians 5:10.

God has admonished every Christian to be holy. This can be achieved if one will (a) control his thoughts, (b) practice self-control in every facet of his life, (c) truly transform his life inwardly, which in turn will be visible outwardly, and (d) remember the redemptive work of Christ and the judicial work of God.

—P.O. Box 1106, Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

TALL TALE or TELLING TALLY?

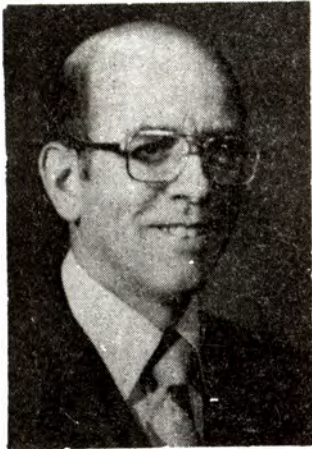
H. L. Blevins
If one is the only person that knows that Christ died, was buried, and is the resurrected Redeemer; and today one tells another, Tomorrow, those two tell two others. How long would it take to tell the whole world (approximately 34 billion persons) about Christ?

ANSWER: 32 days.	
Calculation via Computer.	
DAY	NUMBER TOLD
1.	2
2.	4
3.	8
4.	16
5.	32
6.	64
7.	128
8.	256
9.	512
10.	1024
11.	2048
12.	4096
13.	8192
14.	16384
15.	32768
16.	65536
17.	131072
18.	262144
19.	524288
20.	1048576
21.	2097152
22.	4194304
23.	8388608
24.	16777216
25.	33554432
26.	67108864
27.	134217728
28.	268435456
29.	536870912
30.	1073741824
31.	2147483648
32.	4294967296

There are approximately 24 billion members of the church of Christ. If each told someone today, it would take 10 days to tell the populace of today's world.
So, why don't we?
Christ so commands (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:15, 16; Lk. 24:47) that we tell the world. Christ prays that we do so: Matt. 9:37, 38. The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.
With thanks to Frankie Childs for her calculations!

Being Of The Same Mind

The members of the early church "were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). Furthermore, all Christians are to "be of the same mind one toward another" (Romans 12:16). This means that instead of being divided in various matters, we must be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).



Joe E. Galloway

Those who understand fairly well the matter of Biblical authority have no difficulty understanding how we can be "of one mind" in matters of faith -- matters of specific authority. When the Bible specifies, there is no room for differences of belief, action and teaching. To be right, one must conform to God's word in specified matters. All who so conform to God's pattern will be in harmony, being like-minded.

But, what about matters of generic authority -- matters involving human choice or judgment? Can we be of the "same mind" in these? Some would say, "No; it's impossible!" I Corinthians 1:10 says we can, and must!

How can this be accomplished? By properly

applying the Bible principle of love -- love for the Lord and love for our brethren. I Corinthians 13:5 tells us that love "seeketh not her own" (doesn't cause one to want his own way). Philippians 2:2-4 connects all three of these ideas together (love, being of the same mind, and being considerate of the wishes of others). Listen to it: "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (emphasis mine, J.E.G.). Romans 5:1-2 repeats this need for us not to please ourselves, but others, for their good. When Christians follow this principle, they can be of the same mind, even in matters of judgment.

Let us illustrate: That all Christians are to assemble with the church is a matter of faith, specified in such scriptures as Hebrews 10:25. For one to decide that this is not necessary would be to rebel against God. God has specified that we assemble, but has not specified whether we stand, sit in pews, or sit on the floor. To assemble requires that we be together; some posture or position is essential; and, since God has not specified which, we are at liberty to choose the one most expedient for our assembly. Suppose the decision is to buy pews (as most congregations do), but a few members believe this to be unnecessary and too costly. How can all be of the same mind and judgment in this? The

answer is simple: each should seek the common good, and since most members believe the pews are needed (and it would even be a physical hardship to some not to have them), we should give up our private wishes and then be "like-minded." No matter of faith was compromised; it was only a matter of judgment.

When a congregation has elders, matters such as these can be much more easily solved. Elders are authorized by God to oversee (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28) or rule (I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17) the congregation. This requires that to the best of their ability they know the wishes and needs of the congregation. They are not to make decisions to simply please themselves, their families, or to please a minority of the congregation. They must decide what is best for the congregation as a whole. Certainly they welcome each member to present his thinking concerning the pros and cons of matters being considered. Once the decision is made by the eldership it is probable that some will not see their own personal judgment followed in any major matter under consideration (and this is more and more the case the larger the congregation); but this does not mean that all cannot be of the same mind and same judgment. For, once the elders make their decision known, all members should then back it to the fullest degree of cooperation, helping accomplish the decided matter.

Understanding this matter of how to be like-minded in the matters of generic authority would have solved many of the problems most of us have seen over the years in various churches. Often we have seen:

1. Members become angry with other members over such matters of judgment, resulting in things being said and done that caused "hard feelings," often permanently.

2. Members "quit" the church or run off to other congregations when they did not get their own way.

3. Members withhold their contribution because they were against something the congregation was doing. Keep in mind that these things were in the area of generic authority (were matters of judgment); so it was scriptural to support them, even if one would rather do them differently.

4. Members go from member to member in private, trying to stir up opposition against the elders and the program of work in the congregation.

5. Members try to impede and discourage progress in works which were not to their personal liking.

All such things are sinful and have done untold damage over the years to congregations at various places.

We appreciate members who relegate their own likes and preferences to a secondary position so that things may be better for others. Undoubtedly there are decisions in your congregation which you might have made differently; but you cooperate fully, knowing that, in the eldership's judgment, what was decided was for the best interests of the most members. No principle of faith was involved or violated. Love for God and for other members rules in your lives! May it ever be so!

—218 Pinecrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.

Cults, Critics, And Control

Continued From Page 2

ers have been brain washed (they would deny this) to believe the end justifies any means used to expose the false teacher. It does not matter if their editor has misquoted, printed something out of context, used innuendo, misrepresentations, or outright lies, just as long as it stops the man he is after. That man may be innocent, but if the editor thinks he is guilty, that is sufficient for his followers, and they will continue his lies until the suspected "liberal" is destroyed.

Power

It does not seem to matter that these cultic critics make their whims into the law of Christ and try to bind them upon the church of God. If the church will not submit, they are willing to split the blessed body of our Lord and take their cult following with them. These cultists are so obsessed with "saving the church," that they are willing to destroy it and from the ruins create one in their own image. Like all "anti-" brethren, they look upon their efforts as "purifying the church" and keeping it from digression. And like all other "anti-" movements, they look inward and continue to grow smaller because they insist on feasting upon negativism. If their congregations lose members, they do not investigate themselves to see what is wrong, but accuse the departed of not being able to stand the heat of their gospel. They have their lectures and feature the same speakers, not because these men are "sound in the faith," but because they find it harder and harder to locate men who will agree with them on their list of essentials. Their 7,000 continue to grow

smaller.

The Judaizing teachers tried controlling the church in Paul's day and we have some who are trying in our's. We can be the silent majority and allow these vocal critics to rule us in the place of Christ; or we can be like Paul and speak up.

Conclusion

The church is in a very sad state of affairs when brethren are afraid to stand up and be counted for the truth for fear of being criticized and picked to pieces by the critics. We cannot allow fear to keep us from proclaiming God's word. Have we reached a level in the church where it is better to remain silent and safe, than it is to tell the critic he is wrong? Has the church reached the place where truth has to take a back seat, because out of fear of being written up, misrepresented, maligned, and ruined, we remain silent and watch unethical methods being used to destroy someone's character? Isn't that how Nazism gained control of Germany -- good people remaining silent for fear of reprisal? How do we justify such silence? Do we ease our conscience by saying that it is none of our business? Are we so afraid of a few that we will remain silent to save our own reputations from unfair criticism, questions, and innuendos? If so, what sets us apart from those people in New York City several years ago, who refused to aid a young woman who was being stabbed to death, because they "didn't want to get involved?" When we remain silent, are we not compromising the faith? Think about it before it is too late!

—39 Webb Drive, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

Maintaining The Restoration

The restoration of New Testament Christianity is a continuing quest and goal for all who love God. Men have the tendency to forget mistakes of the past and to loose their way. History demonstrates that departures have occurred, and such will continue to plague us.

Within 40 years of the time Alexander Campbell began his work he and his co-workers had forgotten their objection to human organizations and ecclesiastical structures over the church; thus they organized the American Christian Missionary Society. In another forty years the heirs of those men had gone full circle back into denominationalism.

To Maintain the Restoration

God wants us to "maintain" good works (Titus 3:14). Surely we should strive to maintain the noble cause of the restoration of the primitive church of Christ. Such will not happen by accident. It demands much thought and determined effort.

A. We must know, understand, and appreciate the history of our movement. We need to be acquainted with the great men who blazed the trail before us. Not only do we need to know of their sacrifices and labors, but also the problems and issues of controversy they faced. It is beneficial to see the mistakes they made, lest we repeat their error. A historian noted that he who does not learn the lessons of history is doomed to repeat the mistakes of history.

To gain the above information we must read the history and biography of the restoration. Every saint should read Earl West's 3-volume *Search for the Ancient Order*; Homer Hailey's *Attitudes and Consequences of the Restoration Movement*; and *Christians Only* by J. D. Murch. All would be blessed and strengthened by reading *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* by Robert Richardson; *The Life of John Smith* by J. A. Williams; *The Life and Times of David Lipscomb* by Earl West; *The Life of Elder Barton Stone* by John Rogers; *Ben Franklin, The Eye of the Storm*, by Earl West; *J. D. Tant, A Texas Preacher* by F. Y. Tant; and *W. W. Otey, Contender for the Faith* by Cecil Willis. Of course, there are numerous other excellent biographies. They should be placed in church libraries, called to the attention of the congregation, and highly recommended.

B. Preachers need to present sermons on the concept of and our commitment to restoring original New Testament Christianity. (To call anything else "Christianity" is a misnomer). Else, our people will soon be destroyed by their lack of knowledge in this area (Hosea 4:6). Lessons are needed which tell brethren about the heroes of the faith, and the price they paid to bring us where we presently stand. Thus did Paul in Hebrews 11. Help today's disciples to know the sacrifices made and the debt we owe to those who fought and won the good fight of faith (I Timothy 6:12). Buy, read, and use the classic books of restoration sermons of men like Ben Franklin,



John Waddey

T. W. Brents, N. B. Hardeman, and others.

C. Congregations should plan a series of lessons on the Restoration Movement using such knowledgeable men as Earl West, J. M. Powell and Dabney Phillips.

D. Bro. Bill Humble's filmstrip series, *Back to the Bible: How We Got There: How We'll Stay There*, should be purchased and frequently used in classes and with new converts to help them see where we came from, how we got where we are, and the necessity of sticking to God's word if we expect to get where we are going.

E. We need special in-depth lectureships and workshops on Restoration History such as that conducted annually by the elders of the North Lexington Church in Lexington, KY. Ideally there should be programs conducted throughout the land. Each could lay emphasis on the origin of the church in their own region.

F. We need writers to carefully research and write biographies of the great Christians of the past, lest their story be lost. Likewise we need to publish books that recount the history of the rise and progress of the Restoration Movement in the various states, and in other nations of the world. The Disciples of Christ have done this for many states, but their presentations give a very slanted view of history.

G. Our schools which train preachers should include a course in Restoration History as a requirement for graduation for all such students. Just as teachers need to know the history of education, so our young men need to know our roots.

Self Examination

Every Christian needs to examine himself to determine if he is yet in the faith (II Corinthians 13:5). Erosion of faith is slow, steady, and at first imperceptible. By the time it is seen, it is hard to stop the destructive process. Elders need to refresh their minds as to just what it means to restore the first century church, then ask the hard question: Is our congregational program loyal to that ideal? If not, what steps must we take to remedy the situation? Preachers need to carefully review their sermons and Bible classes, asking: Have I given adequate attention to "the old paths?" Have I taught and led the people to walk therein? (Jeremiah 6:16)? Moses charged Israel to:

"Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations: Ask thy father, and he will show thee; Thine elders, and they will tell thee?" (Deuteronomy 32:7).

We who are heirs of those who made their exodus from the bondage of sectarianism would be blessed beyond measure if we would likewise ponder our past.

Conclusion: Hold fast to the ancient gospel. Preach it boldly. Never be ashamed of your heritage. What a tragedy if we forget and loose all that has been won by the blood, sweat, and tears of a past generation! Rather "be ye imitators of them who through faith and patience inherited the promises" (Hebrews 6:12). Brethren let us maintain the restoration!

—6608 Beaver Ridge, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

I Am Concerned

John Waddey

All over the country good men are concerned about the Unity Meetings with the Christian Churches, and the attitudes of some of those who are participating. I speak not of 'radical reactionaries,' but of solid, sound, men who are alarmed at the spirit of compromise which is evident in some of our men who have participated thus far.

When I hear of gospel preachers who go home to declare that they will no longer oppose instrumental music in worship; or that those who have opposed the use thereof are the "weak" brethren of Romans 14 and 15; or that our forefathers caused the division by insisting on acappella singing -- then I, too, am concerned for those who say such things, and for the brethren they will influence. Such brethren are not speaking things "which befit the sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

When I see these sessions used to praise those who worship in error, and whose practice was -- and continues to be -- the cause of division, and at the same time to heap words of derision and contempt upon those who have sought (and are seeking) to worship as the New Testament authorizes, I am concerned! Solomon said: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah" (Proverbs 17:15).

When I hear men of both camps calling for unity in diversity rather than on the divine blueprint, I am concerned. This is not a new approach. It is the same line set forth by the prince of heretics, W. Carl Ketcherside, and his co-workers, over the last 25 years. We are to work diligently to keep "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3). The unity of the Holy Spirit is that which is based on his inspired,

divine teaching, not on compromise with error.

I am greatly concerned about the problems of faction and division that beset us. Such is sin (Galatians 5:19-21). Unity of those who love God is a most noble and desirable goal. Jesus prayed for it, we must work for it (John 17:20-21). Yet, if to have unity, we abandon God's prescribed way for one of compromise with those who are determined to cling to their idols, then we are only deceiving ourselves. God will not accept or bless such a move.

Over the last several years, some 100 ministers of the Independent Churches have left them and come to the Lord's church. If the current efforts succeed in granting approval, acceptance, and respectability to the "Christian Churches" with all their doctrinal problems, why should any man leave them and come to the scriptural foundation whereon we stand? In fact, the disgusting picture painted of us by some of our brethren is such that only a fool would consider such a move.

Having followed the "summits" and their work carefully, I am frank to say that thus far I have seen little good accruing to the Lord's church, but extensive damage resulting therefrom.

Brethren let us preach the word -- fully, faithfully, and forever! Let us practice every precept and principle with loving loyalty. Let every honest soul who wants to please God meet us on that divine foundation of gospel truth, and we will have that glorious unity for which Christ died.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

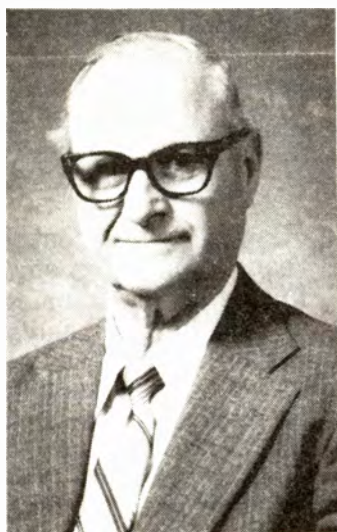
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Respect For The Scriptures

The word "respect" is defined as: "to have a differential regard for; esteem; to treat with propriety or consideration; regard for and appreciation of worth; conform to duty or obligation." The word "scriptures" is used in the Bible to include both the Old and New Testaments (II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 3:15-16). All should have a great regard and respect for the scriptures.



Kyle McWhorter

speaks of the word of God as being powerful, and alive (Hebrews 4:12). The gospel of Christ is, therefore, the means by which sin is blasted out of the lives of sinners, and by which they become new creatures (Acts 2:22-42; Romans 6:1-4; II Corinthians 5:17). It follows, then, that the scriptures are powerful; and when obeyed, the result is that one becomes a child of God (Galatians 3:26-29).

Thirdly, one must respect the scriptures because they are the only source of spiritual life for man. The Lord himself said that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:4-15). There can be no spiritual life without the sowing and/or planting of the gospel into honest and good hearts. Jesus again said that the words spoken by him were the means of spiritual life (John 6:63, 68). Jesus also said the hour had come when those who were dead in sin shall hear his voice, and "they that hear shall live" (John 5:24-25). Paul said that the gospel is the means by which he had begotten those who became members of the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 4:15). The brethren to whom Peter wrote had been born again through their having received and obeyed the word of God. The word is the "incorruptible seed . . . that liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:22-23). It, therefore, follows that the only way one can obtain spiritual life and/or be saved is by hearing, believing, and obeying the scriptures. Because of this great truth all men must have great respect for the word of God.

In the fourth place, one should respect the scriptures because they are God's complete and final message of salvation to mankind. Jesus told his apostles that the Spirit of God would come and guide them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). The scriptures completely furnish the man of God unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16, 17). The gospel of Christ is "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). Jude said, ". . . it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye

should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The scriptures then, according to Jude, were delivered to man one time for all time. The Lord has sounded a solemn warning to all who would add to or take from the sacred scriptures (Revelation 22:18-19). It follows, therefore, that the scriptures are all-sufficient in the salvation of man, and represent God's final call to man to obey him that he might be saved. The scriptures then demand the respect of man.

HOW ONE CAN SHOW RESPECT FOR THE SCRIPTURES

There are several ways by which one can manifest respect for the final relation of God to man. In the first place, one can show respect for the scriptures by a careful and prayerful study of them. Such careful study of the word of God characterized the Bereans of old (Acts 17:11). Paul admonished Timothy to study the Bible (II Timothy 2:15). Doing this shows one's respect for the scriptures.

Secondly, one can show respect for the scriptures by handling them aright (II Timothy 2:15 A.S.V.). Paul said he did not handle the word of God "deceitfully" (II Corinthians 4:2). There were some in the days of Paul who perverted the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-9). Those who did so had the stern disapproval of God. The apostle Peter wrote of some who wrested the scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:15-16). The scriptures must be handled honorably, since they are God's revelation to man. When such is done one shows his respect for the Bible.

Thirdly, one can show respect for the scriptures by recognizing them as the only rule of faith and practice in religious matters. The Bible is composed of two great divisions -- the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was nailed to the cross of Christ and abolished (Colossians 2:14-17; Ephesians

WHY RESPECT THE SCRIPTURES?

The scriptures should be respected because they are inspired of God. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). Peter said, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20-21).

It follows, therefore, that the scriptures are not the product of man, but were breathed in by God. This means then that the very words of the scriptures themselves are the product of the Spirit of God (Matthew 10:19-20; I Corinthians 2:9-13).

In the second place, the scriptures are to be respected because they are alive and powerful. It is sad to note that some have claimed that the Bible is a "dead letter." The word of God is said by Paul to be the power of God to save man (Romans 1:16). The Hebrew writer

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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— Acts 26:25

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Me - Attitudes

Every Bible student is familiar with the "Beattitudes" of Jesus in Matthew, chapter five. Too many people today, including the children of God, have replaced them with what we might call "MEATTITUDES" that are totally opposite from what our Lord was teaching.

1. To make ME happy, never disagree with my opinions on anything.

2. To make ME happy, talk about the faults of others. I have none.

3. To make ME happy, always speak to me, even if I never speak to you.

4. To make ME happy, always praise me, even if all I ever do is criticize others.

5. To make ME happy, serve me. I don't have time to serve others.

6. To make ME happy, always love me, even though I display hatred for others.

7. To make ME happy, no one will get to heaven except me, my family, and my close friends. (Maybe a FEW others . . . like Moses, Abraham, Peter, Paul and such.)

8. To make ME happy, let others do the work of the church, but let me share the credit.

9. To make ME happy, let the preacher preach to all those "bad" people and leave me and my family alone.

10. To make ME happy, let others contribute most of the money, but let me tell them how to spend it.

In reality, none of the above will make such people happy! Such people are never happy! If they get their way they still find some reason to complain. They have a great need in their hearts. They need the love of Christ which will enable them to love others, as well as themselves (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 3:16-19).

—330 East Ave., Cedartown, Ga., 30125.



Douglas Sims

"Total Commitment"

When false doctrine concerning a matter is taught and propagated, we may avoid discussing that subject for fear that someone might associate us with the particular error in question. This may be the case concerning the Bible subject of commitment.

Because advocates of the "total commitment movement" have patronized this theme so prominently, some reluctant to bring up the subject. This is unfortunate, because true "commitment" to God is essential to Christian living. Let it be clear from the outset that the Bible teaching concerning "total commitment," and the Crossroads concept of this, are not the same and should not be confused.

First: What is commitment? Webster says, "to give in charge or trust." The basic term implies the delivery of a person or thing into the charge or keeping of another. Vine says that the words "paradidomi, pisteuo and paratithemi" (translated commit) involve the idea of delivering or entrusting to another. The words "trust" and "entrust" are very prominently involved in this subject. The word "pisteuo" means "to entrust;" it involves the idea of having enough trust or confidence in someone or something to put our welfare in their hands with complete assurance of our safety and well-being.

Sometimes we confuse involvement with commitment. We believe that because we are "involved," we are also "committed." While it is true that one cannot be committed to anything without being involved in it, it is also true that one may be involved, without being committed. The difference between involvement and commitment may be seen in this illustration: "When you look at a plate of ham and eggs, you know the chicken was involved; but the hog was committed."

The Bible's teaching concerning commitment is very plain. In the person of Christ, inspiration gives us a classic example of what true commitment is: "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (II Peter 2:23). Although he was reviled unjustly, Jesus did not retaliate. The Lord's answer to this unjust situation was to "commit" himself (or, to give himself over) to God, who will render righteous judgment. The Greek verb here is in the present tense, which denotes continual action; that is, Christ kept on committing himself to God the Father.

This attitude of "commitment" (or "giving over") his will and welfare to God the Father is further seen in Matthew 26:39: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Jesus entrusted his welfare, and all that is associated with it, into the hands of the Father.

This very type of "commitment" or "giving over" done by our Savior is enjoined upon every Christian: "Wherefore let them that



Raymond Allen Hagood

suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator" (I Peter 4:19). The word "commit" here is exactly the same word that is in I Peter 2:23. Chapter 4 refers to Christians who were suffering persecution because of staunch faithfulness to God in keeping with his will. They were therefore instructed to "commit" their souls to God, who, being a faithful creator, would never violate nor profane that trust.

Man may place his total trust in many things and people who are not trustworthy. Some trusted in themselves (Luke 18:9). Others trusted in their riches, as our Lord noted in Mark 10:24. Yet Paul makes it very clear that our total trust and commitment must be placed in God: "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (II Corinthians 1:9). The Hebrew writer expressed it this way: "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me" (Hebrews 2:13).

All faithful Christians have "committed" or given themselves over to God. They have entrusted their souls to his hands, and with childlike trust follow his inspired directions. They no longer place their trust in the fleeting and uncertain things of life, but with patience and meekness wait on the Lord, knowing full well that all God has promised, he will do. That commitment, in order to be pleasing to God, must be a complete giving over, for nothing less will do.

How truly different this is from the "Crossroads" concept of 'total commitment'! They falsely speak of being totally committed to Christ; but, in reality, their notion of total commitment means a "complete giving over" to their system and their philosophy. They hold up men and women, to whom one must surrender, rather than to God. One's "prayer partner" becomes the "pseudo-deity" when one is coerced into "committing" to.

Commitment to God is a grand and essential matter in Christian living. Let us always have a clear, Biblical concept of it. May we never be tricked into "committing" to men, while forsaking God and his will.

If there is one verse in the Bible which gives us a concise understanding of what true "total commitment" is, it must be Mark 12:30: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." Let us all have this kind of love for God. Then we will not need to worry about whether we are "committed" to God, or not.

—Rt. 1, Box 110, Indian Mound, TN 37079.

Invite A Friend To Church Sunday

Points Of View About The Bible

John P. Weekley

It is always amazing how many points-of-view there are about the word of God. The only proper point-of-view will be the one which is in harmony with the scriptures in thought and life. However, we often hear statements about the Bible which are just not true. Some of these ideas are constantly repeated generation after generation. One of the most prevalent and false statements about the word of God is, "You can prove anything by the Bible."

The idea that someone can prove just anything by the Bible is false because the Bible just does not deal with everything. For example, the Bible does not deal with proving natural laws. It does give us their origin (Genesis 1:1-32), but does not go into the mechanics of natural law. If one wants to prove the law of gravity, he will have to go to science. The Bible is a source which deals with the subject of salvation. It does not concern itself, as far as "proving," with secular topics. Some think (?) that the scriptures can be used to prove any and every religious doctrine. But this is not true. The Bible provides proof only for that which is good and is also truth (I Thessalonians 5:21, I Peter 3:15). False doctrines are not good and they are not truth; therefore, they cannot be proved by the Bible. They are condemned by the word of God (II John 9-10; Galatians

1:6-9).

The Bible is not only a revelation, but it is also a restrictive revelation (Revelation 22:18-19). The fact that it is restrictive in nature and content proves that it does not fall into a class of proving everything. It is interesting, but not surprising, that men feel obligated to prove things by the Bible. This demonstrates a certain amount of faith and longing to be able to say that absolute truth will back them up; but it is gross ignorance (Acts 17:30) to think that one can prove just anything by the Bible.

Another statement often heard is, "You have your interpretation, I have mine." This idea is not in the scriptures, therefore it is not an idea of truth. The scriptures contain all truth (John 8:32; 16:13). The inspired apostle Paul said "... rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). The fact of oneness as taught and created by the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:4-6) shows that there are not several interpretations; only one is right. That one interpretation is simply the one that the Holy Spirit wants us to conclude. The Bible interprets itself. The Bible when studied properly reveals itself, explains itself, proves itself, and sells itself (Psalm 119:97). No man, in the absolute sense, has ever had a personal or "private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20), of the scriptures. Man is to read and study and

reason logically (Isaiah 1:18), to come to the conclusions that the Holy Spirit presents in the gospel of Christ.

Another statement too often heard by implication (if not by direct statement) is: "The Bible is not relevant." What part of the scriptures would anyone sincerely believe is not relevant today. What age has been without the question of the origin of man? What generation has not dealt with the question of its' real purpose in life? What society has ever existed which did not need absolute truth at its base for the civil, moral, and spiritual welfare of its members? The Bible has a message for all ages, all people, and all areas. Some things change; but some things never change. God's methods and laws have changed (Hebrews 7:12), which is in harmony with God's will. For example, we are not under the law of Moses (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:8-12); we are under the law of Christ (James 1:25). But the basic needs and questions of men have never changed, because in every age man has had the same basic moral and spiritual needs. We may have technology on every hand, but technology does not answer questions and fill needs that men have on the inside. Only the word of God can do that, and do it right.

Another statement is, "The Bible is just the words of men." How far this idea is from the truth! The scripture is not only not from man, but it could not be from man. The Bible is so unique in nature and content that it could not be from man. There is the established law that like begets like. The Bible is so unlike man and the way that man thinks that it could not be the production of man. It is so honest that (for most) it is too honest -- and therefore they cast it aside. It is so powerful that governments feel threatened by its presence. It is so unbiased and lacks prejudice that it finds itself among uncomfortable company when it is discussed properly in the light of these things. It is so revealing and hard on sin that sinful men have no problem in seeing that it is exposing and condemning their wrong doing. The Bible contains information that mere men did not know, and could not have known -- such as the rotundity of the earth in Isaiah's day (Isaiah 40:22), the many prophecies about Christ, nations, events, people -- and many others. The content of the Bible completely argues against man as its origin. One has well said, "Man could not produce such a book if he would; and would not produce such a book if he could." The Bible is contrary to the way that man thinks and speaks. It takes the Bible to get man to think and speak correctly.

Men need to talk about the Bible, but they need to talk and think about it in the proper way.

—P.O. Box 233, Cherokee, Alabama 35616.

Short Sermon

Men, because of speech, have the advantage over brutes: but beasts are preferable to men whose language is indecent.

Bernard Baruch sagaciously states: "Every man has a right to an opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts."

One sacrifices but little in exhibiting good manners and gains much.

Respect For The Scriptures

Continued from page 1

2:11-16). It is the New Testament that must be the sole guide for man today. It is the rule by which one must live (Philippians 3:16; Galatians 6:16).

Those who live in this, the Christian Age, must hear Christ (Acts 3:22-23; Matthew 17:1-5; Hebrews 1:1-4). But, the Lord speaks to us through the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit speaks through the apostles and other inspired writers who speak to us through the inspired pages of the New Testament (John 16:13; I Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:1-7; Matthew 10:19-20). It follows then, that those who have respect for the scriptures will accept the New Testament as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice in the church of the Lord.

Fourthly, one can show respect for the scriptures by obeying their commands. Since the Old Testament has been abolished, this principle applies specifically to the New Testament. It seems strange that many claim great respect for the scriptures, yet repudiate some of the commands therein. This is especially true of the Lord's command to be baptized (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:47-48). From the above scriptures it can be very clearly seen that baptism is necessary. Yet, thousands refuse this clear, simple requirement of the Lord. Such is a demonstration of a lack of respect for the scriptures. In order to manifest a proper regard for God's revealed will, all of the commands of the Lord must be obeyed without quibbling (Matthew 7:21-27; James 1:22-25; Romans 10:13-17).

Finally, one can show respect for the scriptures by respecting their silence. Sometimes when God gives a command, he leaves it up to man as to how such a command is to be carried out. Such is true in the Great Commission. The command is to "go" and

"teach" all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). The Lord did not specify how one is to "go." Man is, therefore, at liberty to use any means at his disposal: such as a ship, automobile, horse, or airplane. He would, in using any of these methods of transportation, be carrying out the general command to "go" into all the world with the gospel of Christ.

However, it is also true that in some instances God gives — specific commands. A "specific" command is both exclusive and inclusive. It includes only that which is specified, and excludes any and everything else. For instance God spoke to Noah and said, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch" (Genesis 6:14). God was specific as to the kind of wood Noah was to use in the construction of the ark. Noah, therefore, was limited as to the type of wood he was to use. To have used any other kind of wood to build the ark would have been disobedience to God.

In the same way God has specified the kind of music to be used in New Testament worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). The kind specified is vocal music -- "singing." It follows, therefore, that to use any other kind of music would be to disobey God.

God did not have to go into a lot of details as to the kind of wood "not" to use in the ark. Noah respected the silence of God's word in doing exactly as God specified (Genesis 6:22). This same principle is true with respect to the kind of music in worship. God specified the kind to use, without going into a lot of detail in saying what kinds "not" to use. People today manifest regard for the scriptures by respecting their silence in using only vocal music -- "singing" -- in the worship of God.

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The Broken Fellowship

An observer will note that Churches of Christ and the Independent Christian Churches have many similarities. Once we were a united people, worshiping and serving the Lord in a common faith. In this lesson we will notice that past connection, and the causes of our separation.

The Period Of Unity
(1804-1849)

Our roots on the American scene had their primary beginning with the restoration efforts of Barton W. Stone (in Kentucky) and Thomas and Alexander Campbell (in western Virginia) in the first decade of the 1800's. The seed of the gospel produced a common crop of "Christians" wherever it was preached (Luke 8:11). Thousands of godly souls eagerly embraced the invitation to go back to the Bible and to be Christians only. Scores of Baptist churches abandoned their denominational connection and became New Testament Christians. The Mahoning Baptist Association was dissolved and its member churches united with the Restoration in 1830.

In 1831-1832 in Georgetown and Lexington, KY, the followers of Stone and Campbell agreed to unite, and merged their efforts for the Lord. A tremendous surge of growth followed this move, and the number of disciples soon came to be upwards of 250,000. So great was the reception to the gospel that many thought the restored church would soon sweep the field.

The Period of Turmoil (1849-1906)

Satan never rests when God's cause is flourishing. In October of 1849 a group of prominent brethren met in Cincinnati, Ohio, to organize the American Christian Missionary Society to coordinate the mission work of the entire brotherhood. The chief leaders of this movement were D. S. Burnet, the organizer, and W. K. Pendleton, its chief defender. Alexander Campbell had laid the foundation for the missionary society in a series of articles published in the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1841-1848. He was elected the first president of the organization. Once opened, there was no closing the floodgates, and a clutch or brood of unscriptural and disruptive practices soon appeared in the brotherhood.

In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton introduced an instrument of music into the worship of the church in Midway, Kentucky. His reasoning was that their singing was so poor that even the rats had left the church! Though slow in being accepted, by 1906 the majority of "our" churches had adopted instrumental music. In virtually every place where it came, friction and division followed in the wake.

The issues of slavery and abolition plagued the churches from 1840-1860. A few disciples owned slaves, but many were too poor to afford such a luxury. A. Campbell preached a message of moderation. He viewed slavery as a social evil, but noted that the Scriptures did not specifically condemn it. Rather, it was regulated. While he expected the institution of slavery to fall before the advance of the gospel, he warned against agitation that would disrupt society and lead to blood-



John Waddey

shed. John Boggs founded *The Northwestern Christian* in Indiana, a magazine designed to promote the abolitionist cause within the church. He felt it his duty to drive out of the church all who owned slaves or sympathized with the practice. He went further and attacked those like Campbell who would not espouse his abolitionist viewpoint. James Shannon, of Missouri, was just as outspoken in affirming the merits of slavery, alleging that it was God's will for the African people. In the church, along with the entire nation, the bonds of unity were greatly strained by these agitations.

When the cannons fired on Fort Sumter in 1861, not only the Union, but Christ's church as well, was grievously torn. At first, strong leaders such as David Lipscomb (Tennessee), Ben Franklin (Ohio and Indiana), and J. W. McGarvey (Missouri and Kentucky) urged brethren to maintain a neutral, pacifist position. Others were caught up in the fever of war and joined the fray on their chosen side. James A. Garfield recruited Christian brethren and formed the 42nd Ohio Volunteers. He led his troops in the bloody battles of Shiloh and Chickamauga. He was eventually commissioned a General. R. M. Gano, of Texas, put together a calvary troop made up largely of Christians. By one day (!) they missed fighting Garfield's Christian troops at Shiloh! During the war years the Missionary Society issued several inflammatory resolutions favoring the Union cause and condemning the South. This not only convinced the southern brethren of the evil nature of the society; it also embittered them against those associated with it. Following the war, a sectional bitterness was clearly evident between those north of the Mason-Dixon line and those south. The division that finally came reflected that sectionalism.

A spirit of compromise had been developing in those churches which wanted societies and instrumental music. This was reflected in Walter Scott's paper, *The Protestant Unionist*, which reduced the terms of fellowship to a belief in the deity of Jesus. "Progressive brethren," as they preferred to call themselves were frequently involved in union meetings with denominational ministers. They came to refer to the church as a "denomination." The cliché was coined that "we are Christians only, but not the only Christians."

The role of the "Progressive" minister gradually evolved from that of a preacher and an evangelist, to that of "pastor" like their denominational counterparts. With this it wasn't long until men like Issac Errett began to add the title "Reverend" before their names.

Within that same stream of "Progressive" preachers, there soon were manifestations of rank theological liberalism. Led by men like J. H. Garrison, editor of *The Christian Evangelist*, R. C. Cave, of St. Louis, and Edward Ames, of the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, these men began an assault on the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures that equalled the most rabid of the liberal Protestants.

Separation Realized (1906)

In 1906 those responsible for the U.S. Religious Census noted the polarization that existed among the Restoration churches. They commissioned J. W. Shepherd to gather the statistics of those churches whose fellowship excluded instrumental music and missionary societies. The resulting figures were

shocking. The progressives claimed 982,701 members, our brethren could count only 149,658. We had 2,649 congregations, they had 8,203. The liberals had gained control of most of the foreign mission work, the schools, and benevolent works. We were a small, badly-beaten remnant, scattered primarily in the South. Our little strength was found in the circle of influence of David Lipscomb's *Gospel Advocate* and Austin McGary's *Firm Foundation*. We were poor, with little strength or resources. We were scorned and ridiculed by the "Progressive," and by the sectarian world as well.

Brethren of great courage and conviction refused to accept defeat. They argued that "they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us; they would have continued with us. . . ." (I John 2:19).

Growth and Recovery (1906-1976)

A handful of faithful men of God threw themselves into the Lord's work with incredible sacrifice and zeal. Foot by foot they recovered much of the ground lost, and re-established New Testament congregations throughout the land. By 1976 we had grown to some 1,200,000 members, outstripping those who had digressed. From a lower socio-economic strata, we moved into the middle class of society. Following World War II we expanded our mission outreach into every state of the nation, and into some 140 foreign nations. There has been growth in good works such as Christian Schools, benevolent homes, and Christian camps. With all of this came growth in recognition and respect in the eyes of the world.

Awareness of the hard battles fought and the losses sustained should make us very cautious when we hear voices calling for unity based on compromise with those whose doctrines and practices devastated us in the past. Remember the lessons of history, or you will repeat the mistakes of history!

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Short Sermons

Throughout the ages human progress has depended on people who did more than their share.

There is no limit to what a good man can do if he does not care who gets the credit.

If religion has not changed you, you need to change your religion.

There is no good way to be bad and no bad way to be good.

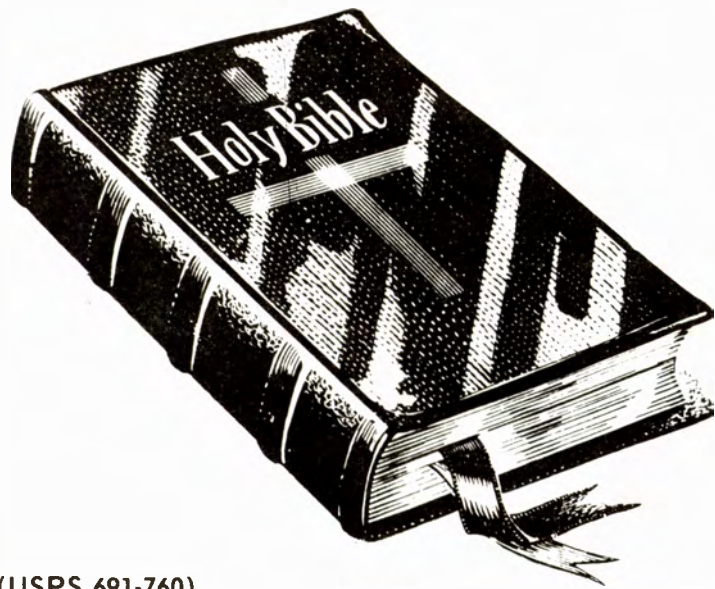
Soft words may appease an angry man; bitter words never will.

Snobbery is the pride of those who are not sure of their position.

Anger is a wind which blows out the lamp of the mind.

The excellence of many discourses consists in their brevity.

He lives in true repose who bridles his passions.



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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Should The Church Have "Committees"?

Jack Wilhelm

Every organization now has committees. When the wheels of progress move slowly, they come in for more than a little criticism. Here are some sample taunts: "A committee consists of a group of men who keep minutes and waste hours." "The man who shows up punctually for a committee meeting is probably attending for the first time." "A camel is a horse planned by a committee." "A committee is a group of the unprepared, appointed by the unwilling, to do the unnecessary."

The Lord's work has not been spared the barbs of barmy souls, either. One preacher has this plaque over his desk: "God so loved the world that he didn't send a committee!" Another has said, "Our brethren are so committee-conscious, that if three of them fell out of an airplane, they would appoint a 'landing committee' on the way down!" One brother told me of a congregation that had 23 committees, one of which was "a Committee Committee" set up to appoint the committees! (He was distressed that there were no elders on the "committee committee.")

Is it wrong for elders to ask members to fulfil certain tasks so they may be involved, and use their talents effectively? I don't think so. To see the work done by united, loving, involved brethren is certainly better than seeing God's work "lie waste" due to neglect, idleness and spiteful division. It would be much more inexcusable not to delegate duties to members -- and have them wither and die spiritually! After all, Jesus distributed duties as well as loaves and fishes (Matthew 15:35-36). The apostles got helpers involved with specific assignments (Acts 6:2-4). "We are all workers together with God" (II Corinthians 6:1) with jobs to do (Philippians 2:12-16).

I think each of us would be better off, though, to think of himself as a committee in another sense. Let me illustrate: A mortgagee is one to whom property is mortgaged. A devisee is one to whom another has

bequeathed an inheritance. A trainee is one who has received training from a trainer. Now, there is a sense in which each Christian is a committee -- one to whom God (the committer) has given tasks: "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

Riches -- material, and spiritual -- have been committed to us (Luke 16:11; I Corinthians

9:17). As with Paul and Timothy, the word of salvation, with the charge to remain in the faith, has been committed to us (II Corinthians 5:19; I Timothy 1:18; 6:20).

Each of us is a committee, and should be faithful in the timely fulfilment of duty. What kind of committee members are we? If God had been a "committee" just like you, would Daniel still be in the lion's den?

—P.O. Box 62, Auburn, AL 36831-0062.

Perseverance

Paul was one who persevered to the end. He said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). Three facts should be recognized from Paul's statement: (1) Paul had not reached the height of his spiritual ambition. (2) He realized that he had to forget the past. (3) He was doing his best to reach his life-long goal.



W. Edwin Kearley

HAVING SPIRITUAL AMBITION AND REACHING IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTEMPLATION OF MAN. Paul was always zealous and true to his conscience. His

zeal caused him to seek to exterminate Christianity by exterminating Christians. Before Agrippa, Paul said, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them" (Acts 26:9-10). When he learned better, he was as zealous for that which he had tried to destroy. For preaching the gospel of Christ, he was beaten, frequently placed in prison, stoned, shipwrecked, in perils of robbers, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and had the care of all the churches (II Corinthians 11:23-28).

Paul declared to the council, "... Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). When he learned better, he changed his practice.

Today many in the church may be spurred into action one time and then return to the old rut. This see-saw action never achieves progress. It is motivated only by the emotion of

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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The Old School

Jack Wilhelm

The younger generation may not catch the significance of the phrase "The Old School" -- but those who have been around for a while seem to find themselves using it more often. I put together the following poem that may help convey the significance of the concept.

THE "OLD SCHOOL"

There's no school like the "old school,"
Where those who lived, and loved and learned
In the "university of hard knocks" used a tool
The world's wits have spurned:
Experience!

Its students, mellowed by patience, caught
A glimpse of life, taught in the old school,
Which excells any degree bought without thought
That ignores God's basic rule:
Love!

To have, to hold, and to learn . . .
To give, and to live, and cope . . .
To cherish, to share, and to yearn
For love's eternal hope . . .

These are the "echoes of the old school":
For love extended is never ended
When it is blended . . .
With our own!
—P.O. Box 62, Auburn, AL 36831-0062



"They Should Seek The Lord"

In Athens the apostle Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill (or, Areopagus, A.S.V.) and to those idolaters proclaimed the one true and living God. Hear him: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

all things; and hath made of one blood all 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. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like to gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device . . ." (Acts 17:24-29). This marvelous text (with the rest of the sermon) is engraved beside the stone steps which tourists take to the top of Mars' Hill.

It was the responsibility of those Athenians to "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him." Even in the Old Testament God wanted man to seek him. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near . . ." (Isaiah 55:6). The prophet Amos wrote: "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4).

Adam Clarke, in his comments on Genesis 1:1, wrote one of the grandest paragraphs about God I have ever read. Few have been able to verbalize better than he what God is

like, nor expressed it more consisely. Read slowly, meditating on each descriptive phrase, and perhaps it will intensify your own acquaintance with God, and enhance your concept of his majesty. After referring to God as "the Great First Cause," he described him:

"The eternal, independent, and self-existing Being; the Being whose purposes and actions spring from himself, without foreign motive or influence; he who is absolute in dominion, the most pure, the most simple, the most spiritual of all essences; infinitely benevolent, beneficent, true, and holy; the cause of all being, the upholder of all things; infinitely happy, because infinitely perfect; and eternally self-sufficient, needing nothing that he has made; illimitable in his immensity, inconceivable in his mode of existence, and indescribable in his essence; known fully only to himself, because an infinite mind can only be fully comprehended by itself. In a word, a Being who, for his infinite wisdom, can not err or be deceived, and from his infinite goodness, can do nothing but what is eternally just, and right, and kind."

Moses wrote: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Scholars tell us that the Hebrew word (Elohim) used here is PLURAL in form, and is used with PLURAL adjectives, verbs, and pronouns. Hence there is the "Trinity" in unity! (More later about the "Godhead"). However, the "infinite and indivisible unity" of the three personages in the "Trinity" vouchsafes to us that there can be "but one will, or purpose," and only "one infinite and uncontrollable energy" --only one deity --one divinity --or divine nature, the name of which is "GOD."

About 445 B.C., upon the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem after they returned from Babylonian Captivity, Israel prayed: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Nehemiah 9:6).

Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Making All Things According To The Pattern

Clifford Dixon

In reference to the worship and priesthood of the Old Testament, the Hebrew writer stated: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou maketh all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

God is a "pattern-minded" God. The design of the universe proves this. The earth is tilted at 23.7 degrees, and is just the right distance from the sun so that life is possible on it.

The rotation of the earth on its axis, and its revolutions around the sun, are extremely accurate. The design of the body and mind of man is nothing short of marvelous!

The same God who made the earth and man, has always required his people to do things according to certain "patterns" in spiritual matters. Moses was impressed with making the tabernacle and all its articles "according to the pattern" God gave him. "As the Lord commanded Moses" is found ten times in Exodus 39 and eight times in Exodus 40 in

summary of the setting up of the tabernacle and its articles. The conclusion was, "and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:35).

God punished people who failed to follow his "patterns" in worship. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord,

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Making All Things According To The Pattern

Continued From Page 2

and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Leviticus 10:1-2). Solomon was given a pattern for building the temple and setting up the worship thereof (I Chronicles 28:11-13). When the wicked King Ahaz went to Damascus and saw an altar there, he sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and pattern of it, having him build this new altar; and among his wicked acts he worshipped before the new altar (II Kings 16:10-16). He is known as a king in Judah who "did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God" (II Kings 16:2). God expects people to follow his patterns in all things.

God has left us some "patterns" to follow in New Testament worship and service. There are those who say that the Old Testament worship was according to physical things, but ours is a spiritual worship; thus we have no set items of worship. How wrong this attitude is! Even though salvation is "by grace," it is still through "faith" (Ephesians 2:8) and men must obey "from the heart that form of doctrine" to be made free from sin, and become servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18).

1. THERE IS A PATTERN FOR SALVATION. By this we mean there is a plan that must be obeyed before a person is saved. In the Great Commission the Lord laid out this pattern. It includes hearing the word, believing, repenting, confessing Christ, and being baptized (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). If one will read carefully Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, and 19 he will find cases of conversion in which people did just exactly what the Lord commanded in the Great Commission.

2. THERE IS A "PATTERN" FOR SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP. Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). To worship "in spirit" is to worship with the proper reverence and respect for God. It is to worship from the heart, paying reverence to deity. To worship "in truth" is to worship as God directs us in his word. God has a "pattern" for worship which we find in the activities and commands

to the early church. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2). From this we can see that worship consisted of prayer, singing, studying the word, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and giving. The congregations came together for this purpose, and were exhorted not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25).

3. THERE IS A PATTERN FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER. In Acts 20:7 we read that the disciples came together on "the first day of the week" to partake of the supper. Every week has a "first day," so every week Christians should meet to partake of the supper and engage in the other items of public worship. The Lord's supper is to be partaken of in remembrance of the death of Christ (I Corinthians 11:20-30). To partake of it in any other way is to eat and drink damnation to one's soul.

4. THERE IS A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING. In Ephesians 4 the Lord showed the platform for unity (verses 1-6), the revelation of the word as a basis of unity (verses 7-16), and then showed that Christians need to live the new life (4:17-5:20). To live the new life requires putting off some things (4:17-32), to walk in love (5:1-2), to avoid immorality (5:3-7), and to walk as children of light (5:8-20).

5. THERE IS A PATTERN FOR PRAYERS. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). Prayers are to be to God, and in the name of Jesus Christ.

Prayers are never to be to Mary, nor to any other dead saint. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (I Timothy 2:1). "Prayers" are simple petitions, while "supplications" are entreaties, and "intercessions" are petitions for others. Jesus gave a model to the apostles in Matthew 6:9-13, all of which are to be incorporated in our prayers [except "thy kingdom come;" the kingdom is already here, and we need to pray for its spread.]

6. THERE IS A PATTERN FOR PREACHING. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). The Lord wants his word preached. He wants his preachers to be courageous enough to show people where they have sinned and tell them what to do to have forgiveness. The Lord doesn't authorize preachers to give their experiences or their testimonies. He wants the word preached.

7. THERE IS A PATTERN FOR MARRIAGE AND THE HOME. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). In line with this Paul said, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Ephesians 5:22-24). The husband is to be the "head" of the house. This is God's pattern. Man is to provide for his family (I Timothy 5:8). The wife is to love her husband and children, guide the house, and give no occasion for the adversary to speak reproachfully (I Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:4-5).

Let us never think that we have the privilege of setting up our own standards in divine matters. Let us follow the "pattern" God has given with the same fidelity as did Moses at Sinai.

—P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

Walking With God

Enoch was one of the unique figures of Patriarchy.

His uniqueness lies in that he did not have to taste death. He was one of two persons (the other being Elijah), whom the Lord God translated. An account of this man is found first in Genesis 5:21-24. Take special note of verse 24, for in this verse the why of Enoch's translation is revealed: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Due to Enoch's walk with God, he was rewarded in that he should not see death.

Man has always had a fear of death. Maybe it is due to the loneliness associated with the event. It could be due to the pain and agony often connected with death's coming which makes men frightful of it. Or perhaps, the



Victor M. Eskew

unknown strikes terror in the hearts of men over death. It is the escape from all of this which causes men to envy the great Patriarch, Enoch. We wish that we too could avoid those stormy waters of Jordan. Note that Enoch's deliverance was due to this walk with God. Let us then examine what it means to walk with God.

Hebrews 11:5 is an excellent starting point for our research. The verse reads: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Moses stated that Enoch was translated because he walked with God. The Hebrew author taught that his deliverance was based upon his having pleased God. The two statements then must be comparable. To please God is to walk with him; to walk with him is to please him.

As we continue our investigation let us now turn our attention to I John 3:22. "And what soever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." This

verse clearly shows that the keeping of the commands is that which causes one to be pleasing in God's sight. Since walking with God is equal to being pleasing to him, we can conclude that when one is walking with God, he is keeping the commandments of God. Thus, Enoch was a man who obeyed God, and his obedience brought him great reward.

Dear reader, it is not possible to be disobedient, yet walk with God, at the same time. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:6). Only in keeping the commands can we rightly say, "I am walking with my God." And in so doing, we, too, will receive great reward. It will not be a translation such as Enoch had, but rather an eternal abode wherein we will never face death after this life is over. "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus" (I Thessalonians 4:1-2).

—P.O. Box 126, Belmont, MS 38827.

"Raccoon" John Smith: A Revelant Preacher

Probably the most unique and colorful of all Restoration preachers would be "Raccoon" John Smith. The undignified nickname is no more peculiar than the man who wore the name. Although by nature he was a humorous man, his life was filled with tragedy. John Smith's life span covered the years of 1784-1868, but his sermons would be



Dabney Phillips

helpful to the people of every century. This article will point out the relevancy of this financially poor, but rich in talent, preacher.

"Raccoon" John Smith had been brought up on the extreme religion of Calvinism, but his logical mind turned from this doctrine. At first he waited for the audible voice to convince him that God had saved him; but it never came. Impatiently John waited for the direct Holy Spirit nudge, as he was anxious to preach. Modern man is also deluded in believing that the Holy Spirit will operate directly upon the heart of the alien sinner. The word has always been the vehicle of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).

Tragedy failed to shake "Raccoon's" faith in God. In 1814 he moved from Kentucky with his family to a rented cabin near Huntsville, Alabama. He had sold his farm in Kentucky for fifteen hundred dollars and moved, looking for new land. While John was out preaching the gospel, the cabin burned -- taking the lives of two children, and burning up the fifteen hundred dollars. His wife, the former Anna Townsend, was at a neighbor's cabin aiding a sick friend. Anna shortly thereafter died of a broken heart, and was buried with the ashes of her two children.

This grievous event caused "Raccoon" to rebel at the doctrine of infant damnation as taught by Calvinism. He returned to Kentucky with a sad heart and an empty purse. God intervened in his spiritual frustration, with the falling into his hands of a copy of Alexander Campbell's "Christian Baptist." This journal dealt with the problem that perplexed Smith. The next year, 1824, when Campbell visited Kentucky, Smith visited him, and was converted to the New Testament way of doing things.

In the checkered life of John Smith his courage and conscience were never separated. He reminded one of Elijah facing Ahab, and John the Baptist before Herod Antipas. When "Raccoon" broke with the Baptists, he was told, "Your friends will abandon you; you will get nothing for your preaching; your debts will press you to the earth, and eventually your home must be given up." His reply, "Conscience is an article that I have never yet brought into the market; but if I should offer it for sale, Montgomery County with all its lands and houses would not be enough to buy it -- much less that farm of one hundred acres." Gospel preachers today would do well to emulate the faith and courage of John Smith. Although an audience might not forget his curious clothes, neither would they forget his sermons.

Smith's two- or three-hour sermons were divided into three parts. At the first he would correct misrepresentations; then he would

expose popular errors; and finally he would present the simple gospel. In the year 1827 he baptized seven hundred people. "Raccoon" was the religious Daniel Boone of his day in Kentucky. The Baptist association brought three charges against Smith. All three were based upon tradition. How easy it is today to let tradition become a substitute for the word of God.

"Raccoon" John Smith was an advocate of Christian unity. In fact, he thought this was the highlight of his work as a preacher. He

was one of the leaders and speakers at the Georgetown, Ky., meeting on Christmas day of 1831, and the following New Year's Day. These two meetings consummated the union between the followers of Campbell with those of Stone. Ecumenical adherents today need to study this successful platform.

The colorful "Raccoon" John Smith preached to almost the last day of his life. He died on February 28, 1868.

—100 Carlton Place, Gadsden, AL 35901.

"I Am Just One Person"

Church growth cannot be easily measured. We find ourselves much too often questioning our approaches. One of the keys which we have discovered that is essential to any church growth is WORK.

The growth of any congregation comes as a result of hard work. There are no shortcuts. There was a time when it seemed the church grew, not because of any concentrated effort on our part, but it just happened. However, that is no longer true. And to grow as we should requires the untiring effort of every member -- not just the elders and the preacher. You are part of a team; and to the extent you fail to perform properly, our united efforts suffer.

Frequently, one is heard to say, "I cannot do much," or "I am just one person." True enough; and so is each individual bee in a beehive. It is estimated that a pound of honey contains 7,000 grains of sugar which represent



Nick Hamilton

the concentrated sweetness of 62,000 clover blossoms. To obtain this amount of honey the single bee (individual in our case) is obligated to make 2,700,000 visits to and from the flowers covering a distance of approximately 5 million miles!

In the process of extracting the nectar, the bee inserts his tiny proboscis into each separate flower, which means that he performs the operation 3,720,000 times in order to get enough nectar to make one pound of honey. And he winds up not getting to eat the honey!!

We mention this bit of information gleaned from various sources to illustrate how important one bee is in a hive. If one bee is required to do so much in order to produce one pound of honey, does not this indicate something of the importance of one individual. Of course it does!

Brethren, let us talk Christianity to our friends. Even though we may not agree with them in many of their beliefs, we still love their souls; and the least we can do is manifest a sincere interest in their spiritual welfare. Paul said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). The very nature of saving souls of men indicates we should be as busy as bees!

—Brady Station, Box 5506, Little Rock, AR 72215.

Perseverance

Continued from page 1

the day. Sustained action is created by deep and abiding conviction. It is caused by deep and abiding faith in God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and his inspired word.

PAUL FORGOT THE PAST. He said, "I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:4-8).

The Jews wanted to go back to the flesh pots and bondage of Egypt. Demas forsook Paul and the Lord "having loved this present

world" (II Timothy 4:10). Far too many in the church today still love "this present world." Christ will not accept a heart reserved for the world.

PAUL'S DEDICATION PROMPTED HIM TO PRESS ON TOWARD THE ETERNAL PRIZE OF HEAVEN. Is there anything worth more to you than eternal life? Paul wanted heaven more than life itself. He was willing to be beheaded for his faith in Christ.

Some are willing to throw away their hope because of some statement by a member of the church made without intent to harm. One's desire to serve God and to go to heaven should be great enough to imitate Paul (I Corinthians 11:1).

Perseverance calls for steadfastness, endurance, and patience. MAY WE ALL PERSEVERE UNTO THE END OF OUR EARTHLY SOJOURN AND HEAR THOSE WORDS "Come, ye blessed of my Father..." (Matthew 25:34).

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.



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Words Of

Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 19

Who Is On The Lord's Side?

We suggest that Exodus 32:1-35 be read with great care. The New Testament teaches that Old Testament lessons are valuable to today's Bible students (Romans 15:4).

According to our text, while Moses was in the Mount, Aaron was building an idol, a calf, which the Israelites began to worship. They "rose up to play" indicates that their worship of the idol was accompanied by sensual, lewd dances which formed a part of the 'fertility cult.' This act was a great sin. When Moses returned, "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. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in fire, and ground it to powder, strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it."

Aaron, like many others, tried to excuse himself of his foolishness. He said, "... Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." The sin of idolatry was so grievous it cost Israel 3,000 men. It was in this circumstance that Moses asked: "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Exodus 32:26). Those on the side of idolatry and those on the side of the Lord are on two different sides!! There is no neutral ground (Matthew 6:24). The choice is ours. We are either for the Lord or we are against him.

Who is on the Lord's side??

We shall note-- (1) We put ourselves on the



W. A. Holley

Lord's side when we subscribe to the Holy Bible and to its marvelous teaching. One cannot be on the Lord's side and reject the Holy Bible! It is the Book we should live by, and die by; and by which we shall be judged (Matthew 4:4; John 12:48). The word of God was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is, indeed, a message from outer space (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21; I Corinthians 2:9-16). God's word stands opposed to all human creeds, human disciplines, catechisms, and the like (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

(2) We are not asking, "Who is on Mother's or Father's side?" As good and loyal as he/she may be, these are not the standard of authority. Where gospel preachers are concerned, we urge people to go to the Sacred Text rather than to today's preachers. Paul, speaking of the Bereans, says that they were "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Nor are we asking if the Lord is on your side, dear Reader; rather, we are asking if you are on the Lord's side. If any moving is to be done, it is you who must do the moving! Men must be reconciled to God, not God Almighty reconciled to men (II Corinthians 5:18-21). Multitudes have been led astray by denominational preachers! It is always wrong to follow men rather than Christ and the Bible (I Corinthians 1:10-13).

(3) To be on the Lord's side is to be on the right side (Psalms 19:8; 119:75). There is a good and right way, wherein responsible people should walk (I Samuel 12:23). If one wishes to go to heaven, he must walk in the strait and narrow way; but if hell should be one's goal, he can travel through the wide gate and in the broad way (Matthew 7:13-14).

To be on the Lord's side one must stand on the side of truth. What is truth? The word of God is truth (John 17:17). Truth, as opposed to error, will stand when the world is on

fire (Psalms 117:2; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:22-25). Whether we wish to admit it or not, there is truth and there is error (I John 4:1,6). Truth involves impartiality (James 1:27; 2:1-4; Colossians 3:25). If one does wrong, he will receive recompense for that wrong (Galatians 6:7-8). The notion that anyone can do as he pleases and still enter heaven, is false. Truth is on the side of obedience (Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:8-9).

(4) If one wants to be on the Lord's side, he must be a member of the church that Jesus established (Matthew 16:18-19). Jesus never established denominationalism. In fact, He said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13). Verily, Jesus is speaking of religious "plants," religious movements unsupported by divine authority. God claims only those religious "plants" which He planted (Cf. Psalms 127:1).

Is the church of Christ a non-essential? Denominational preachers by the score so assert. Would Jesus build a non-essential church, pay for it with his own precious blood, serve it as its head, and be its Saviour, if it were no more than a dish-rag? (Cf. Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). According to Scripture, all spiritual blessings are "in Christ." But to be "in Christ" is to be in his church (Galatians 1:22; I Thessalonians 2:14). Thus, one cannot be "in Christ" and "out of the church" at the same time. To be "in Christ" is the same as being "in the New Testament church." Now an important question arises: How does one get into Christ? The answer is clearly stated: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). Another Scripture teaches: "For by one Spirit" (by the instruction of the Spirit as written in the Bible) "are we all baptized into one body . . ." (I Corinthians 12:13). The "body" is the

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Truth

Truth never contradicts itself. Truth always begets truth, whereas a lie always begets a lie. Truth never needs a lie to uphold it. It never needs a false argument to support it. Truth is never helped by dishonesty. One does not need to hide factual information for fear it, if discovered, will hurt the truth. Truth has nothing to fear from honest inquiry.



Ray Hawk

It is a healthy attitude to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). To so speak is to follow "sound doctrine" (I Timothy 1:10; II Timothy 1:13; 4:3). We should always want to know what the Lord states, and be willing to conform to his standard of authority. Problems arise when we try to bind what God has "loosed," and make our judgment God's law (Matthew 16:19; 18:18). To bind where God has loosed is just as sinful as loosing where God has bound. To do either is to be guilty of leaving God's authority and following "for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). This we must not do!

When men devise doctrines and create division in the body of Christ with those teachings, it weakens our efforts to preach the gospel. Those divisions which have been caused in previous years are just as denominational in attitude as was that which was practiced by members in the church of God at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:10-13). Each new division tells the unbelieving world, "We are the church of the New Testament," and the alien sinner believes it not (John 17:20-21). So often the truth falls upon deaf ears, for those who hear it too often see in us the opposite of what we preach. The world looks at what some consider subjects of prime im-

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Advice To Preachers



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Thanks to the encouragement of both my father and my mother, I cannot remember a time, even in my childhood, when I did not want to preach the gospel. I grew up believing that "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). I wanted to help save lost souls, and began preaching on Sunday, May 13, 1934. Thus on Mother's Day this year I celebrated the fifty-second anniversary of my first sermon.

In brotherly love, I wish to share with preachers of all ages, some truths, lessons, tips, and counsel gleaned from fifty-two years of experience and observation.

I rejoice with you who have prayerfully set this worthy goal for your life. You are in great company, for, as you know, God gave his "only-begotten Son" for us -- and he was a PREACHER (Matthew 4:17)!

We are "called of God" to preach. The fact that this calling is non-miraculous does not make it any the less divine. The call to "salvation" is not a miraculous call, for the apostle Paul wrote: "God hath . . . chosen you to salvation . . . whereunto he CALLED you BY OUR GOSPEL . . ." (II Thessalonians 2:13-14). It is by the gospel that we are called to salvation; and by the same gospel --the word of God-- some are called to be elders; and in this way "the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28). In the same way --by the gospel-- some are called deacons, preachers, Bible class teachers, etc. Hear the apostle Paul again: "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). Yes, we are "called by [the] gospel" (II Thessalonians 2:14) to preach the word, and it is a divine calling.

Since all accountable persons have sinned (Romans 3:23), all are separated from God by our own sins (Isaiah 59:2), and are lost without the gospel. We must ever remember that "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST" (II Corinthians 4:3). The nature of the message, as well as the purpose for preaching it, deserves or merits the most thorough preparation accessible to us --whether we be young or not-so-young preachers. Indeed, continuing preparation throughout one's entire lifetime will be needed.

The "glorious gospel of Christ" is worthy of a far better presentation than any of us ever shall be able to give it! It is worthy of our very best efforts --and then some! Do your best, every time. Preach each sermon as if it were your last one! [It very well may be!] In daily life, reinforce, or back up, your preaching with the very best

example you, with God's help, can give it.

Each preacher should constantly bear in mind that it is the GOSPEL that is God's power to save mankind (Romans 1:16). Illustrations are fine when they do just what the name says --illustrate; but they do not PROVE a single thing. A thing must be proved by the word of God. To a young preacher, the apostle Paul was inspired to write: "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . Preach THE WORD" (II Timothy 4:2). On the wall of my study hangs a plaque which my father had, which says: "Preach the Word."

Jesus himself said: "Preach THE GOSPEL" (Mark 16:15). Despite this, some preachers quote so little scripture that my father used to say that "they would not let God get a word in edgewise!"

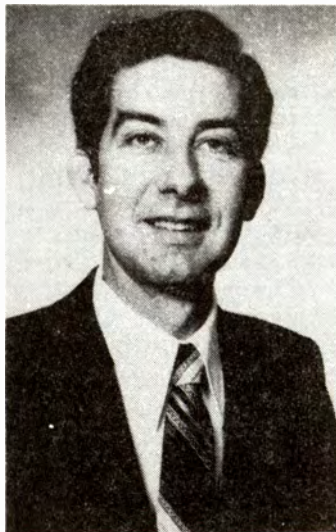
Strive to avoid grammatical errors which my detract a single heart's attention away from God's truth. Ask your wife (or a teacher, or some other knowledgeable person in the congregation) to privately and in secret help you to become aware of prominent mistakes you make. Invite such a one to take notes on your sermons, and learn from him/her what rule(s) of grammar you habitually violate. With such assistance, work to break your faulty speech habits. For example: some preachers shun the word "me" as if it were unfit for use, when in fact it is demanded as the object (in the first person singular) of a verb or preposition --as, "They told him and me," not, "They told him and I." [Mispronounced words may be corrected the same way]. Seek such aid, and demonstrate grateful acceptance of the helpfulness by making corrections in your speech habits.

Eliminate monotonous repetition. To say, "Dear Heavenly Father. . ." (or, "We pray thee," or any other one phrase) forty times [more or less!] in one prayer annoys some hearers, and makes it difficult for them to sincerely endorse the prayer and say, "Amen" to it. (You would not call the name of your earthly father, nor any other person, forty times in one brief three-minute conversation!).

Avoid meaningless gestures. Speech students are sometimes required to stand motionless during their presentations. This helps the speaker develop a naturalness, and to make gestures that have meaning. The constant thrashing of the arm does not stress anything, but rather detracts from a sermon! Too, most people do not like to have a clenched fist waved in their faces. Cultivate friendship with the elders. Make the elders where you preach among your closest friends and advisers. Always speak respectfully to them and of them. Take them into your confidence, and never betray their trust. Never array one elder against another (or, others). Prayerfully evaluate their counsel. Before the congregation and the community, set an example of giving them "double honor" (I Timothy 5:17). Help each elder to recognize that, like you and the entire membership, he also himself is subject to the "eldership."

The Hireling - An Allegory

According to W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, a "hireling," as used in John 10:12-13, "expresses, not only one who has no real interest in his duty, but one who is unfaithful in the discharge of it; that sense attaches always to the word rendered 'hireling'."



Glenn B. Ramsey

Jesus' statement in this passage is as follows: "He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them: he fleeth because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep" (John 10:12-13).

In my thirty years as a gospel preacher I have viewed with fear the temptation to become a "hireling" in the Lord's work. It is always easier to yield to the powers that be within a congregation than it is to take a firm and strong stand for the truth on each and every issue that faces a local church. A man who will compromise his God-given

responsibility of being faithful to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2), a trust that he has received of God, will suffer a guilty conscience (if his conscience is still sensitive); he will suffer the loss of respect of his fellow Christians; and this is not the worst thing: -- he also incurs the wrath of God upon himself for being unfaithful in his "preaching of the word."

A man who works in the Lord's kingdom as a preacher of the gospel, or as an elder of the church, must be one who has "counted the cost" and has properly concluded concerning the responsibility he must assume in the great task of leading the Lord's church.

Any man who works as a gospel preacher who is primarily interested in pleasing all other men (either those outside the church, or the worldly and unfaithful within the church) even to the compromise of his teaching and life for the Lord, is a "hireling!" There are those who occupy pulpits who are willing to stop their own mouths -- or allow someone else to silence their voices -- by the mere suggestion of the ones in "authority," even when the matter under consideration is a matter that the Lord has given clear and plain teaching regarding. A man who will refuse to confront sin with sincere and strong rebuke (even if it involves the elders of the church, see I Timothy 5:20) is a "hireling" preacher--not God's man! This man serves his own belly. He stands judged by God's present law as a

"hireling!"

Elders of the church who are unwilling to stand squarely on Biblical principles in dealing with church matters are also "hirelings." Although they may not receive money for their "work," often they remain hirelings because they receive what they value more than money -- the praise of men and the feeling of power and/or importance.

Bro. Guy N. Woods has this comment in his *Commentary On The Gospel of John*, page 211:

"Individuals and organizations abound which prey on people in the name of religion whose sole purpose is the personal profit they derive. And, the church today is not without those who feel no obligation to defend the truth against false teachers and godless philosophies and who flee at the first approach of such in their congregations because they love the "peace" and tranquility they enjoy, being in perfect harmony with denominational bodies round about. All who thus do, whether elders, preachers, prominent members or obscure ones, are hirelings in the sense our Lord used the word in this allegory."

Any eldership that bends its decisions to the will of a few in the membership while knowing that those decisions are against true Bible teaching is a hireling eldership and will not escape the wrath of God, and will not long delude honest and good Christians.

How important it is for us to be faithful to God's law -- come what may! If the Lord is our helper, why should we fear what men may do to us (Hebrews 13:5-6) or say about us?

—Vice-President, Tennessee Bible College, P.O. Box 865, Cookeville, Tennessee 38501.

Truth

Continued From Page 2

portance and shakes its head in disbelief at this pettiness. In-fighting has never promoted out-reach! False teaching or sinful attitudes have never built the church up nor pulled error down.

Much controversy has arisen lately over the multiplicity of versions. It is never wrong to point out errors in a translation. All English translations of the Bible are produced by men. Men often make mistakes. Some translations are so distorted that one shudders to think of their falling into the hands of those who do not know the word of God. There are some versions that are more reliable than others. I prefer the King James Version (KJV) but often do comparative studies in others. Whenever a question arises, I will go to the Greek to see what the original text says. Although I prefer the KJV, I will not bind that version on any one. As long as a person teaches the truth and points out error, I care not what translation he reads. Jesus often used the Greek translation of the Old Testament rather than the Hebrew text. That translation had its problems, but Jesus never made an issue of translations.

We must be careful when we make arguments against those versions we feel are unsafe. When a brother objects to a translation because it does not italicize words supplied by the translators, and upholds the KJV because it does, he is not fully informed, or he is not being honest with himself or his audience. Why use an argument that is not sound against a translation when valid arguments would be better? Although the KJV has a Preface explaining that all italicized words are supplied by the translators, they fail to inform us that there are a great many words which they did supply which are not italicized. To reject a translation on the basis

that it does not italicize words supplied by the translators, if we are going to be honest, means we would have to reject the KJV as a sound translation.

Another argument used against other versions is that some state they are not word-for-word translations from the Greek. The translation committee is criticized for their honesty, whereas the KJV is praised because it does not have such a statement. However, anyone having a working knowledge of Greek understands that the KJV is not a word-for-word translation of the Greek text. In fact, the KJV will use several English words to translate one Greek word, whereas other versions that have been criticized for doing the same thing, in those places have used one English word to render the Greek! A number of the arguments made against some translations, if they were equally applied to the KJV, would disqualify it as a sound translation. I am not ready to give up my KJV! I don't have to. What must be done is for some to give up their invalid arguments. One needs to make sure that his objection is based upon truth, rather than upon faulty reasoning. Faulty reasoning has never helped the truth!

We should also recognize that when someone points out a truth to us, he is not our enemy, but our friend (Galatians 4:16). To point out faulty logic does not mean a person is against the KJV and for error; it simply means he objects to using falsehood to uphold the truth!

Truth never fears investigation. Truth will always remain truth. Solomon said, "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). We can do no less. May our desire always be to know the truth (John 8:32).

—39 Webb Drive, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

Silas, The Co-Worker Of Paul

Great men make their mark in life because of others who help them to succeed. In part, Paul's greatness may lie in the fact that he recruited and utilized the talents of capable, talented men -- like Silas.

About the Man

Of Silas' early life we know nothing. His name means "lover of words." "Silas" is the Greek form of the Hebrew Saul. In Latin it is rendered Silvanus. Because of his name and because of his attitude toward the Gentiles, Silas is thought to have been a Hellenistic Jew.

We know that he was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). Such an honor was hard to come by for a Jew. It conferred great advantages to the holder.

Silas was considered a "chief man" in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22). He was an inspired prophet and preacher of the gospel



John Waddey

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Silas, The Co-Worker Of Paul

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(Acts 15:32). Prophecy was one of several supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:8-10). Those who prophesied spoke "unto men unto edification, and exhortation, and consolation" (I Corinthians 14:3).

His Record of Service To The Church

Our first notice of Silas is his mission to the young church at Antioch of Syria. "Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcized after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). It seemed good to the apostles and elders with the whole church at Jerusalem to send a letter of instruction to the Antioch brethren correcting the matter. Barnabas and Silas were sent along to personally resolve the problem. They comforted, exhorted and confirmed the brethren. Afterward Silas returned home (Acts 15:1-32).

When Paul set out on his second missionary journey, Silas was his companion and co-worker. This alone tells us something of the confidence had in him by the church and Paul. First they travelled "through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches" (Acts 14:36-40).

At Lystra, young Timothy joined their company. The churches of the region "were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily" (Acts 16:1-5).

While at the seaport of Troas on the Adriatic, Luke joined them. In Acts 16:8-10 notice the change in pronouns from "they" to "we." There also Paul received his vision of the man from Macedonia pleading, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9-10). This was the event that opened the door of Europe to their missionary outreach.

Acts chapter 16 relates their conflicts and victories at Philippi. They found Lydia and her household, taught, and baptized them (Acts 16:11-15). Headquartered in her home, they launched a vigorous program of evangelism that soon set them at odds with the city authorities. Paul cast a demon out of a young slave girl who harassed them. Her owners had them arrested, beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:19-24). The bruised and suffering preachers cheered themselves and their fellow inmates by singing hymns to Jehovah. The Lord responded to their need by sending an earthquake which shook the very foundations of the prison and loosed their shackles. All know how the jailor and his family were converted (Acts 16:25-34). In Paul's company Silas left Philippi.

At Thessalonica, the people rioted in response to their preaching. Paul and Silas were forced to flee the city (Acts 17:1-9).

Thus with toil and weariness and in the face of hostility and violence, Silas helped as Paul sowed the gospel seed and planted congregations of Christians.

In later years Silas served as a secretary to the apostle Peter (I Peter 5:12).

His Worth To the Cause

His brethren counted Silas a chief man (Acts 15:22). This is an honor few could earn. He was a man that could be entrusted with an important, sensitive task. He did his job well and accomplished his mission (Acts 15:27). Silas knew how to exhort and build up his brethren (Acts 15:32). Some folks are skilled at tearing down fellow Christians, congregations and good works. It demands much more talent to edify and build up the cause.

Silas was willing to "hit the road" for Christ, leaving home, family and friends for the Lord.

He took the great commission as a personal responsibility (Mark 16:15). He spread the good news of the gospel everywhere he went (II Corinthians 1:19).

His generous attitude towards our Gentile ancestors was in sharp contrast to the ugly, narrow racism of the Judaizing teachers.

He endured hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (II Timothy 2:3).

He was content to serve in the background as a help to a greater leader like Paul. This required qualities of character such as few possess.

Peter calls him a "faithful brother" (I Peter 5:12). Silas could always be counted on to do his duty.

Lessons To Remember

May we live and serve so that our brethren

I Bare You On Eagles' Wings!

DON WILLIAMS

Solomon, in all his wisdom, said it best when he wrote, "There are three things which are too wonderful for me. . . the way of an eagle in the air. . ." (Proverbs 30:18, 19). For hundreds of years, the eagle has been admired for its grandeur, its grace in flight, and its great size and awesome power. Early Indians often worshipped the great bird, for its majesty and independent spirit were viewed as things to be revered.

Indeed, the flight of the eagle is a breathtaking sight. Assisted by his powerful wings, the eagle can glide effortlessly to altitudes of over 2,400 feet. The turbulence of winds can cause it to fly even higher and faster. With a wing span that can easily reach over eight feet, it has the ability to carry young eaglets upon its back to safer nests and homes.

Another great characteristic of the eagle is its paternal care for its own. The eagle's keen eyesight enables it to be sensitive to approaching danger and its sharp claws are a ready weapon, should it need to protect its young family. The eagle is unique in that he mates for life and returns to the same nest each year, making necessary repairs and additions. He also takes an active role in providing for his family and in teaching the young to fly.

Because of these great qualities, the eagle has been chosen as the symbol of what America stands for. The freedom and liberty that we enjoy in this beautiful land are illustrated by the seal of the eagle, found on one dollar bills and other important government documents. Because of the many freedoms that this bird represents in America, the eagle is protected by numerous laws in the United States. It is a major offense to hunt or in any way to hurt and destroy the American bald eagle.

Just as the eagle is representative of the many blessings we have in American, so also the eagle is used in the Bible to show us the providential care of God. In Exodus 19:14, God told Moses, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, to tell the people of Israel to remember what he had done unto the Egyptians and "how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself." Later on, Moses, near the end of his life, sings his famous song about the Israelite nation and tells of the care of Jehovah God. In Deuteronomy 32:11, God is depicted as an Eagle that "stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings."

will hold us in high esteem as they did Silas. Let us be willing to go forth with the message of Christ as was he (Matthew 28:19). Silas endured his hardships with a song (Acts 16:25) in his heart. So should we (I Peter 4:12-16). We need to be exhorters of our brethren like Silas, not demoralizers and discouragers. Silas was a team worker. Such is essential for the success of any good work. May we have that same "team" spirit. He was content to be the "backup man," the assistant. In every age, such men are indispensable to the Lord's church. They are still needed today. Not every soul can be a great leader like Peter or Paul, but everyone can be a Silas! We can -- we must! -- be faithful as was this devoted saint, if we hope to receive our crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

It is the same care, demonstrated for the Israelites, that God shows us today. The Lord's church is today the true Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). We have the promise that God is watching over us and that all things will work out for the best because of such care (Romans 8:28). Isaiah even tells us that in times of pain and sorrow God is there. He writes, "but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31)!

One last thought about the eagles. They are on the list of endangered species. Great sights like the flight of the eagle can only be seen in a few spots around the country and particularly in gamelife reserve areas. One may never in his lifetime see an American eagle. But for the people of God, they have but to look above and around them and see all the glorious blessings that come down from the Father of lights (James 1:17). **REMEMBER, OUR LORD GOD BEARS US ON EAGLES' WINGS!**

934 Florence Street - Lewisburg, TN. 37091

Who Is On The Lord's Side?

Continued From Page 1

church (Colossians 1:18, 24). Thus, when one is "baptized into Christ" one is also "baptized into the one body" (Ephesians 4:3-6), the church. It is in this act that the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47).

(5) To be on the Lord's side, as members of the Lord's church, one must be faithful to the Master. Here is involved the following of the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), working to save the souls of men (I John 4:7, 20-21), praying for those who may dislike you (Matthew 5:43-48), ever trying to keep tongue and body under control (James 3:6, 8; I Corinthians 9:27), serving as peacemakers instead of trouble-makers (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; 14:19), and abiding faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

A faithful adherence to these principles will put you on the Lord's side.

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Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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The Church Of Christ Is Different

The church of Christ is not just another denomination. Factually, denominationalism did not exist in the days of the Apostles. If such did exist, how can one account for the New Testament's silence regarding them?? Most denominational preachers are very proud of denominationalism and they spend much time in praising it; but the apostles never engaged in any such practice. We ask, Why?? W. A. Holley



The Bible teaches that differences between right and wrong must be shown. Preachers who pretend that there are no differences are false teachers. "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezekiel 44:23; Cf. Ezekiel 22:26). A great woe is pronounced upon them "that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). Hence those preachers who contend that everything is right, depending upon how one looks at it, are in grievous error.

For centuries, there have been those who contend that people should do as they please, regardless of what God Almighty says. In the days of the Judges when "there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25), we can see this attitude at work. Anti-nomianism (situation ethics) contends that Christians are not under any moral law except their feelings produced by the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit operates through

his word, not through feelings. It is always a sin to violate the commands of God, moral or spiritual.

Not all churches are alike good. Is it possible for men to build churches which are just as good and right as that church established by Jesus Christ? Take a look at man-made churches: they have different names, different creeds, different terms of membership, different systems of government; some claim to perform miracles, some do not; plus other differences too numerous to mention. Jesus prayed for the unity of all true believers (John 17:20-23); but denominational churches can never be truly one, because it (denominationalism) is a Babel of total confusion (Genesis 11:1-9; I Corinthians 14:33).

Churches of Christ are bound to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). Churches of Christ have no creed but the Holy Bible (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the full revelation of God (Jude 3; Hebrews 2:1-4; Mark 16:17-20). But the Holy Spirit did not reveal and confirm any denominational creeds. Is it reasonable to think for one sober minute that the Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed all the contradictory doctrines of denominational churches? Denominational churches do not speak the same language, when it comes to their teaching.

Denominational churches oppose each other -- until they find it advantageous to cooperate together in their opposition of the churches of Christ. The foregoing statement has been proven true a thousand times over! They will parrot: "one church is as good as another" till they come to the church of Christ, and then they change their tune!

According to the Bible, the church of Christ was established by Jesus Christ on the first Pentecost after his glorious resurrection (Matthew 16:16-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 41, 47; 11:13-15). The church of Christ and the kingdom of God are one (Ephesians 5:5). The

kingdom of God is in existence now (Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). Those who are Christians are in the kingdom now! The kingdom of God is neither pre-millennial, nor postmillennial. In fact, the Bible says nothing about a literal reign of Christ on the literal earth for a literal thousand years. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). At Jesus' second coming, the earth and all that pertains to it shall be destroyed or burned up (II Peter 3:10-13). If one is not in the Lord's kingdom when he dies, he never will be!!

What are some of the peculiar characteristics, not true of Romanism nor denominationalism, but which mark the church of Christ, thus showing their differences?

(1) Jesus is the builder of his church (Matthew 16:18-19). Jesus did not leave the building of his church to men (such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, et al). "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it . . ." (Psalms 127:1).

(2) Jesus is the foundation of his church (I Corinthians 3:10-11). Hence, the Lord's church was not built upon Peter nor any other human being! In Matthew 16:18-19, let it be noted, that the Greek word translated "rock" is feminine and refers to the foundation upon which Jesus built his church. "Petros" (the Greek for "Peter"), which means "a stone," is one thing; and "Petra," which means a ledge of rock, is another. Jesus did not say that his church would be upon "a stone," a pebble; but upon a solid "ledge of rock." A pebble is too small for a foundation, but a ledge of rock -- Jesus Christ -- furnished sufficient foundation for the greatest superstructure, possible.

(3) Jesus is the head of his church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24). Jesus has not abdicated or renounced this exalted position in favor of the Pope, nor of any other

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Why Did I Change Churches?

There are many wonderful articles written by brethren who have come from various denominational backgrounds to obedience of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I dearly love to read these articles because I came out of such error myself. It is inspiring to read of the changes others have made, and I am often able to gain information which helps in working with those who are presently caught up in this evil.



Tom Lynch

I am troubled by some trends among some Christians. Those of us who have broken from denominationalism are being forced to consider whether or not such a move was really necessary! Too many members of the Lord's church are now adopting the idea which those in denominations have long affirmed -- specifically, that there are sincere, knowledgeable and devout Christians in all of the various denominations; and that while critical doctrinal differences exist, we can still have fellowship with one another in those areas where there is agreement. If this were true, I wish it had been taught in 1977. Then I simply could have stayed in the Southern Baptist Church. By doing so I could have avoided a great deal of personal anguish which included severed friendships and family conflict.

As I studied the scriptures with members of the Needmore church in Indian Mound, Tennessee, one point they would constantly stress, regardless of any arguments I

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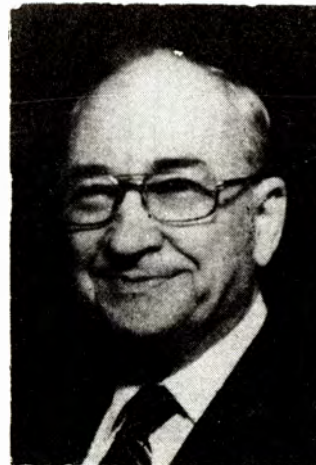


The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Advice To Preachers

(No. 2)



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

When I began to write on this theme, it was my purpose to design the material especially for "young" preachers. Another minister who is past 65, upon reading the first draft, suggested that the title be changed, noting that everything in it is helpful for preachers of all ages. I accepted his suggestion. I fully realize that many others are more capable than I, but I am drawing from my observations and experiences over the past fifty-two years. I offer the following suggestions as of major importance to every preacher. --And I know in advance that some may think, "Anybody with the proverbial 'one eye and half sense' ought to know these things!" Or, "Anybody who can 'see through a ladder' ought to see the importance of these things!" Nevertheless, I believe these things need to be said. So, I shall try to say them kindly, yet plainly.

(1) Study. This is first and foremost! It was to a man who already was a preacher that the Holy Spirit guided Paul to write: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). You can't preach what you do not know. I don't care how many OTHER books you read, but be sure to read the BIBLE first! Commentaries were written by men, and may be wrong: but the BIBLE is always right! Books of sermons, sermon outlines, and other helps should be used only as AIDS to understanding, arranging, and teaching what GOD says. Become thoroughly familiar with the Bible --every book, every chapter, every verse, every sentence, and every word --to the extent of your ability! You cannot preach "the word" if you do not study THE WORD! Make the Bible your daily study.

My father, the late Gus Nichols, averaged studying the Bible five hours a day for fifty-seven years. In the 1930's a young preacher named Franklin Camp heard my father state that he was studying five hours a day, and brother Camp decided he needed to study more than that-- so he has averaged SIX hours a day for fifty years! During a revival in another state my father was asked to recommend a preacher for a place to move. Dad reviewed the frequent moves the man had made, preaching in each place for about one or two years. The only criticism he had ever heard of the man was that his preaching was shallow; so Dad proposed to ask the

elders where he then was preaching to keep the man, PROVIDED he would solemnly promise to STUDY at least three hours a day. The matter was thoroughly discussed with the elders, who agreed to keep him --and he was still there several years later! Study will crop out in improved preaching and teaching! "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;" --and look at the result: "that thy profiting" (A.S.V.: "progress") "may appear to all" (I Timothy 4:15). Yes, Preacher, give Bible STUDY top priority! If you allow the brethren, or your family, to make an 'errand boy' out of you, your preaching and teaching will suffer. Study! Study! Study!

(2) Live within your income. Nationwide, as a 'class,' preachers (of all denominations) have a very disgraceful image, with a credit-rating recently down at (or near) the bottom! This is inexcusable! [I once told a banker that if he would not put all PREACHERS in the same 'class' with 'dead-beats,' I would not put all BANKERS in the same class with Bert Lance!] Preachers (as well as all other Christians) should live by the "Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12). Most creditors will be lenient with one who is in debt to them if they feel the debtor is being honest with them. If one foresees he will not be able to meet any payment when due, he should contact the creditor and ask for thirty days' grace, or negotiate agreeable arrangements to pay what he can when he can. Never give any creditor grounds to suspect that you do not intend to pay him.

Try to save something out of each pay-check; --but at least, don't spend MORE than you earn. Both husband and wife should work out a budget, and learn to live by it. If a preacher is not yet married, I advise him to choose a wife who (among other things) can help him live honorably within his means --not one who throws more out the back door than he can bring in the front door! It is dishonest and dishonorable to make financial (or other) commitments which you cannot reasonably expect to fulfill. God still says, "Owe no man anything..." (Romans 13:8), and to "Provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (II Corinthians 8:21).

(3) Keep your hands off the girls and women. Keep your heart pure (Matthew 5:8), and this will help you to keep your life and character clean and above reproach. In this age of lowered moral and ethical standards, it is imperative that preachers (especially) live right before God and man. One's conduct reveals what is in his heart, for "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Jesus himself said, "Out of the heart proceedeth... adulteries, fornications..." et al (Matthew 15:19).

Specifically, I caution "young"

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The Christian's Marching Orders

The Bible often describes the church as the army of God, and Christians as soldiers therein. The conquering Christ, seated on his white horse of victory and armed with the two edged sword of truth (Revelation 19:11-14) leads forth his warriors. The Christian's battle armor is displayed in Ephesians 6:10-18. We are charged to "fight the good fight of faith" (I



John Waddey

Timothy 6:12). The Great Commission of Jesus provides our marching orders. Our General said "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). Matthew's account says "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them . . . and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

I. We are to Go. This term suggests action, direction and motivation. It is the

opposite of stay, lie, or sit. The idea of missions, of evangelistic outreach, is inherent in the word. A non-evangelistic church or disciple is a misnomer. For the bee colony to survive, the worker bees must go and seek the pollen. The church cannot survive if her members choose not to go teach the gospel!

II. We Must Go Into All the World. Christ claims all nations as his domain. He acknowledges no national boundaries. When we limit our work to people of our own nation we defeat the plan of Jesus. God's church is a universal kingdom. The ancient prophets spoke of "all nations" flowing into it (Isaiah 2:2). We must not be intimidated by forbidding barriers of government. Even those nations which are enemies to us must have the gospel preached to their people. Pagan kingdoms built upon the false systems such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam may not want the gospel; but our king says go to them.

III. Jesus says Go to Every Creature. Matthew's words mean to every ethnic group (Matthew 28:19). None are too rich or too poor for us to approach. None are too good or too bad. No race may be excluded. No enemy may be by-passed. This aspect of the commission has been and continues to be most difficult for us to fulfill. Racial prejudice

among Christians frustrates the Lord's wish. Congregations find it easy to concentrate on "their own kind" of people. God is no respecter of persons, nor can be the troops of his great army. "In every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

IV. We are privileged to Go with Christ. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). By ourselves we are nothing. All human help has its limitations. Jeremiah said it thusly: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man . . ." (17:5). We follow Christ as sheep follow their shepherd (John 10:4). Following Christ "all things work together for good" to his soldiers (Romans 8:28). With God on our side, "who is against us?" (Romans 8:31). Under his leadership and protection, "we are more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). We can fight any battle, face any foe, for he "himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." So, that with good courage we say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: what shall man do unto me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

V. We are to Go with the Gospel (Mark 16:15). This is the only message with adequate power to save men's souls and to defeat the forces of sin and error (Romans 1:16). It is a tried and proven weapon, having been tested for some 2,000 years! (I Corinthians 15:1-4). Thus we do not seek to preach nor impose our personal opinions or traditions. We leave at home our American culture. We cast aside as worthless, the doctrines originated by men, or a social gospel that neglects the eternal soul while ministering to the outward man that is soon to perish (II Corinthians 4:16-18). We preach Christ and him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2).

VI. We Go to Make Disciples for Jesus (Matthew 28:18). We are in the teaching business. Our warfare is not a carnal one. Our weapons are not missiles, tanks, or guns. Our objective is to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Our weapon is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). Our strategy for victory is to teach all men the good news about Jesus, his death and resurrection. In this lifting up the Christ, we will draw all men unto him (John 12:32). No matter how nice our buildings, how refined our preachers, how exciting our programs of fellowship, if we are not teaching sinners the gospel, and Christians their duty, we are poor soldiers!

VII. We Go with Great Confidence. Jesus promised to be with us always (Matthew 28:20). We can count on his help and assistance as did the apostles (Mark 16:19-20). With such promises we can "do all things in him that strengtheneth" us (Philippians 4:13). Satan and his armies will be routed. The cause of our King will prevail. With the blood-washed throng we will soon sing the song of victory: "Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigneth" (Revelation 19:6).

To share in the victory celebration then, each must be willing to "suffer hardship . . . as a good soldier of Christ Jesus . . . that (he) may please him who enrolled (him) as a soldier" (II Timothy 2:4). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation . . ." (Mark 16:15).

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Advice To Preachers

Continued From Page 2

preachers to guard against sexual impurity. Youth is the time when physical powers are developing, and when curiosity is at its peak. It is easy for young men [and women] unintentionally, and perhaps unaware, to become excited and aroused sexually. Neither the young man nor the young woman may realize (at the time) that one step of petting leads to another. Perhaps neither of them INTENDED for his/her caresses to involve them in the sin of adultery (or fornication); but after whetting their sexual appetites, neither wanted to [nor knew where to] stop—nor was willing to say to the other, "Stop!" The best time to set limits is in advance. This is done by firmly resolving to save yourself sexually for your wedding night.

So, I say again: Keep your hands off the girls and women. Few things will destroy a preacher's self-respect, nor kill a preacher's image, nor undermine his influence in the church and throughout the community, more quickly (or more completely) than 'zipper trouble!' So, in the Holy Spirit's words, "Flee fornication" (I Corinthians 6:18) --run away from the temptation! Avoid situations where temptations might arise.

--Oh, I know: God does not have a double standard: a high one for preachers, and a lower one for other Christians! God expects all Christians to live right all the time. And, I realize, too, that by grace through faith one who falls into temptation and yields, even committing fornication, can be saved. After naming "fornicators," "adulterers," et al, the apostle Paul wrote: "And such were" --past tense!-- "some of you: but ye are" --present tense!-- "washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11)! However, such a one cannot order from a catalog, nor go down to the bargain basement and buy him a GOOD NAME, to replace the one he has tarnished and damaged!

Nor will forty or fifty years of penitent living in righteousness cause even the most faithful brethren to forget just ONE episode of immorality!

To the entire congregation at Thessalonica the Holy Spirit directed this message: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you" [surely this includes the preacher!] "should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence" [or, "not in the passion of lust" --A.S.V.], "even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:3-7).

Generally speaking, brethren all over the country honor preachers. They give us the finest chair in the house, the best bedroom, the most delicious meal, served in their china and silver on a lace table-cloth with their finest grace and charm. Any preacher who betrays such trust by writing him a worthless check, or who betrays such confidence by robbing his wife or daughter of her virtue, is lower down than any snake that ever trailed his belly in the dust!

To preachers today, therefore, the apostle Paul's words to Timothy seem especially appropriate: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine" [A.S.V.: "teaching"]; "continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16). "Keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22).

Then, may our God give you "good success" (Joshua 1:8) in the work to which "he hath called you by [the] gospel" (II Thessalonians 2:14).

Why Did I Change Churches?

Continued from page 2

presented for or against any position -- whether it was the preacher, elders, teenagers or any others; emphasis was placed on Biblical authority! I presented what could probably be regarded as "standard" Baptist arguments, and all were answered unashamedly with: "what does the Bible say?" That stance impressed me. It was that point above all others that convinced me of my error.

Looking back on my time as a Baptist, I

believe I could classify myself as having been as sincere, knowledgeable and devout as any in a denomination could be. To attest my sincerity, I attended all activities of the church, taught a Bible class, sang in the choir, sang in a youth group that performed at functions of various churches, organized youth revivals, went door-knocking, and would "testify" of my conversion experience whenever asked to do so. Could any question

my sincerity?

As for being knowledgeable, consider that before ever talking to a member of the church I had come to realize Sunday is not the Sabbath, and "sabbath keeping" was at the very least questionable. I had also questioned points such as salvation outside the church, and if it is consistent with the Bible for so many churches to exist.

I present none of these facts in an effort to brag on myself. It would certainly be inappropriate for a Christian to be boastful of his former error. I mention these things only to show that I was sincere, knowledgeable, and devout, and therefore was worthy of the fellowship some Christians are willing to extend today.

The problem with my former condition is that I was not walking "in the light, as he is in the light" (I John 1:7).

Rather I could more accurately be described as walking in the light, as "I" was in the light.

The matter rests heavily upon that which I have already identified as having convinced me of the error of denominationalism: Respect for the authority of the sacred scriptures.

Jesus said "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Clearly, scriptural authority provides the basis of that truth Christ spoke of so highly. Truth is not one's own "version" of truth, nor one's "understanding" of truth. Did Uzzah's own concept of right and wrong justify his actions (II Samuel 6) in defiance of the word of God? Did the light Saul of Tarsus believed himself to be walking in (Acts 26), justify his stand against the truth of God? We must never permit ourselves to regard scriptural authority as a small matter.

As I write these words I can say without reservation that I am "proud" to be (in a righteous sense) just a Christian. Included in this thought is the fact that I am "proud" to be out of denominationalism. Through teaching the word of God I have been able to persuade a few others of the error involved in joining themselves to man-made ideas. I plan to continue to do this as long as I am able. I pray to God that brethren will cease to hinder such efforts by telling those in error that they are all right, and that they can be fellowshiped as they are.

—Rt. 1 Box 215-B, Ackerman, MS 39735.

'Daddy, Have I Ever Seen A Christian?'

A little boy once asked his dad what a "Christian" was. The dad replied that a Christian is a person who loves and obeys God. He loves friends and neighbors and expresses his appreciation for other Christians. He even loves his enemies and prays for them that they might be blessed. He prays often and blesses God's holy name in reverent worship. He is kind, considerate,



Edsel Bursleson

gentle, courteous in speech, and in his selfless attitude. He lives a life that is pure and holy and Christian-like through and through. The little boy thought for a moment and then asked another question: "Daddy, have I ever seen one?"

Most of the New Testament is instruction designed to help us know how to live so as to bring honor to God. How sad that so many are "hearers" but not "doers" of the word. For this reason many little boys could very well ask, "Have I ever seen a Christian?" 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).

Someone told of a good brother who was in a field when a neighbor came over to talk about insect trouble. The neighbor was very anxious to get his plowing done, but he took time to visit.

After a while the neighbor said, "I hear you are having a good interest at church." "Fair," the brother replied. "You say that the church is the only one mentioned in the Bible," the neighbor asked. "Yes, Sir, it is," replied the brother proudly. "You must be very happy to belong to such an important church," suggested the neighbor. "Well, yes, I am," the brother replied.

"Sometime I would like to go with you and learn more about the church," offered the neighbor. "Fine," said the brother, "I'll be glad to take you any time." "Isn't tonight mid-week meeting night for you folks?" asked the interested friend. "Yes, it is," was the brother's answer, "but I CAN'T go tonight; I've got too much work to do."

The friend said, "Well, I don't reckon your church is any more important than any other. WE don't think one has to belong to the church or attend its services to be saved; and if YOUR work is more important than that of the church, I reckon your church isn't very important either."

As the neighbor walked away the brother started his tractor, jerking it into gear, and muttered something about narrow-mindedness. No, he didn't attend the service that night nor has he been able to bring his neighbor with him since. Nor does his neighbor seem interested in talking religion with him any more.

—420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Short Sermons

There is no limit to what a good man can do if he does not care who gets the credit.

If religion has not changed you, you need to change your religion.

There is no good way to be bad and no bad way to be good.

Soft words may appease an angry man; bitter words never will.

Snobbery is the pride of those who are not sure of their position.

Anger is a wind which blows out the lamp of the mind.

The excellence of many discourses consists in their brevity.

He lives in true repose who bridles his passions.

The Church Of Christ Is Different

Continued from page 1

man. No passage of Scripture teaches that the Pope is the head of the Lord's church. Book, chapter, verse please!

(4) Jesus purchased his church with his own blood (Acts 20:28; I Peter 1:18-19; I Corinthians 6:15-20). Romanism and denominationalism were not purchased by the precious blood of Christ. Human institutions are not covered by Christ's blood.

(5) Jesus is the Saviour of his body which is the church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:24). Jesus does not add unsaved people (those who have obeyed commandments of men) to his church; nor does he add any men to human churches (Acts 2:41, 47).

(6) Verily, Jesus adds the saved to his church (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47). Among denominationalism, "joining the church of one's choice," is a very prominent doctrine; but no one can

"join" the Lord's church. Why? Because, when one obeys the gospel of Christ, the Lord adds that one to his church.

(7) How can an honest soul determine, in the wilderness of denominationalism, which church is the Scriptural church? Four cardinal points must be considered: (1) Is the church scriptural in origin? (2) Is it scriptural in doctrine? (3) Is it scriptural in name? (4) Is it scriptural in practice? If the church of which you are a member does not meet this criterion, then you belong to the wrong church. You are respectfully requested to read your own Bible, believe what it teaches, obey its commands, and live faithfully according to the demands of God Almighty, if you would inherit heaven. Will you do it today?

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



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Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

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Are We Afraid To Obey?

Attitudes concerning church discipline have greatly changed. The question is, "Why?" Is it because of a better understanding of God's word? Or is it from fear of what might happen? Has God's word changed? -- We know it has not, and will not.

Church discipline: what is it? Is it an option we have been given by God in conducting the oversight of his family?



Timothy Kidwell

Many treat it as such. Some ignore it completely. A close look at God's word should give us the correct answer.

First, is discipline an option? Paul said, "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 they received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). There can be no misunderstanding of this passage. In this particular situation a person is to be disciplined through withdrawal. This is the last resort in God's plan of discipline.

Before this drastic action occurs in the case of a personal offense against us, we are to talk to our brother (Matthew 18:15-17). But are we even doing this much? When our brethren "err from the truth" (James 5:19), are we getting involved? Jude said that some would be "snatched out of the fire," which means that someone helped them out of a life of sin. We are commanded to "restore such a one" (Galatians 6:1). Also "if any one among you wanders from the truth, and some one turns him back, let him know that who ever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20

R.S.V.). These scriptures teach us that we have a responsibility to try and bring the erring person back before we "note that man, that ye have no company with," him (II Thessalonians 3:14, A.S.V.).

What is God's purpose for his plan of discipline? Paul tells us that it causes the person to become ashamed, and will save his soul (II Thessalonians 3:14, I Corinthians 5:1-5).

Who should be disciplined? The Holy Spirit lists several: covetous (Romans 1:29; I Timothy 6:10); liars (Revelation 21:8); immoral (I Corinthians 5:1-5; Matthew 19:9); heretics (Titus 3:10); those who cause division (Romans 16:17); busy-bodies, tattlers, backbiters (I Timothy 5:13; I Peter 4:15); those who use foul speech (Matthew 12:36-37; Colossians 3:8); those who walk disorderly (II Thessalonians 3:6); the non-penitent brother (Matthew 18:15-17); and those who forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25). How many of these categories are being disciplined in the church?

It amazes me what our brethren can sometimes rationalize! Concerning those who are forsaking the assembly, some say that we can not withdraw from these people since they have already withdrawn from us. Where did this reasoning develop? There is not even a single scripture that can be interpreted to support this attitude. Some, to soothe their conscience, will go as far as calling or writing the erring to let them know that if they don't come back their name will be dropped from the regular membership roll. What a "cop-out!" This doesn't even vaguely represent the plan God has given us!

Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Is Hebrews 10:25 a command? Are we commanded to withdraw from such a one? Paul said, "We command you" to "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly" (II Thessalonians 3:6). A person could not be more obvious in his disorderly walk than in forsaking the assembly. Therefore such are subject to God's plan of discipline. Besides, these

people must be made known publicly (marked, Romans 16:17) as someone who professes one thing and does another.

God's word teaches a plan of discipline against the ungodly. Failure to follow this plan violates God's word. Those responsible for this failure are subject to corrective discipline.

To practice discipline can cause trials to befall the church. Fear has plagued the church leadership from past experiences in which lawsuits entered into the picture. It has been called an infringement of one's private life by some courts of our land. But in the words of Peter I say, "We ought to obey God rather than me" (Acts 5:29).

There may be an easy way, and there is a right way. Which are you following?

—P.O. Box 192, Mountain Home, AR 72653.

Magnets Won't Attract Rusty Nails

A strong horseshoe magnet may be held over an old rust-eaten, shapeless nail without meeting any response. A bright, ringing nail will leap to the magnet, attract another, and through it draw another until several are attached.

Just so, a rusty, unpolished, corroded "Christian," cranky, defiled, and selfish, has very little attraction; and through him the power of Christ to win the world will not flow.

A Hindu woman was converted to

Continued on page 4



Edsel Burleson



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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Single Yet Happy

Many moderns, struggling to survive in the aftermath of marriage failure or death of a mate ask, "Is there life after love?" The answer is yes --but only if you will allow it to be.

God endowed mankind with the remarkable ability to determine to a large degree whether or not to be happy. Solomon put it in these words: "as he thinketh within himself, so is he"

(Proverbs 23:7). Paul found contentment even in the misery of captivity (Philippians 4:13). Sadly, many folk punish themselves mercilessly in the aftermath of death, or divorce. The following thoughts may be of help to some of those who walk that lonely road.

1. Unresolved guilt is a heavy burden which exacts a heavy toll. If you caused the marriage to fail, you sinned! You need forgiveness from your former mate, children, and most of all, from God. Fortunately, mercy is extended to the penitent. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Express your repentance to your estranged mate. It may be too late to restore the marriage; but at least you can go to sleep with a clear conscience.

2. Claim the gift God has given you. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). With God's help you not only can survive, but you can even be happy again.

3. Reject the myths that plague the broken hearted.

a. It is a myth that a single person is incomplete or only half a person. Jesus was the ideal man; he lived



John Waddey

Again this week I quote Adam Clarke's definition or description of God: "The eternal, independent, and self-existing Being; the Being whose purposes and actions spring from himself, without foreign motive or influence; he who is absolute in dominion, the most pure, the most simple, the most spiritual of all essences; infinitely benevolent, beneficent, true, and holy; the cause of all being, the upholder of all things; infinitely happy, because infinitely perfect; and eternally self-sufficient, needing nothing that he has made; illimitable in his immensity, inconceivable in his mode of existence, and indescribable in his essence; known fully only to himself, because an infinite mind can only be fully comprehended by itself. In a word, a Being who, from his infinite wisdom, can not err or be deceived, and from his infinite goodness, can do nothing but what is eternally just, and right, and kind."

There is one --and ONLY ONE-- divine nature, or DEITY --the name of which is "GOD." Yet there are three beings or personages of whom this divine nature is characteristic. These comprise the 'family' of deity, or divinity, and thrice are called "the Godhead" in the King James Version (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9).

In this 'divine nature' there is clearly the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as three 'subjects,' or 'persons.' Each of the three has equally, and in common with the other two, the nature --and perfection-- of supreme DIVINITY. After writing by inspiration that "to us that believe there is BUT one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him," the apostle Paul added: "and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Corinthians 8:6). In this text two of the three members of the God-family are identified: the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Numerous texts mention the third person of the Godhead --the Holy Spirit-- along with these two, as we shall see.

Godhead In The Old Testament

The God who created the heaven and the earth was-- and is!-- a unity in plurality, for note the plural pronouns used by him: "And God said, Let US make man, in OUR image, after OUR likeness . . ." (Genesis 1:26). All who claim to believe the Bible acknowledge that God created everything; and in connection with God the Father, the third person in the Godhead (the Holy Spirit, or the "Spirit of God") is mentioned as being present --and being active-- in creation (Genesis 1:2). After Adam sinned, "The Lord God said,



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Three Persons In The Godhead



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Behold, the man is become as one of US . . ." (Genesis 3:22). The use of the plural pronoun ("US") proves that at that time there were more than one person in the Godhead!

At the tower of Babel, "The Lord said, . . . Let US go down and there confound their language . . ." (Genesis 11:6-7). This is not a sole personage of Deity talking to himself! But one member of the Godhead is speaking to the other two, which proves a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

Isaiah wrote, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?" (Isaiah 6:8). The singular pronoun ("I") shows the unity of the Godhead; and the plural pronoun ("US") shows that there is more than one personage of deity.

Christ In Creation

Let it be observed that the second person in the Godhead is specifically stated to have had a part in creation. Jesus Christ is the "Word" that "was made flesh" (John 1:14), and became "the only begotten of the Father." Of him we read: "In the beginning . . ." (that puts him back at the time of creation, Genesis 1:1) "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). The personage who in the New Testament is known as the Son not only existed at the creation --he was active, or had a part, in creation!

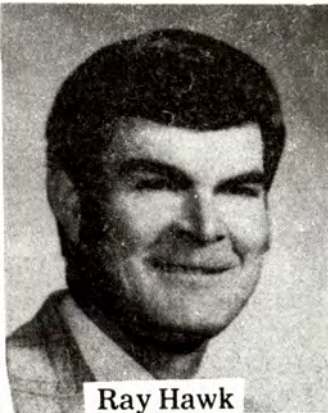
Jesus said that the Father loved him "before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24), at which time he was "in the form of God" (Philippians 2:5-11). Before he was "made in the likeness of men," he existed with, and had glory with the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5). To us, in "these last days," God has spoken by his Son, "by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). This Son, the second member of the Godhead, was called by the first person, "GOD" (Hebrews 1:5-8); yet in the same paragraph he is called "my SON" (verse 5).

Of "his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13) we read again: "Who 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: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist: and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:16-20).

[Next week we shall see further evidence that there are three divine personages in the "Godhead."]

Subjective Integrity

The magazine *Integrity* has been around for seventeen years. From Volume one to seventeen one sees a progressive drift from biblical precepts to a denominational subjectivism. The staff and writers of the magazine have their brand of "integrity," for they make little pretense of following the old paths as they chart new courses to mold the church into their own image. There is however, no resemblance between *Integrity* magazine and biblical "integrity."



Ray Hawk

In the January/February 1986 issue, we are treated to articles on the church. Laquita M. Higgs opens the issue with an article, "The Vital Connection." She has many good things to say, but before she ends her article, she states,

"We must seriously ask our head to guide in all areas of our body life, and we can expect to receive wisdom and guidance from him. If our prayer is real communion with him, he can use that prayer time as an opportunity to speak to our hearts and to put thoughts in our minds. "After much prayer for guidance concerning their finances, the elders of a large church in Oklahoma once decided that the Lord would have them abolish the annual budget for the following year, trusting the Lord to provide the financial needs of the church. Some of the congregation thought it very foolish, but the elders, confident that they were in the Lord's will, proceeded without the planned budget. The church prospered as never before. Such things happen when we pray, listen, and obey" (Pages 4, 5).

It is amazing how false teachers can tell you in one breath that one must follow the written word, and in the next, that we are to listen to voices other than the Bible which are supposed to come directly from Jesus. How do we know these voices are from Jesus? Because these teachers say so! How are false teachers so successful in getting followers? The sheep follow their voices rather than what is written in scripture!

In the next article, "Mission of the Body - Building Itself Up," by Dean Thoroman, we are informed,

"Another important function in the body that is expected to build itself up is that of the prophets. Essentially, a prophet is one who speaks for God, who unfolds the mind of God for the purpose of stimulating the body of God's people to action. It is the prophet's role to interpret the truth delivered through the apostles - to explain it so clearly and compellingly that hearers will not only understand but will be motivated to respond . . . As previously noted with regard to the function of the apostles, it is an error to believe that the prophet's role has ceased" (Page 6).

This is not to say that brother Thoroman does not say some good things in his article; but alas it is much like a good, cool glass of sweet milk laced with cyanide!

Hoy Ledbetter treats us to a third article, "Problems with Uniqueness," in which he

says:

"At some point in our history our focus shifted from trying to unite the Christians in the various churches to defending our right to exist as a separate denomination. Knowing deep in our hearts that if we were basically like everybody else we would have no sufficient reason to maintain a separate brotherhood to which other Christians could be converted, we began to emphasize peculiarities which, instead of separating the church from the world, separated us from other Christians who shared our conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Page 1)

The last article is by W. Robert Palmer, minister of the West Lansing, Michigan Christian Church, writing on "Where Do We Go From Here?" His article does not surprise us; but where *Integrity* magazine has gone in seventeen years does. It is also upsetting that

others in the churches of Christ want to walk down that same road, a road that speaks of unity, but is veiled in compromise; a highway supposedly paved with love, but actually embedded with denominational trappings.

How sad that the church is so divided when it needs to be united and stand against this new threat. We weaken ourselves by creating tensions over matters that will be forgotten in a decade or two. We inflate our egos by championing causes which make heaven weep and hell ring with laughter. We are making history, but look at the history we are making! How can a house that is so badly divided stand against the onslaught of the new denominationalism that is overtaking the church? We are at the crossroads. Let us put aside our petty wrangling and stand with BIBLICAL INTEGRITY against those who desire to make us into another denomination called the Christian Church.

—39 Webb Drive, Jackson, TN 38301.

Single Yet Happy

Continued from page 2

the perfect life; he is the example for all to follow -- yet he was single; and so was Paul. Our society, intoxicated with romance, has concluded that a single soul must be a failure, or a case for pity. Not necessarily so. God's child need be neither. Whether married or single, we can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

b. It is a myth that we can love only one person in a lifetime. We learn to love a person; and we can learn to live without that person. Admittedly, this will be harder for some than for others. But every person who has lost a dear friend or loved one can attest to the fact that one can survive, and the wounded heart will heal. Of course, one has to want to survive and be healed. It is a fact that a person can grieve himself to the point of illness, or even death.

c. It is a myth that one cannot live without a mate. Our society has convinced most people that man is so controlled by sexual passions that he cannot survive without a partner. But God asks only that which we can give. He commands that we "abstain from fornication" (I Thessalonians 4:3). Made in God's image, the human mind has power over the fleshly desires. We are not animals driven by a mating urge, nor machines that must perform a certain way. If we never find a proper mate, or if we lose ours, we yet can live a holy life of continence. Remember that thousands have done this successfully before, and even now there are numerous Christians who live alone in purity. God "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" to bear (I Corinthians 10:13).

4. Accept your situation. If singleness is your lot, accept that reality, and live your life to its fullest potential. If you are widowed, don't live in the past. 'Play the hand' that life has dealt you. We know not the future; there may be another person for you to love in marriage in the days ahead. You will be more likely to attract that person if you are living your life to its full potential. Few people

are drawn to a "living" corpse.

If your divorce were for reasons other than adultery of your mate, you must accept the fact that a second marriage is forbidden while your former mate lives (Matthew 19:19). Don't fight against God's will in this matter. As in Saul's case, "it is hard to kick against the goad" (Acts 26:14). One only adds grief to sorrow when he ignores this prohibition and rebels against the will of heaven.

Remember that some things are worse than being alone. It is worse to be in an unscriptural marriage, than to be alone and right with God! It is better to be righteously single and happy, than to be yoked in a marriage to a miserable person who poisons the relationship and imposes a slow death on your spirit.

Life is not always "fair," nor always what we prefer; but the Christian faces it and is triumphant! -- because Christ has promised, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear . . .'" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

My Task

To love some one more dearly every day.
To help a wondering child to find its way
To ponder over a noble thought and pray.
And smile when evening falls -
This is my task.

To follow truth as blind men seek for light.
To do my best from dawn to day til night.
To keep my heart lit for His holy sight,
And answer when He calls -
This is my task

And then my Savior by and by to meet.
When faith hath made her task on earth
complete.
And lay my homage at the Master's feet
Within the jasper walls -
This crowns my task

—Maude Louise Ray

Snake-Handling Preacher Does

We have two excerpts taken from *The Birmingham News* and *The Birmingham Post-Herald*, August 20, 1985. We shall quote from these and offer some comments as we deem appropriate. We do not wish to be unfair in our remarks, but we shall speak to the point.



W. A. Holley

The story told is tragic, indeed! Had the preacher and the church for which he preached known the truth of God's holy Word, this situation would never have happened. Ignorance can be so devastating. Almighty God wants all men to know his truth (John 8:30-32; I Corinthians 10:1; II Timothy 2:15).

The dateline of the article is, Greenville, Tenn. (AP). It says: "A relative of a man bitten while handling snakes in a religious ceremony says she begged him to go to the hospital but he refused, believing God would not let him die." As a matter of fact, God had nothing to do with this whole situation. He neither authorized such a rash act, nor did he save the preacher from death!

"Charles Prince did die Monday after fighting off the effects of the snake's venom for 36 hours. The North Carolina baitshop owner was bitten several times Saturday in the small Apostolic Church of God near this eastern Tennessee mountain city." The article under review continues: "He held (his faith) to the end. It was a horrible death. There was not a more honest person."

Here is an example of a person who had zeal but without knowledge (Romans 10:1-4). The preacher "held (his faith) to the end;" but his faith could not heal him! Miraculous faith does not now exist (I Corinthians 12:1, 8-10 with 13:8-13). These verses, and many others, show that miracles, having fulfilled their divine purpose, have ceased. We are sure that the preacher suffered "a horrible death," because he refused proper medical treatment which should have been administered (Luke 5:31-32). "There was not a more honest man," the statement reads. But one can be "honest" and "sincere" and, at the same time, be honestly and sincerely mistaken. Saul of Tarsus was honest and sincere while he persecuted Jesus Christ, but he was wrong, nevertheless! (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; II Timothy 1:12).

If one takes strychnine, thinking that he is taking aspirin, death follows just the same—regardless of how honest one may be!

"Prince, who handled snakes as a sign of religious faith, slipped in and out of consciousness until he died." And more: "Prince was handling several snakes during the service when a four-foot rattler bit him three or four times on the hand . . . Prince continued with the service, and drank strychnine after he was bitten . . ."

Handling snakes "as a sign of religious faith," cost the preacher his life. And to add insult to injury, he drank strychnine—a deadly poison. The Lord God Almighty never commanded any one to "show his faith" by handling snakes and drinking strychnine. Those who use Mark 16:17-18 to justify such

foolishness, do so through ignorance. These verses apply only to the Apostolic Age—to the miraculous period, before the New Testament was committed to writing; and these verses are never to be applied to present-day situations.

The miraculous signs which accompanied believers of the first century were bestowed on others than the apostles through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-6). Although Philip was miraculously endowed, through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 6:6), he was not an apostle; he, therefore had no power to transmit miraculous gifts to others. Since all the apostles are dead, Charles Prince, the preacher, had no miraculous powers which enabled him to perform miracles.

James 5:14-15 offers no support to such men who believe as Charles Prince believed. This passage has special application to the period of miraculous gifts in the church and is limited to that period. If we assume that these verses are applicable today, if the sick called for the elders as directed here, and if the elders did their duty, **no one in the church would ever die!** This conclusion follows irresistibly, as night follows day. But, in spite of all that might be said concerning the text under consideration, Hebrews 9:27 teaches that ". . . it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Does the Bible contradict itself? Certainly not.

It is a sin for any man to tempt Almighty God. The Devil wanted Jesus Christ to show himself through some spectacular stunt, thus gaining some cheap publicity or attention. Satan carried Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple. He said, "If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down . . . Jesus replied, Thou shalt not make trial ("tempt," K.J.V.) of the Lord thy God. Please consider Matthew 4:1-11. It is a sin for one to put himself in dangerous situations, hoping (?) for a miraculous

deliverance. This is exactly what the snake-handling and strychnine-drinking preacher did. Jesus refused to do in principle what Charles Prince willfully did! All who willfully endanger themselves without any command of God or call of divine duty, "make trial" of (or "tempt") GOD ALMIGHTY. Jesus would have become a sinner had he yielded to Satan's trials!! (Hebrews 4:14-16).

In the excerpt from which we are quoting, the death of this unfortunate preacher is explained on this wise: "It was the Lord's will; we're just put here for so long a time. When the Lord gets ready to take us away, we're gone." We shall propose a few questions: (1) Did the preacher have no responsibility for his foolish acts? (2) Does the Bible teach what the length of one's life is predestinated and foreordained from the foundation of the world? If so, how could one prolong one's life on earth (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-4)? (3) Must God be blamed for man's rashness (Ecclesiastes 5:2)? (4) Is God responsible for all suicides? for those who deliberately step into the path of an oncoming eighteen-wheeler? for those who willfully handle rattlesnakes and drink strychnine?? (5) Is God liable for the health of one who refuses proper medical treatment (Luke 5:31-32)? The answer to these questions is a resounding "NO, NO, NO!"

Just one more thought: There is such a thing as criminal negligence. "His wife was there. He had made her promise if he ever got unconscious she would not let them take him to a doctor." This statement is an example of a rash promise. It is a sin to make such promises or vows. Matthew 14:1-12 contains a much-needed lesson here. Herod's rash promise cost John the Baptist his life. Do not be a party to the sins of others (I Timothy 5:22; Ephesians 5:11).

Dear Reader, take warning -- learn and be wise.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Magnets Won't Attract Rusty Nails

Continued from page 1

Christianity by hearing the gospel. She suffered much persecution from her husband. One day another Christian asked her, "When your husband is angry and treats you badly, what do you do?" She replied, "I cook his food better; I try to sweep the floor cleaner; I speak mildly, love him tenderly, and show him that when I became a Christian, I became a better wife and a better mother for his children."

The husband could withstand the preaching of others, but he could not withstand the Christian life of his wife. He soon became a Christian with her.

Several years ago a preacher was in London preaching in Hyde Park when a man in the crowd interrupted him. "We got nothin' agin' Jesus of Nazareth," said the interrupter, "but we have something agin' you Christians, because you ain't up to sample."

Real Christianity described in the Bible is (1) to grow as Jesus grew (Luke 2:52); (2) to think as Jesus thought (Philippians 2:5); (3) to obey as Jesus obeyed (Hebrews 5:8-9); (4) to give as Jesus gave (Matthew 20:28); (5) to love as Jesus loved (John 13:34-35); (6) to forgive as Jesus forgave (Colossians 3:13; Luke 23:34); (7) to pray as Jesus prayed (Matthew 6:9); and (8) to seek the lost as

Jesus did (Luke 19:10).

Mrs. J. F. Moser wrote these thought-provoking words:

Would I be called a "Christian,"
If everybody knew
My secret thoughts and feelings,
And everything I do?
Or could they see the likeness
Of Christ in me each day?
Or could they hear him speaking
In every word I say?

Would I be called a "Christian,"
If everyone should know
That I am found in places
Where Jesus would not go?
Or could they hear his echo
In every song I sing?
In eating, drinking, dressing,
Could they see Christ my King?

Would I be called a "Christian,"
If judged by what I read?
By all my recreation,
And every thought and deed?
Could I be counted Christ-like
As I now work and pray,
Unselfish, kind, forgiving
To others every day?

—420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.



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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Biblical Interpretation

The Importance Of Our Study

D. R. Dungan, in his book *Hermeneutics*, defines his subject as "the science of interpretation." One who is interested in philosophy is a lover of words and is dedicated to the study of them. An exegete is one who tries to draw out of a text all that the writer put into it. Our purpose will be to learn to effectively practice all of these forms of study with the greatest of books, the Bible.



Gary C. Hampton

Ezra set his heart on seeking the law of the Lord, doing it and teaching those of Israel to do the same (Ezra 7:10). Some things remain hidden, or secret; but those things which are revealed are uncovered so that man can do God's will (Deuteronomy 29:29). Scripture is not the product of man's imagination, but is God's spoken word as revealed by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16-17). To understand this revealed will, man must study (II Timothy 2:15). We should especially notice the careful, respectful attention given to the study of God's word during Nehemiah's and Ezra's day (Nehemiah 8:1-8). David describes (Psalms 1:1-2) the blessed man as one who meditates on the law of God day and night.

The importance of knowing and obeying God's will is vividly portrayed in Abraham's conversation with the rich man in Luke 16. After realizing there was nothing that could be done to ease his own torment, the rich man asked that Lazarus be sent back to earth to warn his five brothers lest they join him in torments. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The rich man evidently did not think they would pay attention to the written word,

but did think they would heed the words of one returned from the dead. Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31, esp. 27-31). Friends, we must learn to get out of a passage all that God put into it so that we do not join the rich man in eternal suffering. God speaks to us only through his word.

A proper interpretation of the Bible could heal the divisions in the religious world. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They tried to place Jesus on the horns of a dilemma by telling of a woman who had married a man and then each of his six brethren, after her previous husband died. They asked Jesus whose wife she would be after the resurrection. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:23-29). The ridiculous nature of their question would have been obvious to them had they been better Bible students.

Of course, a proper understanding of the Bible is absolutely necessary for my salvation. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). It is the truth that must be known if a man would be set free (John 8:32). That truth is found in God's word (John 17:17). Writers like John wrote that we might know we have eternal life, and Peter assured his readers that if they developed the virtues he had listed they would never fall (I John 5:13; II Peter 1:10). Plainly, we need to learn how to better understand God's word.

THINGS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

Dungan lists some things that can help us understand the Bible. The first is common sense. Some verses are obviously talking about the same things, while others obviously cover different subjects. Included within this common sense should be the realization

that the Bible was written for the common man. God sent Jesus when all on earth was ready. A part of that readiness would seem to be the nearly universal usage of Koine Greek, the language of the common man (Ephesians 1:10). The Bible was not written in complex intellectual language, but in simple terms so that all could understand.

Second, believing the Bible is truly the word of God helps in understanding it. It is not impossible to understand the truth revealed in the Bible without such a belief, but one's attitude surely has tremendous effect. Belief that the Bible is God's word causes one to be reverent and more serious in study.

Third, one must be willing to work to understand the Bible. Timothy had known the scripture from the time of early childhood, yet Paul instructed him to study to be approved of God (II Timothy 3:15; 2:15). This suggests work that is ongoing throughout one's lifetime, instead of one-time study. The Bereans searched the scriptures "daily" to see if the word preached was God's word (Acts 17:11-12). Mary recognized the importance of hearing the Master and chose it over other things of lesser import (Luke 10:38-42).

Fourth, our understanding can be helped by a sincere desire to know the truth and obey its commands. In Matthew 13:10-17, Jesus' disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables. Jesus told them it was God's will that they should know these mysteries (verse 11). Remember, the gospel was a "mystery" in the Old Testament because it was not yet made known (compare verse 17; Romans 16:25; I Peter 1:10-12). Both the unbelieving Jews and Christ's disciples had been given the opportunity to see Christ's miracles and hear Christ's teaching. The unbelieving Jews saw the miracles, but refused to see the truth that Jesus is God's Son, thus wasted their opportunities and caused God to take away even the opportunities they had. The disciples

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Three Persons In The Godhead

(No. 2)

Last week we saw that God (the Father) had a part in creation (Genesis 1:1). But that he was not alone is evident from the fact that he used plural pronouns in referring to himself (Genesis 12:26; 3:22; 11:6-7; Isaiah 6:8). We saw that God (the Son) --who then was simply "the Word" (John 1:1-3, 14) but later became flesh, and was known as Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ-- also participated in creation (Colossians 1:16-20). The Holy Spirit (or, Spirit of God) also was present in creation (Genesis 1:2).



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Now let us read numerous passages where all three of these divine persons (or, personages) are mentioned in the same text.

All Three Mentioned

At Jesus' baptism, God the Father [one person] spoke from heaven, identifying as "my beloved Son" Jesus [the second person], who came up out of the water, upon whom the Spirit of God [the third person] descended like a dove (Matthew 3:16-17).

Jesus directed his apostles to teach all nations, "baptizing them in" (ASV: "into") "the name of the Father" [that is one person], "and of the Son" [that is a second person], "and of the Holy Ghost" [a third person] (Matthew 28:19).

Read thoughtfully John 14:16-17, where Jesus said: "And I" [that is one person] "will pray the Father" [that is a second person --for surely he would not pray to himself!!!], "and he shall give you another Comforter" [a third person], "that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth . . ." Note that while Jesus may have been a 'Comforter' to his disciples (John 14:1-3), the Holy Spirit is "another" --not the SAME-- "Comforter."

All three persons in the Godhead are mentioned again in this same chapter. Jesus said to his disciples: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost" [that is one person], "whom the Father" [another person] "will send in my" [a third person] "name . . ." (verse 26).

At Cornelius' home, Peter preached to the Gentiles that "God" [one person] "anointed Jesus" [a second person] "with the Holy Ghost" [a third person] (Acts 10:38).

Hear the apostle Paul: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake" [that is one person], "that ye strive together with me in your prayer to God" [there is the third person] "for me" (Romans 15:30).

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ"

[one person], "and the love of God" [a second person], "and the communion of the Holy Ghost" [the third person] "be with you all. Amen" (II Corinthians 13:14).

"There is one Spirit" [one person] . . . "One Lord" [a second person] . . . "One God and Father of all" [a third person] "who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:13) we read: "For through him" [one person], "we both have access by one Spirit" [another person] "unto the Father" [a third person] (Ephesians 2:18).

The apostle Peter wrote: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" [one person], "through sanctification of the Spirit" [a second person], "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" [a third person]: "Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (I Peter 1:2).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" [one person]. "Keep yourselves in the love of God" [another person], "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" [a third person] "unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21).

Do not ever make the mistake of saying that there are three Gods; but always recognize that the one --and only-- God of the Bible exists in three persons. All three of them are eternal, and all three of them are called "God." --Indeed, each of them possesses ALL the qualities and characteristics of deity described by Adam Clarke, which I quote again: "The eternal, independent, and self-existing Being; the Being whose purposes and actions spring from himself, without foreign motive or influence; he who is absolute in dominion, the most pure, the most simple, the most spiritual of all essences; infinitely benevolent, beneficent, true, and holy; the cause of all being, the upholder of all things; infinitely happy, because infinitely perfect; and eternally self-sufficient, needing nothing that he has made; illimitable in his immensity, inconceivable in his mode of existence, and indescribable in his essence; known fully only to himself, because an infinite mind can only be fully comprehended by itself. In a word, a Being who, from his infinite wisdom, can not err or be deceived, and from his infinite goodness, can do nothing but what is eternally just, and right, and kind."

It's All Up To You!

One of the most frightening warnings of the Master is found in the parable of the "Vine and the Branches." Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2).



Edsel Burleson

An unwillingness to assume tasks, or not getting around to accomplishing those we have accepted, or deciding someone else will do it, these are attitudes far too common among us. The fruit on another branch will not cause the Lord to give approval to us.

Someone has written this thought-provoking rhyme:

An old man sat by the open fire, and dreamed the years away;

While outside in the battle of life, many perished in the toils of day.

He never, never did any good; nor did he ever do any wrong;

He just sat by the open fire; and dreamed the whole day long.

Now, he's left a vacant chair, and they say he's gone up higher;

But, if he still does as he used to do, he's sitting by the fire!

Some folk will rationalize, scrutinize, criticize, de-emphasize, ostracize, philosophize, and minimize, in an effort to place their burdens upon the shoulders of others. James said, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore

If you your ears would save from jeers,
These things keep meekly hid:
Myself and I, and mine, and my,
And how I do and did.

* * * *

Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.

* * * *

Things That Are Hard For Men

John P. Weekley

Some things are extremely difficult for men to do. The world is filled with excuses simply because of those hard-to-do-things. No one makes excuses for the things that come easy. But there are some commands which men make excuses for not doing because they, in their minds, make these commands so difficult.

One of the most difficult is the command to repent (Acts 17:30). The world doesn't like to make changes (John 3:19). Changes in the moral and spiritual realms come hard because such changes take away momentary pleasures. No one likes to have removed what he or she is enjoying. But if what one is finding joy in is wrong, then it ought to be removed. Getting the world to change from darkness to light is hard because the world is so accustomed to doing wrong that it is difficult to get it to see the wrong. Young people see and hear so much sex that by the time they are adults, "bedroom scenes" don't even phase their conscience. The conscience of the world has grown insensitive to such things because they have become part of our society. Perhaps the Lord's church has not been the contender for moral purity it should have been over the past years (I Timothy 3:15).

Some of the hardest commands for the denominational world are baptism for the remission of sins, worshipping according to the pattern of the New Testament, and staying completely with the authority of the scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17). Most in the denominational world believe in the faith-only doctrine for the remission of sins. They believe this doctrine because they only believe in part of the authority of the scriptures. No where does the Bible teach faith-only will

please the heavenly Father. Such passages as Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21; and Romans 6:4 prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that it takes more than just faith. The denominational world has a most difficult time seeing that worship must be done according to the pattern (John 4:24; Hebrews 8:5). Never has God allowed man to set up his own avenues of worship. In the examples of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10), and also the example of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4), patterns were given and expected to be followed. When men want to live the way they think they ought to live, it is difficult to get them to live the way God wants them to live. When men want to worship (Mark 7:7) the way they think they ought to worship, they will find it difficult to worship the way God wants them to worship. Men must live by a thus saith the Lord in all that they do (Colossians 3:17).

God has commanded us to be faithful in all things (Revelation 2:10) for all times. The Christian who loves the Lord and his church will never have problems being true to any call or demands made by these. We have to be faithful in all the services (Hebrews 10:25), and the demand to put the church "first" in our lives (Matthew 6:33-34). There are those today who try to do away with Hebrews 10:25. Christians who argue that one doesn't have to attend the worship services and Bible study on Sunday, and on Wednesday nights, is debating with faithfulness -- not, does Hebrews 10:25 apply to every service!

One of the most difficult commands for Christians to observe is the one to be forgiving (Ephesians 4:32). Some Christians think that they have the right to hold a

grudge. This is not true (I Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 4:31, 26). The same Christians expect God to forgive them when they repent, confess, and pray. If God refused to forgive as some brethren have a tendency to do today, who could find forgiveness? Some brethren just can't seem to forgive and forget mistakes made by elders, or by preachers. If the apostle Peter were living today, would he be used by such brethren -- after his mistakes? This is not characteristic of all Christians; but it is true of too many. An unforgiving spirit will not enter into the eternal kingdom. An unforgiving spirit is sin (Matthew 6:15), and no sin will enter into heaven's glory (Revelation 21:27).

One of the most difficult commands for some to obey is to be futuristic in our goals and interests (Colossians 3:1-2). In Hebrews 12:2 we are told to look unto Jesus. This objective will keep us from being earthly-minded (Matthew 6:19-20). Many find it hard to be future-minded about things on the other side of the grave. It is easy to fall into a pattern to be over-involved in the present age. If brethren would really be heavenly-minded, many of the problems that we have now would be solved. Christ, our example, was future-minded, "... who for the joy that was set before him . . ." Jesus looked forward and upward. These are keys to success in doing the will of God.

Another command that is hard for some to observe is being favorable. In Acts 2:47 the firstfruits of Christianity had "favor" with all the people. This doesn't mean that they compromised, as is seen from Acts 2:42; and chapters 4 & 5. But it means that the Christians lived peaceably with all men as much as possible (Romans 12:18). It is true that some men are prejudiced against the truth and the church, and therefore will not favor Christians. But their sinful attitude does not excuse Christians from trying to get along with men. Christians do not have the right to be cranky nor meddlers in other men's matters! This causes untold damage to the local church (II Thessalonians 3:11-12).

Some Christians just cannot be fervent and stand for what is right. The Bible commands us to be strong, solid, and unyielding when it comes to matters of truth (Jude 3; I Timothy 6:12; Galatians 2:5). The word "fervent" means to be on fire for the Lord. This does not mean to be zealous without knowledge (Romans 10:1-4); but it does mean that we should have a lively spirit in what we believe and do (I Corinthians 15:58). Too many are deadheads when it comes to the Lord's will. They no longer enjoy living the Christian life, they have no zeal (Titus 2:14) about the work of the local church; they have no desire to improve their spiritual condition or to help others to grow (Hebrews 10:24). These Christians never believe that the buck stops with them about anything! The world, to them, is a lost cause, and it is impossible for anyone to be saved. We need to look at the examples of the apostles and first century Christians. Even though the world was sold under sin (II Corinthians 4:4), yet they carried the gospel to the ends of the world (Colossians 1:23). We have the same God, the same gospel, the same providence, and the same charge. If we don't do it, the failure is in us,

Biblical Interpretation

Continued from page 1

believed because of their opportunities, and God gave them a greater opportunity for understanding in the great teaching of the parables (verses 12-14). Because they refused truth plainly set before them, the unbelieving found their hearts filled with earthly desires (waxed gross) and their ears unreceptive to the truth (verse 15). To be sure that they received no light of truth, they actually closed their eyes lest they should see. We must beware lest we go to the scriptures with minds made up and refuse to understand the truth we may read there (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

Fifth, proper tools can help us study and increase our understanding. Having several different versions for comparison can be helpful. Use the standard translations which were done by committees (King James, American Standard, Revised Standard, et al). Avoid paraphrases, and one-man translations (like the Living Bible Paraphrased, Today's English Version [which is also called Good News for Modern Man]). Also, avoid Bibles translated by a single group to support their doctrine, such as the New World Translation. Read the passage under consideration from all of them. Use a dictionary to discover the meaning of words you do not recognize or which seem odd in the context. Some have criticized the King James for its outdated words. Yet all of their proper meanings can

be found in a good collegiate dictionary.

A good concordance can be used to look up key words. Sometimes looking up other passages where a word is used can help. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance** has a Hebrew and Greek dictionary in the back so the Bible definition can be readily looked up. A Bible dictionary can help us discover the meaning of a word, historical background, habits and customs of the people involved, descriptions of animals or plants, and laws of that day and nation. **Baker's Bible Atlas**, or some other geography book, can assist us in understanding the terrain involved, and give pertinent data on the people. Commentaries can help if one keeps in mind that they are written by men and were influenced by the author's thinking. Also, we need to learn to use the center column references and footnotes that appear in most good Bibles. Often an alternate word is given that could help us understand an entire passage.

Sixth, all Bible study should be accompanied by prayer for wisdom from God that we might understand what we read. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

(To be continued).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Road, Mobile, AL 36608.

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Dealing With Divisive Brethren

Paul wrote that some would depart from the faith (I Timothy 4:1). Those who depart from the faith rarely openly declare their apostasy. Rather they are determined to stay in the midst of the body of Christ. Like a deadly virus, they work to embed themselves in the "host" body until every cell is over taken. If they are marked and cut off by brethren, they soon dry up and die.



John Waddey

Divine Methods of Treatment

God's prophylactic and treatment for heresy is set forth in Scripture: "Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which we learned: and turn away from them. For . . . by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Romans 16:17). "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse . . ." (Titus 3:10).

"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 10-11).

MARK THEM

In simple terms then, those who divide churches and trouble the brotherhood with their false teaching and unscriptural practices should be exposed before they can infiltrate and damage other congregations. Elders of churches which have been rent, owe it to sister congregations to warn them of those troublemakers. To allow them to slip away quietly with an apparently clean record, is to endanger all others. Such is a serious mistake, as well as disobedience to God's will.

Refuse Them an Audience

When teachers arise in a congregation, who espouse methods, doctrines and practices that are divisive and/or deceptive, they should be confronted by the elders and called upon to renounce their error and to cease from their agitation. If they refuse two (Titus 3:10) appeals, they should be subjected to Scriptural discipline (II Thessalonians 3:6). For preachers, that should include immediate dismissal and removal from all teaching posts. For others, it should involve removal from all leadership or teaching roles as well. It is a fatal mistake to allow such agitators to go on operating for months before decisive action is taken. In that period they will sow seeds of discord and undermine the church. Some diseases must be dealt with swiftly if we are to save the patient.

Do Not Bid Them Godspeed

No aid or comfort should be given to church wreckers. No sensible man would invite a person infected with some deadly plague into his home where loved ones would be jeopardized. No congregation should invite into their midst those involved in faction and division. Don't employ their campus evangelists. Don't host their preachers and teachers for your meetings and workshops. Don't invite their singers and youth workers. Don't use them for campaigns and workshops. To invite them in is to court disaster;

it is the height of folly. Neither should we announce their retreats, mission forums, and workshops, and thus encourage our people to participate.

Editors of gospel papers should close their columns to those who harm the body. Do not promote their destructive cause by publicizing it. Don't provide them space to spread their doctrine to unsuspecting souls. In so doing you bid them Godspeed, and others assume they must be acceptable by your apparent recommendation.

THOSE WHO DIRECT SCHOOLS, LECTURESHIPS, AND WORKSHOPS SHOULD EXTEND NO INVITATIONS TO FACTIOUS BRETHERN. Why some unthinking brethren continue to do so in view of the awful carnage already done to the Lord's body is a mystery. A contagious disease must be isolated and denied a brooding place before it will subside. Solomon asks, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Proverbs 6:27). Neither can we fellowship a factious movement without damage.

An Ounce of Prevention

Preventive medicine is always better than curative. Preachers and elderships owe it to their congregations to inform them of the dangers of a false system before it attacks them locally. It is not out of order to present one or more sermons dealing with a specific heresy to properly inoculate the brethren. Perhaps a class could be devoted to the issue. Printed literature could be made available. Where wise leaders have provided this preventive teaching, false teachers cannot gain a foothold.

An Artful Dodge

Our current crop of church-splitters have

found an effective tool to silence (?) their critics. When someone speaks out against them they respond: "It is unfair to criticize us until you have visited us." For select leaders they even offer to pay for a trip to Boston or Gainesville.

This is a diversionary tactic to squash criticism that might close some doors to them. It is a faulty argument based on unsound premises.

We can analyze, identify, and refute an erroneous system without visiting the town and meeting house where it emanates. We need not go to Rome and personally interview the pope before we teach against Catholicism. We can read their books and see the fruit of their faith and practice. For the same reason we need not go to Moscow and interview the leaders of Communism to publicly speak against that evil system.

When we hear their taped sermons, read their published bulletins and observe multiple congregations wrecked by a false system, we can -- and should!-- speak out against it. Jesus said "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit."

Brother Keelbe used to say:

Anyone can be a fruit inspector!

Brethren, do not allow your blows to be deflected because you haven't made a pilgrimage. A powerful army can be routed if the soldiers won't fire their weapons. "Preach the word, reprove, rebuke and exhort" (II Timothy 4:2). The camp of the saints is under siege; and we must resist the adversary, or suffer great loss to the Cause we dearly love.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

It's All Up To You!

Continued from page 2

such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2).

You are the one who has to decide to bear fruit. An unknown poet has admonished: You are the fellow who has to decide whether you'll do it, or toss it aside;

You are the fellow who makes up your mind whether you'll lead or linger behind, Whether to try for the good that's afar, or be contented to stay where you are. Take it or leave it, there's much to do; just think it over: it's all up to you.

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Things That Are Hard For Men

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not above us.

Many find it hard to be full of righteousness (Matthew 5:6). There is so much spiritual food that the Christian should never have an empty stomach! There are so many righteous things that a Christian can do, he should never feel empty and useless in the church. Inactivity always produces a lack of satisfaction. The Christian should be content

(Philippians 4:11). Every Christian should fill himself with God's righteousness (Hebrews 1:8).

These things are as difficult to do as we make them. God's will is not an impossible task (I John 5:3). Paul said that he could do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13). So can we!

—P.O. Box 233, Cherokee, Alabama 35616.

THE SHIP THAT SAILS

By D. M. Robins

I'd rather be the ship that sails
And rides the billows wild and free;

Than to be the ship that always fails
To leave its port and go to sea.

I'd rather feel the sting of strife,
Where gales are born and tempests roar;

Than to settle down to useless life
And rot in dry dock on the shore.

I'd rather fight some mighty wave
With honor in supreme command;

And find at last a well-earned grave,
Than die in ease upon the sand.

I'd rather drive where sea storms blow,
And be the ship that always failed

To make the ports where it would go,
Than be the ship that never sailed.



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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Biblical Interpretation

(No. II)

One definition of the word "method" (as found in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary) is: "a systematic procedure, technique, or mode of inquiry employed by or proper to a particular discipline or art." It is obvious that serious Bible students must have an overall plan for their approach to the study of scripture.

Various methods have been employed and each affects one's whole process of thought about God's word.

Dungan suggests that some have used the mystical method. This method originated during the time of the Greek and Roman "gods." It was thought that the gods spoke through an oracle, usually a priest or priestess. As the church went into apostasy, it adopted as much of the ritual of heathenism as possible so as to attract heathen worshipers. Thus, the priests, or clergy, became the official spokesmen (?) for God and the Bible was taken out of the hands of the people. In this way, the word of God became what the priests said the Bible says. The reformation took this power out of the hands of the priests and placed it into the hands of the creed-makers, which is no better. Others have avoided placing their trust in the creed and priest, only to give it to men with great names.

Closely akin to the mystical method is the spiritual method. Those who hold to this view do not limit knowledge of God's will to a small group but claim it is within the power of all of us. Dungan says, "Piety and a possession of the light of God in the soul, will enable everyone to understand the Scriptures in this



Gary C. Hampton

spiritual way." He goes on to explain, "Many plain passages of the word of God will, to them, have the meaning of something very different from what has been said. For, with them, it is not so much what the Lord has said, as what he revealed to them as the meaning of that language." While there are several different groups which hold to this view, it is ironic that they do not interpret the Bible the same way.

The allegorical method is similar to the spiritual. Those who take this approach believe everything in the Bible is a metaphor. That is, everything that is said means something besides what it says. This is really "eisegesis," instead of exegesis, and allows one to read into the text what he wants to be there.

The hierarchical method is a modified form of the mystical. This says the church is empowered with the knowledge of God's will. If the priests disagree as to interpretation, then the bishop is consulted. If the bishops disagree, the archbishop is called upon; and so on up the ladder of their earthly chain of command.

The rationalistic method rejects any interpretation that cannot be explained with human reason. If human reason says there is no such thing as a miracle, then Bible miracles must be explained away. If it is said that the world came about through evolution, then perhaps they would say it was theistic evolution. Jeremiah 10:23 makes this method clearly unacceptable.

The apologetic method makes all statements in the Bible absolutely true no matter who spoke them. In this way, words of the devil, the witch of Endor, Cain, and others, become truth. Of course, the record of their statements is inspired, and it is true they made them; but what they said could be in error.

Some take a stand or set forth a doctrine, and then go to the Bible to prove it is true. This approach is used by those who accept the dogmatic method. Often those who take a position in a public way will resort to this method


to prove their point. Truth may be found in this manner; however, in general it slows one down in his search for the truth. Those who use this method will also, at times, point to the results of a practice, writings of the early "church fathers," or the practice of a church, to enhance their view when they fail to find a Bible verse they can use for proof.

Others wish to take every word in the Bible literally. They refuse to allow for the use of metaphors, poetic descriptions, or any other use of figurative language. Ironically, they will generally not try to literalize verses like Psalm 22:14. Instead, like those of the dogmatic method, they will literalize only those verses that would support their position when literalized.

The inductive method is described by Dungan as "A leading or drawing off a general fact from a number of instances, or summing up the result of observations and experiments." One using this method must seek out all available facts and then draw a conclusion based upon them. No interpretation can be true which does not harmonize with known facts. We must make sure that we gather as many parts as possible so that we can clearly identify the whole. However, we do not have to see every part before we recognize the whole. Obviously, we do not know everything Jesus ever did or said; but we do have sufficient evidence to prove he is the Christ (John 20:30-31).

The inductive method is the one used in our courtroom. None of us would want to have evidence hastily gathered against an innocent man. Instead we want a careful search for all the facts that can be found before the trial began. Similarly, most of us do not want a doctor to operate on us based solely on the evidence from one inconclusive test. Certainly, with our souls at stake (John 8:32), we do not want to formulate our understanding of doctrine based on only a few verses read with-

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Words Of Truth
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Acts 26:25

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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**Here Comes
The "Clergy"**

Sunday witnessed a beautiful sight. Young Jason Baker came forward during the invitation and asked to be immersed in water for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). Ralph extended the invitation and took his public confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Romans 10:9, 10; Matthew 10:32, 33). I was asked to read the names of our visitors while Ralph and Jason prepared for the baptismal service.



Ray Hawk

When the curtains to the baptistery opened, David Baker, Jason's father, was in the water and immersed him rather than Ralph (Acts 22:16). To many people, this would have been a disturbing sight. For us, it is a natural occurrence

Why would this tender scene of a father immersing his son into the Lord have disturbed some folks? Although David Baker is a fine Christian, most religious people would not look upon him as having the proper credentials to immerse anyone, much less his son. They would not think of Jason's father as being clergy! In their mind, if one is not a licensed clergy, he does not have the authority of the Lord or the church to marry, bury, or perform baptisms. After all, in their way of thinking, David Baker was not ordained! Why would we allow David to immerse his son?

First, it is interesting that some people would get so upset and think Jason's baptism was invalid because of who immersed him, when they don't consider baptism to be essential to

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The Editor's Pen
Flavil H. Nichols

W. T. Hamilton Passes

W. T. Hamilton, 65, minister of the Clear Lake City church of Christ, at Houston, Texas, died May 14th of cancer. He was married to the former Carrie Nichols, the youngest daughter of the late Gus Nichols & Mrs. Matilda Nichols of Jasper, Alabama. He is survived by his wife, and their two children: a son, Nick Hamilton, who preaches at the Pleasant Valley church in Little Rock, Arkansas; and a daughter, Mrs. Ronald Scott, of Temple, Texas. One brother, Lewis Hamilton, of Richardson, Texas, and five grandchildren also are among the survivors.



Born in Goree, Texas, he was reared in Bowie, and attended North Texas State University. His "home" congregation (Bowie) helped him attend Freed-Hardeman College, and after his graduation hired him as their local minister. He served there for five years (1943-1948), and has returned for several revivals. Other churches he has served include Frederick, Oklahoma (1948-1950); Gainesville, Texas (1950-1953); Lamesa, Texas (1953-1964); Plainview, Texas (1964-1969); Waxahachie, Texas (1969-1978); and Clear Lake City Texas (1978-1986). He accepted the challenge to move to Houston and help build up a congregation which had begun meeting in a school building near NAASA. During his ministry a large building was erected, and also additional classrooms have been constructed, wherever he lived, the church was stronger because of his labor and wholesome Christian influence.

In addition to being an effective local preacher, W. T. was also distinguished as a writer. He was on the editorial staff of **Power For Today**, and his articles have appeared in many brotherhood publications, including **Words of Truth**. **Show Us The Father** (1964) contains fifty-two 4-page outlines on the book of John. **His Yet Trouble Came** (1969) is a devotional book based on the book of Job, which has gone through several editions. **Glory In The Church** (1977) is a series of outlines on the church at Ephesus and the book of Ephesians. Now in the hands of the printer in his latest manuscript, **Why Is This Happening To Me?** which he completed after he knew he had cancer.

For many years he conducted regular radio programs, and did his wife's share of the work as a partner in Nichols Brothers Publishing Company. Gospel meetings took him into thirteen states. He preached special sermons in several others, and lectured at six

colleges. He was listed in Who's Who In Texas.

W. T. preached on Sunday morning, May 4, after which he announced his resignation to become effective June 1. But he was unable to attend services that night, and was hospitalized the next day, where he remained till his death. For several years he also served as one of the elders of that congregation, but his failing health forced his resignation from the eldership about the first of this year.

Funeral services were held at the Clear Lake City Church of Christ on Friday night, May 16, where his long-time friend, Jimmy Wood, of Dallas, spoke. His body was then taken to Waxahachie, Texas, to which city they planned to move about June 1. At a memorial service there five of his brothers-in-law and his son, Nick, spoke. Burial was in the Restland Cemetery at Dallas.

**The Christian
Faces Gambling**

Gambling is very much a part of our society. There are any number of ways to legally participate in this activity. A recent decision allowed Sunday horse-racing to begin in Miami last week. Also, we will probably be faced with the opportunity to choose if we want even more -- statewide lottery, and casino gambling.



Ancil Jenkins

What should be a Christian's attitude? There is no scripture that expressly forbids such activity. Also, there is none that expressly commands us to participate. In such a case, the teaching of other scriptures should be considered.

There is one factor that must not be overlooked. It is something about which the scriptures do speak. We must be aware that it is possible for gambling and related activities to affect our view of life.

"The greatest loss that resulted from our gambling was neither time, nor money, which are gone forever; but our sense of values. By 'sense of values' we mean an understanding of what is really important and good for our lives, such as the value of love, and the respect of the people who care most about us. Most of us place far too little value on such precious qualities as love, truth, dependability, unselfishness, and honor, and because we valued them so lightly, we lost them" (GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS guidebook, quoted in article by

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The Preacher As A Student

In 1514 Erasmus wrote to Bishop Fisher: "I know how busy you are in your library, your paradise." The statement by Erasmus should be reflective of every Bible student. Study is not an optional activity of preachers, but rather is a "must" on their agenda. A professor a few years ago stated: "It takes more than a gift of gab and parroting



Dabney Phillips

a few scriptures to preach successfully." There is a vast difference between those who aspire to preach, and those will perspire in order to get the job well done. Tyndale, in prison wrote, "Send me, for Jesus' sake, a warm cap, a woolen shirt, and my Hebrew Bible." Paul requested the "books" and the "parchments" (II Timothy 4:13).

A person's judgment is only as good as his information. The reward of study is understanding. It is interesting in the preface to the King James Bible that there is the following: "It is a preposterous order to teach first and learn afterwards." It is tempting for the preacher to spend time in trivial matters, such as enjoying the coffee-breaks with the brethren. Preaching is a monumental task, and requires the best of mental efforts. Preaching that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. He who does not bleed cannot bless. Preaching is the result of a head full of light and a heart full of love (Ephesians 4:15). Alexander Campbell believed that "Great preaching is when Christ is the theme, charity the tone, clarity the route, and certainty the foundation."

By the age of 40, Samuel Church had read the Old Testament through 75 times and the New Testament through 150 times. Jacob Creath, Jr., read the Bible through 50 times, beginning on January 1 of each year. Alexander Campell spent hours daily in his library, and thus was able to accomplish his tremendous amount of writing and speaking. J. W. McGarvey wrote 16 books, of which 14 are still in print. He never read a text in the pulpit or in the classroom, as he had the text of scripture memorized.

What should the preacher have in his library? He should go heavy on research materials, and light on sermon outlines. Biblical and religious encyclopedias, Bible dictionaries, church histories, and commentaries should make up a large section. Debates -- and especially those that involve our brethren -- should be in his library, and should be studied. Choice restoration selections should be made, including *The Christian Baptist*, *The Millennial Harbinger*, *The Christian Messenger* and *Campbell's Memoirs* by Robert Richardson. The writer has purchased lectureship books of the various college lectureships. It is vital to know what is in your library. The wise preacher will vary the types of sermons delivered, such as topical, expository, and biographical. Look at the original languages if you know them.

Martin Luther compared study to getting apples off of a tree. He said to first shake the tree; and then, to look under each limb and leaf. We need to read the entire book, then

read by chapter, and again by verse. The sermon must be simple and practical. The listener must know that our key fits the lock of his own private door. "Cases are won in the chambers," said a distinguished English Judge, Lord Bowen. He went on to say that success was not in the public court, but in one's own private study.

Study is a lifelong privilege, not a task to be completed. School is never "out" for the preacher, nor any other serious Bible student. We must be sure that our study is a continuation of learning, rather than the reaffirmation of views previously held. The late H. Leo Boles commented: "A preacher may be a man without a message, just a talker." Read yourself full; think yourself clear; outline your sermon well, and preach it effec-

tively. One will never be a better preacher, or teacher, than he is a student of the Bible. It is wise never to be a mimic. Campbell said: "Mimics can never excel, except in being mimics." There is nothing "drier" than a "dry" sermon drawn from a "dry" well. The trumpets in the morning are calling to the ministers of our day to come to the pulpits and to give a message from the word of God. To "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2) continues to be our prime thrust in life. May God grant us the power to perform the task of proclamation, encouragement, and conviction. "Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching" (I Timothy 4:13).

—100 Carlton Place, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Here Comes The "Clergy"

Continued From Page 2

salvation in the first place. If baptism is "non-essential," what difference would it make who did the baptizing?

Second, the Bible never speaks of a special class of people in the church as the clergy. The establishment of seminaries, required courses of study, degrees, and specific ordination services to install a special class of people called the clergy, is foreign to New Testament teaching or terminology. Paul, Peter, James, John, and others were apostles, but they are never referred to as the clergy. They never attended a seminary, they were not required to attend one, nor did they require anyone else to do so. Since they spoke and wrote by the inspiration of the Spirit, he never required any of these things.

Third, God never uses the title of "Reverend," "the right Reverend," "the holy Reverend," nor "the most Reverend" to refer to any man. These are glorified titles given by man to accommodate the egos of men. It reeks of Phariseism (Matthew 23:6-12). God is holy and reverend (Psalm 111:9). If one is in Christ Jesus, regardless of his role or work in the body of Christ, he shares in the attributes and characteristics of the body. When men take what is common to the body of Christ and narrow it to a small group of men which they designate as clergy, they have done what God refuses to do! They have perverted the good news and added to it (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

Fourth, God never limited the duties of marrying, burying, or baptizing to a special group of men called the clergy. He did give the Great Commission to the apostles (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). However, as one reads the New Testament, the responsibility of converting others to Christ (which includes immersing them), is laid upon the shoulders of every child of God. The problem with the religious world, and sometimes the view accepted by members of the body of Christ, is that only preachers have the responsibility

to teach and immerse. Paul was a preacher of the gospel (Colossians 1:23), but he left the baptizing to others (I Corinthians 1:14-17).

Fifth, every Christian is a priest in the body of Christ (I Peter 2:5, 9). Whatever God allows one priest to do, he allows of the other. If the State would allow it, any member of the body of Christ could perform a marriage ceremony. However, due to the laws of the land, only preachers are allowed to do so. In the case of preaching a funeral, or immersing someone, any Christian is allowed to perform the function. In this case, David immersed his son. David is a Christian. He is a priest; for this reason he may baptize, preach, or serve the Lord's supper. Although women are priests, there are some public functions they are limited in, such as preaching, due to passages like I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-12). There probably would be some circumstances in which a woman could immerse another or serve the Lord's supper. In private situations she should and must teach others the gospel.

Sixth, when a man decides he wants to use his talents to preach the gospel, his only requirements are the Book. He may decide to get some education, but a B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. is not required before he may preach the gospel or work with a congregation. There are no seminaries among churches of Christ. Preachers in the churches of Christ may have several degrees from different colleges or universities; but you will seldom if ever see a sign in front of the building saying anything about their educational accomplishments. That is not important. Their knowledge and application of the Bible is! We want to be known as a people of the Book. We require no more nor no less of a person than does the Bible. For this reason, David Baker immersed his son, Jason, into Jesus Christ this past Sunday morning.

—39 Webb Drive, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

SMILE

Smile, and the world smiles with you,
Frown and you go alone.
A cheerful grin will let you in,
Where trouble is never known.
Growl, and the way looks dreary,
Laugh, and the path grows bright,
A welcome smile brings sunshine, while
A frown shuts out the light.

Sing, and the world sings with you,
Pout, and things go wrong,
And all the time you're out of rhyme
With the busy hustling throng.
Kick, and there's trouble brewing,
Whistle, and life is gay,
The world's in tune, like a day in June
When clouds have vanished away.

A Practical Approach To Successful Living

One lives until one dies, whether successfully or unsuccessfully. One is not a robot. One can determine the road one travels throughout one's life. Choices are constantly before responsible human beings (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19; Joshua 24:15).

"He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to. It is the means that determine the end."

Destiny is not a matter of chance; rather, it is a matter of choice. Its not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved. Successful Christian living depends on proper choices each day of one's life.

In the Old Testament we read of some kings who chose to follow the right way, while others chose to follow the wrong way. Why some choose right but others choose wrong, we may not be able to give a satisfactory explanation. Who has not noticed that from the same home, from the same father and mother, from the same home training, one goes out and does that which is right in the sight of God, but another through a long life does that which is evil?

Herewith, we shall offer some suggestions which can help those who wish to live successfully the Christian life--

(1) Start now, and clean up your life. The day you become a Christian, you begin a new life (John 3:3-5). One is "born of water and of the Spirit" when one hears and obeys the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:36-38; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:6-10). In this operation, you become a new creature in Christ, your sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5; 7:14). One whose life is filled with the garbage of sin can never live successfully (Galatians 5:19-21).

(2) To live successfully one must keep a constant check on one's spiritual temperature. There are such things as fervor and zeal in service to the Lord (Romans 12:11; Titus 2:11-14). The Laodicean church (Revelation 3:14-22) was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, which caused an intolerable situation. "I know thy works," said Jesus, "that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." This statement shows the Lord's utter abhorrence of the condition of the church at Laodicea. Thus, we should watch our spiritual temperature lest it grow cold and render us useless!!

(3) It is always appropriate for one to examine one's attitude. Is it abrasive? Is it an irritant? Do we tend to leave bad impressions in the minds of others? Self-Examination is always in order (II Corinthians 13:5).

What are some of the signs of a bad attitude? We shall ask a few questions: Are you always finding fault? Is your tongue running out of control? Do you have a flaming temper? Have you become a super critic? Is every thing wrong and nothing right? Do you tell others off at the drop of a hat? Do you have to have your way regarding every thing? "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"



W. A. Holley

(Romans 15:1-3; Philippians 2:3-4)? As a rule, inordinate pride and excessive selfishness are at the roof of a bad attitude.

(4) Don't spin your wheels. To try to do all things at once is to fail. First things come first (Matthew 6:33). There is such a thing as priority. One can be "busy here and there," while great opportunities are forever lost (Cf. I Kings 20:40). Learning to do one job well, and to do it right, is far better than half-doing a thousand jobs (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

(5) Learn to proceed at a constant pace. Christians are to be "steadfast, unmoveable" (I Corinthians 15:58). Persistence and perseverance are words which suggest the idea of continued service in spite of obstacles that might stand in one's way (Ephesians 6:10-18). Persistence is what brings success! For example, a certain automobile dealer in a northern state, some years ago, averaged a sale a week right through the winter months, when other dealers were snow-bound and doing no business. When asked what his secret was, he denied that he had one. How did he manage to sell autos when others could not? Well, he followed an inflexible rule to make ten calls a day. **And that meant ten calls every day!!** Do you think that Christians could profit from his example??

(6) Resolve to avoid hindrances which slow you down, or stop you altogether. When driving, one must avoid pot-holes, ditches, curbs, and other road hazards if one wishes to reach his destination. Just so, all bad habits, all cursing and swearing, all drunkenness and fornication, and the like, must be eliminated from one's life (I Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 12:1-3; 2:1-4). Those who die in their sins

cannot enter heaven (John 8:21, 24; Revelation 21:8).

(7) One must make sure that he does not run out of gas. How can one's fuel supply be replenished? How can one have all the energy he needs to finish his journey? The answer is simple: Just open your Bible and read it reverently, daily, memorizing as much as you can -- and you will always have the power and strength to resist temptation and to press onward, regardless of the obstacles that might block your path (Matthew 4:4; John 8:3-32; 17:17; Hebrews 4:12; II Timothy 3:15-17; I Timothy 4:13). To resist temptation, hide the word of God in your heart (Psalms 119:11; I Corinthians 10:13).

(8) To live successfully, one must know his destination. Where are you going? Where will you be when you get where you are going? And going, you are! (Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:30-31). How foolish to drive aimlessly along life's highways, not knowing where one is going!!

The Christian's citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20, ASV.) How does one establish citizenship in that wonderful land? (1) One must believe that Jesus is the Son of God; (2) one must repent of his sins; (3) one must confess Jesus' holy name before men; and then (4) one must be baptized into Jesus Christ for remission of sins (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 6:3-4). In this manner one becomes a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), and if one will but remain faithful to him, heaven will be his eternal home (Revelation 2:10).

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Christian Faces Gambling

Continued From Page 2

John Gipson).

One danger in gambling is that it becomes the consuming passion of one's life. **Winning** gives the greatest thrill. Participating in gambling becomes the most important thing one does. Everything else becomes secondary.

We are warned of this danger. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor

rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21, New King James Bible).

"No one 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" or "money," Twentieth Century New Testament (Matthew 6:24).

—Sunset Church of Christ, 8445 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143.

Biblical Interpretation

Continued from page 1

out proper consideration of other facts.

The Bible approves of the inductive method. On the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), Jesus expounded unto the two disciples all that Moses and the prophets had said concerning him. When the apostles and elders came together in Jerusalem to consider whether or not Gentile converts should have to be circumcized and keep the law, they heard testimony from Peter on the conversion of Cornelius and his household; Paul and Barnabas on the miracles and wonders wrought among the Gentiles; and the Old Testament prophets, as recited by James (Acts 15; Amos 9:11-12). Philip began at the very scripture the Ethiopian nobleman was reading and preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:26-40). When the council questioned Stephen as to his teaching

about Jesus, he reasoned beginning at the story of Abraham and related much of Old Testament history (Acts 6:8-7:60). In each of the instances cited, inductive reasoning was used.

We can use inference to determine facts not specifically stated. For example, Genesis 12:10 tells us Abraham went down into Egypt. No mention is made of Lot's going. However, Genesis 13:1 tells us Lot came up out of Egypt, so we can be sure he went down with Abraham into Egypt. We will explore more uses of this method as we go along in our study.

(To be continued).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36608.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1986

NUMBER 24

Biblical Interpretation

(No. 3)

"Rightly Dividing the Word Of truth"

Paul told Timothy to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). This verse clearly points out our need to study. Study will help us know what to do to be approved of God through obedience to his will. However, we need to ask what part of that will we are to obey; and this involves a right division of the truth.



Gary C. Hampton

God planned his creation before he began to create. His plan included the free moral agency of man, which meant that man could sin and fall away from God. Thus, God prepared for the eventuality of man's fall before he framed the world. In speaking of our redemption by the precious blood of the Savior, Peter says: "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:18-20). Paul agrees with Peter and says God chose for the saved to be in Christ all along, but did not send him until the time was right (Ephesians 1:3-4, 10).

Man was created in the image of God and was given the job of tending to the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:26; 2:15). Woman was created to be a suitable helper for man (2:18). Only one law was recorded in the inspired record, and that was that they should not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2:16-17). Satan became the

father of liars by adding just one word to that which God had said (Genesis 3:4; John 8:44). He told a partial truth that made sin seem attractive (Genesis 3:5, 7, 22). He appealed to fleshly desire by telling Eve that it was good for food. Satan aroused her desire through sight, as she saw that it was "pleasant to the eyes." He took advantage of wrongful pride through causing her to think it was "to be desired to make one wise" (3:6; I John 2:15-17). In God's words to the serpent, after man's fall, God presented the first great foreshadowing of his plan to send Christ: "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" (3:15). In his death on the cross, Jesus suffered a painful bruise like one we might get on the heel, but in his resurrection Jesus dealt a mortal, or head, wound to Satan.

While he was in the Garden of Eden, man enjoyed a close relationship with God (Genesis 3:8). Man's sin placed a barrier between him and God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The long road to the restoration of that relationship, or fellowship, began with the Patriarchal Age. During that age, God spoke to the head of the house, or Patriarch. For example, God spoke to Noah and instructed him to build an ark of gopher wood (Genesis 6:12-14). Notice that other families were destroyed for their disobedience, but Noah's was saved because he led them in the way of obedience (Genesis 6:22; Hebrews 11:7). As they come forth out of the ark, we can see Noah leading his family in worship to God (Genesis 8:15-20). His righteousness caused God to bless his family and promise never to destroy the world by water again (8:21-9:1).

Abraham was another of the Patriarchs to whom God spoke (Genesis 12:1-4). We should notice again that certain blessings


accompany obedience. Further, God knew he would be a good spiritual leader for all those in his house, both servants and children (18:18-19). Abraham obeyed even in the most difficult of circumstances, thus teaching his son, Isaac, the way of obedience (22:1-13, especially 7-8; Hebrews 11:17-19; Genesis 26:1-3, 6).

After the Patriarchal Age, God dealt with man through the written law of Moses (John 1:17). This law was specifically delivered only to Israel, causing some to believe the Gentiles continued to worship God at the direction of their fathers (Exodus 19:3-6; Acts 10:1-4). Just as the people of the Patriarchal Age died in the flood because of disobedience, the disobedient under Moses' law were punished (Leviticus 10:1-2; I Corinthians 10:1-10; Judges 2:10-14). The law of Moses showed man that he could not live a perfect life, and pointed out the great need for a means of overcoming sin; but it did not make such a means available to the people (Hebrews 10:1-4). That law fulfilled its purpose when it showed man his need for a perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:19-25). Its stories serve as an example to us of how God will deal with disobedient man (I Corinthians 10:11).

Jesus came to fulfill the law and its many promises of a Savior (Matthew 5:17-18; Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2-3). In his death, Jesus took the old law out of the way and put his law into force (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:11-17). Christ's resurrection was the final great proof that he is God's anointed (Acts 2:22-36). He ascended to heaven and took his rightful seat on the throne of power.

In taking away the law at the cross, Jesus tore down the barrier between Jew and

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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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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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13 In 1 Bible Workshops

The biennial and unique 13-in-1 Bible Workshops will take place on the Harding University campus, Searcy, Ark., July 28-31, 1986, according to Eddie Cloer, workshops coordinator.

Each workshop provides concentrated Christian training in the particular subject area. The training is provided by a variety of Christian teachers, leaders and preachers recognized for their expertise in the areas covered.

"The 13-in-1 Workshops program is unique in our brotherhood," said Cloer. "There is nothing like it; there is no other program which provides this quality of training in so many areas. Our goal is to give a large number of Christians, who have varied interests, in-depth training in a specific area of Christian service."

The titles of the workshops are: The Christian Home; Educational Work of the Church; Stewardship; Time and Stress Management; Mental Health; Preaching; Overseeing the Church; Evangelism; Youth Ministry; Teaching Children; The Christian Woman; Counseling; Personal Bible Study.

About 5,000 attended the last 13-in-1 Workshop in 1984. More information may be obtained by writing Eddie Cloer at: Harding University Bible Department, Box 939, Station A, Searcy, Ark. 72143.

**Invite
A Friend
To Church Sunday**



The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Unusual Radio Program

Seven days a week at 8:00 a.m., the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, Alabama, broadcasts the gospel over WWWB (1360 k.c.) and WWWB-FM (102.4 mhz). The 1,000 watt a.m. station effectively saturates Walker County, with its approximately 75,000 population. The 39,000 watt f.m. station reaches much, much farther. My car radio picks it up beyond Birmingham,



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

and I have heard it daily on a portable radio in Montgomery during revivals in that city. I likewise received it at Anniston. I have heard it in some areas of Huntsville. In May, 1986, it came in "loud and clear" past Columbus, Mississippi, all the way to Starkville.

Several features make this radio program unusual. (1) It began November 2, 1946. The day this radio station went on the air, my father (the late Gus Nichols) preached over its facilities at 8 a.m.; and the gospel has been preached at that hour over this station EVERY DAY it has ever been on the air! Now in its FORTIETH year, this may be the OLDEST daily radio program of churches of Christ! We know of no other DAILY broadcast that rivals this. (Does any reader know one that is older?)

(2) This is literally a DAILY broadcast -- not just a Monday-through-Friday, nor a Sunday-through-Friday program. It is aired 365 days a year.

(3) It has NEVER been presented by tape recording -- but has always been done "live."

(4) What began as a 15-minute program soon became a 30-minute broadcast, and it continues to be 30-minutes long.

(5) We announce illnesses, births, wedding anniversaries, deaths, funerals, burn-outs, gospel meetings, cemetery cleanings, activities of Christian colleges, Christian youth camps, and our orphan homes, birthdays for those past 70, (sometimes exceptions are made for those younger) --anything of GENERAL INTEREST that is reported to us. This has built and maintained (what is reported to be) the largest listening audience of any radio program in the county. [Since all denominations are in competition with the church Christ built (Matthew 16:18), we of course announce no denominational services.] After all announcements, we still usually have about 25 minutes for a Bible lesson.

(6) The program has been primarily the responsibility of the Sixth Avenue church,

with preachers here being the regular speakers. This includes Gus Nichols, Bob Duncan, Wade Johnson, Glenn Posey, Alan Cloyd, Ray Dutton, Russ Crosswhite, John P. Gray, and this writer. Countless others have been guest speakers, some of them (e.g., W. A. Holley? being heard frequently). The total number who have preached their first radio sermons on this broadcast is unknown.

(7) Mr. Buddy Franklin, of the Franklin Motor Company (Buick, Pontiac, & Cadillac dealer) has a 15-minute "talk" show called a "Sports" program that follows ours. Through the years he frequently (perhaps averaging once or twice a week!) has given us his time on the radio. And he has been doing this for decades! (Literally!) Frequently the announcer calls WHILE WE ARE ON THE AIR, and tells our secretary that Mr. Franklin wants to give us his time, which allows us an additional 12 or 13 minutes to preach!!! Only eternity can reveal how much time he has paid for and given for our use. Although he is a Methodist, there are absolutely no strings attached to his gift, either.

(8) On Saturdays the audience is invited to call in during the program questions of a religious nature, and the preacher will give a Bible answer.

We would like for churches all over this area to please announce our broadcast. For insertion in your bulletin, the following is suggested:

Daily Radio Program

See if you can hear the gospel broadcast seven days a week at 8:00 a.m. [1360 on your AM radio dial, or 102.4 on FM.] If you can, please drop a note to: Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

Thanks to all who are courteous enough to run this announcement.

As the station approaches its fortieth anniversary November 2, I should like to hear from every area where you can pick up our gospel sermons.

Who Is A Godly Mother?

Ola Edgeworth

A godly mother is one who is a Christian. She teaches her children to "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

A godly mother is one who will give her children to God even before they are born, as did Hannah (1 Samuel 1:11).

A godly mother's children will not have to be made to go to church. She carries them to church from babyhood regularly, so church

The "I's" Of Summer

With the incoming of the summer season, there seems to always be an increase in iniquity. Many members of the body of Christ will be absorbed into the enlarging slime-pits of sin over the next few months. Let us, then, discuss some of these transgressions in hope that some will be warned, and, that others might be called to repentance.



Victor M. Eskew

Each iniquity of this article begins with an "I." Therefore, we have entitled this study, "The 'I's' of Summer." The first "I" of summer which will run rampant is **IMMODESTY**. Temperatures in the summer months are much warmer than those of December - March. And as the heat begins to come on, the clothes begin to come off. Nakedness which used to be confined to the bathroom, now parades itself in the most public of places. What was once connected with the houses of ill-repute of the big cities, is now canvassing the streets of the rural communities. Sad to say, some of those who will be modeling the "bare-essential" wardrobe will be children of elders, deacons, and gospel preachers. In fact, in some cases, the elders, deacons, and preachers themselves will be found upon the display floor. Although Paul wrote: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10), there will still be the robbing of the body in immodest apparel, with no sense of shame exhibited, and with little or no sobriety.

The second "I" of summer is **INTOXICATION**. The liquor industry eagerly awaits the return of the hot months of summer. Sales increase in astronomical amounts at this time of the year. Doesn't such an increase in sales indicate that individuals are drinking more? Certainly this is the necessary inference. Young people, out of school, congregate almost nightly in the park or parking lot, and it is a rare occasion when beer is not found among them. Fishing trips, week-end excursions, vacations, and parties are common at this time of the year. And many feel that these things must always be "topped-off" with a cold cooler of brew. The many warnings against the use of intoxicants in the scripture (Proverbs 23:29-32; Habakkuk 2:15; Galatians 5:19-21; etc.) will go unheeded, even by some who profess themselves to be God's children. And "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

A third "I" of summer is **INDIFFERENCE**. When the excitement of summer rolls around, the interest in things of a spiritual nature decreases. Since this is "vacation time," many have convinced themselves that this is the season to take a vacation from religion. If this is not the attitude, why do many works of the church cease at this time of the year. Bible Bowl activities, visitation programs, personal work classes, ladies classes, youth devotionals and many other events are placed on the back-burner until September.

Yes, the summer brings death to many aspects of the Lord's work. Could the words to the church at Sardis be applicable to us as the summer approaches? "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Revelation 3:1). Yes, many will be content with merely keeping the pulse of the congregation going over the next three months. In September, all the works will begin again -- for the church will come out of hibernation.

A fourth "I" of summer is **IDOLATRY**. The idolatry about which we speak is the idolatry spoken about by the apostle Paul in Colossians 3:5. "Mortify therefore you members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." The summer's activities seem always to involve more money than is normally spent by families. This fact alone doesn't mean one is covetous. However, many people will either decrease their church contribution, or stop giving it completely. Therefore, in most congregations the contributions will drop, sometimes very drastically during these months. The greatest number of these lost

contributions are seldom, if ever, made up. Some of the individuals who allow this to happen, do so without thinking. Theirs is not a deliberate attempt to rob God. But even though it is done unconscionably, the effect is the same: God is robbed. "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).

Satan must truly rejoice during the season known as summer. Nakedness, drunkenness, and covetousness greatly increase, while the work of the Lord is seen to decrease. We can combat the subtle Satan in all of these areas, if we just will. Immodestly can be overcome by adorning ourselves in modest apparel. Intoxication can be fought by refusing to look upon the wine when it is red in the cup. Idolatry can be halted by cheerfully giving as we have been prospered upon the first day of the week, regardless of other expenses. And indifference will be lessened as we strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die. Our prayer is that the Lord's work and the Lord's people will not be affected by the "I's" of summer.

—P.O. Box 126, Belmont, MS 38827.

School Of Biblical Studies To Expand Offerings

We recently announced that the School of Biblical Studies at Faulkner University has added twenty-eight new classes to its schedule of course offerings. We are making every effort to continue to reinforce the curriculum of the School of Biblical Studies and to expand our offerings. Several of the new classes will also serve to supplement pre-graduate studies.

The School will add eight classes on expository preaching, because of our commitment to adequately and thoroughly train our young men to preach. The courses are designed to build skills in the preparation and delivery of expository sermons, and to give students a storehouse of sermonic material. Areas of the Bible covered by the new classes include Joshua, Psalms, Jeremiah, Minor Prophets, John and his Epistles, Acts, General Epistles and Great Chapters of the Bible. **Difficult Texts Explained** (Old and New testaments) will also help students in this area.

The school will strengthen the preparation of future preachers in other areas by offering more courses which deal with relevant ethical and doctrinal issues. **Christian Ethics** is a new offering that will explore ethical conduct in the light of Bible teaching. Students will learn to handle such issues as abortion, euthanasia, war, and genetic engineering.

Christian Apologetics I and II, Denominational Doctrines I and II, History of Reli-



Wendell Winkler

gious Thought, the Case for Christianity and Historical and Current Issues in the Church will study challenges to the faith. Topics of study will include evidences for the existence of God and the deity of Christ, atheism, evolution, humanism, modern religious cults and denominations, the validity of Christianity, and divisive issues in the church.

Two new courses will increase the scope of offerings to equip the graduate for working in the local congregational setting. **The Local Church Program and Local Church Leadership** will explore planning and implementing a workable program of work (including visitation, youth, evangelism, etc.), and principles and their application for effective leadership, including the study of the roles of elders, deacons and teachers.

The School is strengthening its offerings in the home and family area. Our training will cover material from pre-marriage to successful child-rearing.

—Dean, School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36193.

False Assumptions

Ancil Jenkins

I am indebted to Bob Forcum for this story: A man was going into a building when he saw a security man holding a dog. "Does your dog bite?" asked the man.

"No," the guard replied.

As the man walked into the building, the dog pulled free from the guard and attacked the man, biting him several times.

"I thought you said your dog didn't bite," cried the suffering man.

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Good Intentions Don't Get Work Done

The writer to the Hebrews said, "For when for the 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. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).



Edsel Burleson

Inspiration is here stressing the importance

of not only doing what we know, but also what we could have known. Far too few are doing as well as they know, much less trying to increase knowledge.

A young solicitor for a farm journal was canvassing in a farm community trying to get subscribers for his paper. He approached an old farmer who was leaning against a rickety fence in front of a dilapidated house, reflectively chewing a wisp of hay which dangled across a chin bristling with a two week's growth of whiskers.

"My paper will be of immense value to you," argued the young salesman. "By reading it, you will be able to learn to farm better, to be more efficient and economical, and you will naturally make more money." The farmer shook his head decisively. "Nope," he said, "tain't no use fer me to read your paper, young feller. I ain't farming now as good as I know how."

How sad that this illustrates the condition of so many in the church. Consider just about

any area of the activities of the average congregation and note the number of folk who "ain't doing now as good as they know how."

A dressmaker's apprentice, after being severely reprimanded for having ruined a costly dress of a regular customer, replied, "I did the best I knew. I don't see what she is blaming me for." The dressmaker replied, "I'm not blaming you for doing the best you knew how, but for not knowing any better. You should — you have been here long enough! You meant well; but good intentions are not enough to carry on the dressmaking business."

And may we hasten to add, **GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO CARRY ON THE LORD'S BUSINESS!**

—West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Who Is A Godly Mother?

Continued from Page 2

attendance comes as naturally as eating.

A little boy who was carried to church from a baby, went to stay a few days with his aunt. While there, Sunday came, and he did not get to go to church because he didn't have a way. When he got back he told his mother about it and said it did not seem right. That "little boy" is a gospel preacher today.

Sometimes mothers do not take their children to church until they are large enough to have other interests; and then if they go she has to make them.

Some do not believe in making their children go to church; but they make them go to school, and make them apologize for wrong things they do or say. Why the difference?

A godly mother will love her children, and punish them if they need it (Proverbs 13:24). If she does not, she hates them!

People today are taught not to whip their

children. Some say, "It will warp their personality." That's not what the Bible says! We must "chasten them while there is hope" (Proverbs 19:18).

We do not have enough godly mothers! If we did, this world would not be in the shape it is in today. —And may I add, not enough godly fathers, either!

And it seems we don't have enough peach trees. When I grew up my parents believed in peach tree "tea." For those who don't know what that means: they used limbs off peach trees to whip their children. [I also used them on my children]. It is real good medicine for a child's personality. Why not try it?

A godly mother will not give her children everything they want. That is one thing that will warp their personality! She will teach her children to work, so they won't steal, nor depend on someone else for a living.

We have entirely too many "parasites" today. Parents are first to blame, then the government, and (in some cases) the church. We must not help those who will not work. II Thessalonians 3:10 says: "If any would not work neither should he eat."

A godly mother will take time with her children, time to answer their questions. Remember: they may not ask you again.

A godly mother will do without things so her children can have what they need. (I have seen this in reverse).

A godly mother will love her children's father (Ephesians 5:33).

There is much more that could be said about godly mothers, but I hope this will help more mothers to be godly.

We still have some godly mothers. Sister, are you one?

—Rt. 2, Detroit, AL 35552.

False Assumptions

Continued from page 3

"He doesn't," replied the guard; "but this isn't my dog."

How easy it is to assume the obvious and miss what is really true. Often there is more to a situation than meets the eye.

Life is like this. Most of us have enjoyed good health and comfort all our lives. We have known little privation and suffering. We assume life will continue like this. Yet, we come into life with no guarantees. Job was not speaking for everyone, but he was stating the truth when he said, "Man, that is born of woman is of few days and full of troubles" (Job 14:1). Just because we have not experienced this, doesn't mean we won't.

Life is good now. Many assume it will always be so. By their own reasoning, they assume God will not punish them or consign them to a living, fiery hell. They assume they will always be happy, and that life after death will only be an extension of what is now enjoyed. How often we need to be reminded of the judgment of God. The Hebrew writer said, "... after death, the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). We will face our Judge, and give

account for our lives and actions (Romans 2:5-6).

Why do we fail to look beyond the obvious and thus make false assumptions? Too often, we only look at what is seen. "... 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 Corin-

thians 4:18). There is a part of life that is unseen. It is by far the most important part of life.

We need to pray for continual help to look beyond the obvious and see the eternal truth of God.

—Sunset Church of Christ, 8445 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143.

Biblical Interpretation

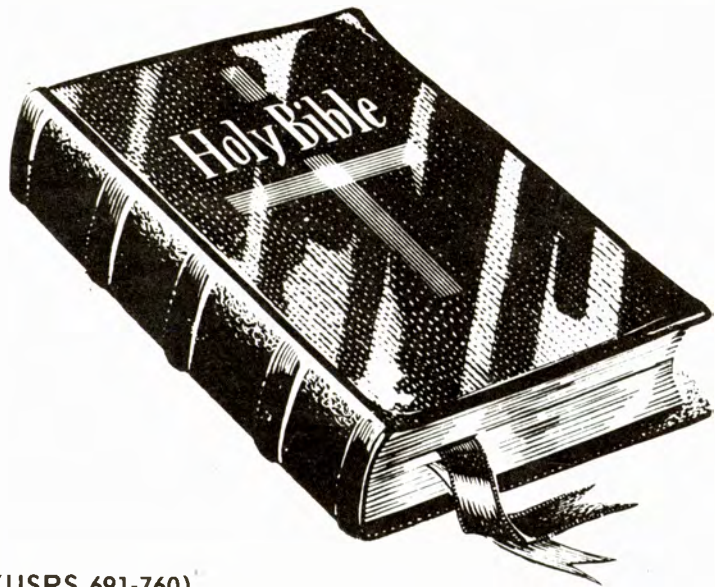
Continued from page 1

Gentile, or man and man. The blood shed on that cross also gave man the means of overcoming sin, which for centuries had stood as a barrier between man and God (Ephesians 2:11-16; Hebrews 9:22). The Gentiles, as well as the Jews, were granted repentance unto life (Acts 10:34-36, 40, 42-43; 11:15-18). In fact, it can be said that all are one in the church, or in Christ, since it is his body (Ephesians 2:16; Galatians 3:26-28). Thus, peace can be

preached to all (Ephesians 2:17-19). We are built upon the foundation of Christ, and are a temple for God to live in (2:20-22; I Corinthians 3:9, 16). Man had walked with God in the Garden of Eden. Now, in Christ, we can be in fellowship with him again through the blood of his glorious Son (I John 1:3-7).

(To be continued).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36608.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1986

NUMBER 25

Biblical Interpretation

(IV)

To truly understand any statement, it must be considered in light of the context. The context is made up of three parts: the specific statement itself; the immediate context, which includes the verses immediately before and after; and the remote context, which would include all that is said in the whole Bible about the thing being considered. It has been truly said, "A text out of its context is simply a pretext." Let us study a few examples, and try to understand some statements by letting the context speak.



Gary C. Hampton

In I Corinthians 14:34 Paul wrote: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." By reading verses 19, 23 and 25; we learn that "the churches" would be the assemblies. After reading the entire chapter, one reaches the conclusion that these instructions involved the use of spiritual gifts in the assembly. Women are not permitted to lead in public worship (I Timothy 2:8-12). Paul thus suggests that they should remain silent while the spiritual gifts were being used. Verse 35 causes us to think that some women were interrupting their husbands as they prophesied, and were disrupting the peace of the assembly by asking them questions about their prophecy before it was completed. Thus women, and particularly wives, are forbidden to interrupt a prophecy in progress. Note the other men who also had a prophecy had to wait to speak

(verse 30).

After the Philippian jailer asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?", Paul and Silas said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30-31). The context reveals that they taught him the word of the Lord, he washed their stripes (which is an evident sign of repentance), and he was baptized immediately, along with his family. In verse 34, the American Standard Version correctly records, "And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God." Clearly, "belief" in God involves hearing the truth and being baptized. That is further proven by Galatians 3:26-27 where the faith of verse 26 is explained by: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (verse 27).

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (I John 5:16). One might well ask what this passage means. In verses 13-15, John has been talking about the obedient Christian and the great confidence he should have in the power of prayer. If we ask in accord with the Lord's will we are sure to receive a good answer to our request. Verse 16 is first an example of a prayer that will be answered. If we see a brother sin a sin not unto death, we can pray for him and he will receive eternal life through forgiveness. However, there is a sin unto death that will not be forgiven if prayed for by another brother who has seen it. In 1:8, John had said that all Christians sin. In 1:9, he indicated God is ready to forgive our sins when we confess them. Denial of our sins causes us to call God a liar and his word not be in us (1:10). Evidently, the sin which is unto death is one we will not confess. We can -- in fact, we must (James 5:16) -- pray for our brothers who

confess their sins. We may pray for the brother who has sinned and will not confess; but he cannot be saved unless he confesses.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17 particularly describes the resurrection of the righteous. It tells us the dead in Christ will first be raised, and then the living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. Premillennialists would suggest these are separated by from 3-to-7½-years. Further, they would say the resurrection of the good and evil dead is at different times. The remote context will not allow such a position. II Thessalonians 1:7-10 tells us the wicked will be punished at the Lord's return when the Lord is glorified in his saints. John 5:28-29 says both good and bad will come forth in the same hour.

In John 21:15 Jesus asks: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" In the immediate context, we have both a large catch of fish provided by a miracle of Jesus' after a long unfruitful night of fishing, and also Peter's fellow disciples (1-14). Which of "these" does the Lord intend to refer to? Why not both? It may have reminded Peter of another time when the Lord had him cast out his nets after a fruitless night, and how the Lord said he would be a fisher of men (Luke 5:1-11). Jesus may have been asking if Peter would continue to forsake his nets for him. Likely it would also remind him of his confident boast, and his denial that followed (Matthew 26:31-33, 69-75). Now, he does not brag with such confidence but expresses a genuine love.

(To be continued.)

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, Alabama 36608.

Looking ahead is a good way to keep from falling behind.



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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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"Filthy Lucre"

CECIL MAY JR.

Samuel's sons did not walk in the ways of their godly father, "but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment" (I Samuel 8:3). Both elders and deacons are to be chosen from among men who are "not greedy of filthy lucre," "not given to filthy lucre" (I Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7). Elders are to take the oversight and shepherding of the flock because of "a ready mind," and "not for filthy lucre" (I Peter 5:2). In contrast, certain unruly deceivers, "whose mouths must be stopped," are "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:11).

"Filthy lucre" is not a synonym for money. Money itself is not evil. Abraham was blessed of God and was wealthy, but was never said to possess filthy lucre. Three things can turn money into filthy lucre: the way it is gained, the way it is used, and the attitude one has toward it.

Ill-gotten gain is filthy lucre. Money taken as a bribe, money stolen, money due another unjustly held back for oneself, money kept from the government by signing a lie, a preacher's salary that continues after the preacher abdicates his responsibility to courageously proclaim the truth: these funds become "filthy" lucre by the sinful ways they are received.

Misused money is filthy lucre. Money used for bribery is "filthy," for it is a sin to give a bribe as well as to receive one; money used for alcohol to drink, drugs to abuse, or pornography to lecherously peruse; money used entirely for one's own fleshly satisfaction, however truthfully or respectably, without a thought to the poor or the lost, ignoring God and his cause: these become "filthy" lucre by their sinful use.

Coveted coins and bills become filthy lucre. Covetousness is idolatry. Whether we have little or much, to desire money to the extent that we would do wrong or neglect right to get it, is to put money before God. Jesus reminded the covetous of the rich man who died and was buried, but awoke in Hades and torment. To one who thought his goods were

Continued on page 4

The Church In Prophecy, Preparation, And In Fact

Long ago a prophet of God stated, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44). Daniel was speaking of the coming kingdom (or church) of our Lord. Jesus the Christ identified the kingdom to be the church in Matthew

16:18-19. The apostle Paul said that the church is the body and Christ is the head of it (Colossians 1:18). Therefore, the kingdom can be referred to as the church, and also as the body of Christ.

Isaiah, the city prophet spoke of the church in prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-4. He, through the inspiration of God, said that the church is the body and Christ is the head of it (Colossians 1:18). Therefore, the kingdom can be referred to as the church, and also as the body of Christ.

Isaiah, the city prophet spoke of the church in prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-4. He, through the inspiration of God, said that the church would come in the "last days" and would be established in the city of Jerusalem. The Hebrew writer described the "last days" to be existence in the Christian dispensation (Hebrews 1:1,2). The "last days" began on Pentecost and will remain until time shall be no more (Acts 2). The "last days" were not to be found during the Old Testament dispensation (Hebrews 10:1; 8:8-13).

Isaiah, as well as Zechariah prophesied that the place for the establishment of the church would be in the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 28:16; 2:2, 3; Zechariah 1:16). The extent or domain of the kingdom would be to all nations (Isaiah 2:2). This would be in accordance with Christ's command to preach the gospel to all the world or nations (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). The preaching of the gospel to "all nations" would not begin until Pentecost in 33 A.D. (Matthew 10:5-6). The apostle Paul recorded (Colossians 1:23) that the gospel was universally proclaimed, thus fulfilling the prophecy given by Isaiah (Isaiah 2:2).

Reliable men of inspiration spoke of the church in the preparatory stage, in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and thus not in a complete existence. John the baptizer spoke of the church as being "at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2). Jesus the Christ spoke of his church in the preparatory stage as he stated, "That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). The Twelve were commissioned to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:7). The Seventy were told to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh



Harold Bigham

unto you" (Luke 10:9). Some in the very age of the Christ still looked with great anticipation toward the coming of the church in fact. The Thief on the cross, as well as Joseph of Arimathea realized that the church was still in the preparatory stage (Luke 23:42; Mark 15:42-43). Therefore any church that came before Pentecost was much too early; and any church that came after Pentecost was much too late, to be the Lord's church.

The church of Christ came into a complete existence, or was fully established in fact, on the day of Pentecost, as the gospel of Christ was being preached by the apostles and was obeyed by sinners on that glorious occasion. Peter stood up and uncompromisingly proclaimed the Lord's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 2:22-36). Those who were pricked by the gospel (Romans 1:16), obeyed the gospel and were added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). The church of Christ spoken of in prophecy and in preparation finally came in fact! The church of Christ exists now wherever the pure and unadulterated gospel is preached and obeyed and lived! The church of Christ will never be destroyed. It has weathered many violent storms over the ages, but it remains! As Daniel by inspiration said, "It shall stand forever!" (Daniel 2:44).

The church of Christ as seen in prophecy, preparation, and in fact, is the "called out" body of believers who have been obedient to the commands of the gospel. Friend, will you not become a member of the church of Christ, as thousands of others have done throughout the ages? Will you not remain faithful and true till death (Revelation 2:10)? By hearing (Romans 10:17), believing (Mark 16:16), repenting (Luke 13:3), confessing the name of Christ (Acts 8:37), and by being baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38), you can become a member of the church that was prophesied, was prepared, and is now in existence!

—P.O. Box 544, Bay Springs, MS 39422.

Short Sermons

The world is no longer at the crossroads; it's at the traffic light.

We are rewarded for our good works, not for our good intentions.

A man may be down, but he isn't out . . . unless he'd rather talk about his ill fortune than his prospects.

Some people's minds are like concrete -- all mixed up and thoroughly set.

When a man is down on everybody, he's completely down . . . in more ways than one.

The devil's traps are never set in the middle of God's road.

Your Last Journey

During your lifetime, you have taken many journeys away from home. From these journeys you have returned-- more or less at your own will. But, you will soon be taking a journey from which you will not return. We know that at the end of this age there will be a general resurrection (John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:20-28), but of that event we do not here speak.



W. A. Holley

The Hebrew writer mentions a special appointment which we all must keep: "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Death is the inevitable fate of all except those alive when Jesus Christ comes (I Corinthians 15:51). The scriptures teach that all preparation for eternity must be made before we are dead (Matthew 25:5-10; Luke 16:19-31). After death there is no second chance!

We have but a few years to live here upon this earth. "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return," said Job (Job 16:22). The history of man has been one of departure (Job 14:1-2). Man's life is like a shadow or a flower which is destined to fade away (James 4:14; I Peter 1:24). Wealth cannot purchase one's way into heaven (Psalms 49:6-8; Matthew 16:26). Thus, all must come to the end of life, and all must leave their wealth behind (I Timothy 6:7). It is the gravest folly for one to set one's hopes and desires on this world, which is temporary.

We shall now quote Psalms 90:10: "For the days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

In view of the fact that we shall be soon "cut off" and "fly away," how should we spend our days? Human beings are free moral agents--creatures of choice. This fact is taught in Deuteronomy 30:15, 19; Joshua 24:15, and in many "whosoever will" passages of the New Testament (Cf. Matthew 19:9; Galatians 5:10; Revelation 22:17).

There are but two ways (roads) through this world: the strait and narrow, and the wide and broad. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14; Cf. Luke 13:24).

Will you choose to follow in the "broad way?" What is the "broad way?" It is the way of lust, sin, and unrighteousness. We shall quote the apostle Paul: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told

you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Dear Reader, you may try to rationalize the sins of your life away, arguing that after all, sin is not so bad, since countless millions are dedicated to its perpetuation. But do not be deceived: what people sow, people must reap (Galatians 6:7-9). Just as sure as there is a heaven, there also is a hell (Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 21:8).

Those who choose to follow in the "strait and narrow way" will enter heaven, with all of its wonderful splendor (Revelation 21:1-4; John 14:1-6). Here is the very best way ever devised through this old, cruel world. Its promises are wonderful, its rewards can never be surpassed, its hopes outshine our fondest dreams. Heaven!!! -- the vision of the soul of man!! One who does not enjoy the Lord's assembly with the saints, would, no doubt, be out of place in heaven.

But, since you, Dear Reader, are going to take your last journey, there are three requirements necessary for a safe journey. What are these requirements? We shall note--

First, you will need a guide. You would not think of traveling from Alabama to New York City without obtaining a reliable road map, would you? Well, in just the same way you need a safe guide to heaven, and that safe guide is the sacred scriptures (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21; I Corinthians 2:9-16). This book tells you what to do to be saved, how to worship God, and how to live (Mark 16:15-16; John 4:24; Titus 2:11-12). Will you believe and obey its demands?

Second, the necessary preparation must be made. You would not journey to New York City without preparing for your trip. Amos,

the ancient prophet, exhorted the Israelites of his day, saying: "... Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12). It is always well for one to count the cost of one's actions (Luke 14:31-32). How did the Pentecostians prepare themselves to stand before God? Well, they believed Jesus to be the Son of God, they repented of their sins, and they were baptized in Jesus' name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). How was Saul of Tarsus saved? He was saved by faith when it led him to obey the commands of the Lord (Acts 9:6; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4, 17-18). No person can be saved in disobedience (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Third, one must have a special companion to travel with him into the next world. Your husband or wife, or other family members may accompany you to the cemetery, but that is as far as they can go. But there is One who can lead you across the dark, stormy, river of death. In Psalms 23 we have that sublime assurance. Verse 4 says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." The Lord walks with those who walk with him (I Chronicles 28:9; II Chronicles 15:2). One must die in the Lord, if one wishes to rest eternally in his presence (Revelation 14:13).

How does one enter into Christ? By an obedient faith. What does an obedient faith include? An obedient faith comprehends repentance (Luke 13:3), the confession of Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33), and baptism in the name of Jesus for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). Prepare NOW for your last journey. —P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Crab Grass Will Not Produce Violets

Jesus said, "Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (Mark 4:24). In the beginning God established the law that every seed brings forth after it's own kind. This law applies to every kind of seed.

Paul underscored the application of this rule to man's daily living by warning, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

This beautiful story tells how a little boy learned this wonderful lesson because his echo persisted in answering him every time he said something.

The little boy (let us call him Johnny) went home to his mother and said, "Mother, I was out on the hill by the spring and when I called across the lake there was a boy

mocking me."

"How do you mean, Johnny?" said his mother.

"I was calling out, 'Ho!' and this boy said, 'Ho!' So I said to him, 'Who are you?' and he answered, 'Who are you?' I said, 'What is your name?' He said, 'What is your name?' And I said to him, 'Why don't you show yourself?' He said, 'Show yourself?' And I jumped over the ditch and went into the woods and could not find him so I came back and said, 'If you don't come out and show yourself, I will beat you!' and he said, 'Will beat you!'"

His mother said, "Ah, Johnny! If you had said, 'Your voice is sweet,' he would have said, 'Your voice is sweet.' If you had said, 'I love you,' he would have said, 'I love you.' Whatever you said to him, he would have said back to you. You see, it was really just an echo!"

Then his mother said, "Now, Johnny, when you grow up and get to be a man, whatever you say to others they will, by and by, say to you."

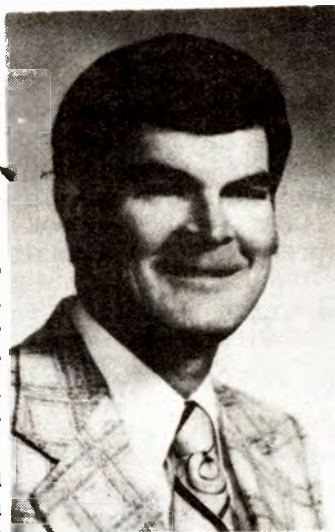
An unknown poet put it this way:
 We sow a thought and reap an act;
 We sow an act and reap a habit;
 We sow a habit and reap a character;
 We sow a character and reap a destiny.
 —West End Church of Christ, 420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.



Edsel Burleson

“A” “A”

“A” “A”? That's right! Attitude Adjustment. If a person wants to learn to do something, he must make an attitude adjustment. If he doesn't know how, he must want to learn. If he doesn't want to learn, he never will. There must be desire upon the part of the individual.



Ray Hawk

How much do you and I want growth in the church? There are at least five ways that growth will never come. **First**, it will never come by finding fault with everyone else. That line of thinking degenerates into nitpicking, back-stabbing, and other distasteful things that should never happen in the Lord's body (Galatians 5:15-17). **Second**, it will never come by one person expecting more out of others than he puts forth himself (Matthew 23:3). **Third**, it will never come if we have the clergy-laity view in the church, whereby we believe that is why we have hired preachers (Mark 10:42-45). **Fourth**, it will never come if members believe they have no responsibility to the lost (Luke 19:10; I Peter 2:21). **Fifth**, it will never come so long as there is one member who has no desire to be a minister and priest, offering up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord (I Peter 2:5, 9).

“A” “A” ON GROWTH

First, we need to sow as much seed as we can. If we limit our seed sowing to fifteen or twenty people, we will end up reaping fewer souls for the Lord than if we sow the seed among 1,000 people (Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23).

Second, we must make the gospel appealing (Philippians 1:27). One of the biggest turn-offs is an unfriendly congregation (Proverbs 18:24). If a congregation hears this criticism against it, it usually goes on the defensive and counters that it is very friendly. Usually that is correct --it is friendly --to itself! Members are so eager to talk to one another that they almost run over visitors trying to get to their friends! Friendliness is one thing that we must constantly work on. It is the responsibility of every member, not just for those who have been listed as Sunday morning and evening greeters. We must seek out our visitors, and make them feel welcomed and at home.

Third, we must be proud of our congregation! If you bought a new car, you would be proud of, and talk positive about, it. If you are a young woman and receive an engagement ring from the one you love, you would be proud of it and want people to see it. When we are proud of something, we talk it up in an excited and positive way. Solomon said, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22). Can you imagine a man getting married and when he returns to work tell his co-laborers all her physical and personality faults? If such husbands or wives exist, they aren't very good spouses! The member who goes to work and never says anything good about the church, isn't much of a member. He needs an attitude adjustment in the worst way.

Would you want to attend another congregation if the member who had invited you kept complaining about something con-

nected with his church? Would you buy a car if others who had bought that model complained about one thing or another and said they would never buy another one? If two people who worked with you invited you to their church services and one talked his church up and the other was usually complaining about something in his, which invitation would you most likely accept? Think about it! Find something positive to say about your congregation, every chance you get.

If you had your choice between two congregations, if one were the Laodicean

congregation and the other were the Philadelphia church, which one would you want to work and worship with (Revelation 3:7-19)? The members at Laodicea needed an attitude adjustment!

Fourth, we need to be a service organization. People want to be a part of something that cares for others (Galatians 6:9-10).

Growth will come as we improve in these areas. Each of us needs to look into the perfect law of liberty and start with self improvement (James 1:21-25). Let us use it to its fullest to the glory of God!

—39 Webb Drive, Jackson, Tennessee 38301.

Then Trouble Came

Some folks are ashamed to admit that they have problems, yet the Bible says problems are an occasion for rejoicing:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2-3).

Problems promote prayer, fasting, and diligent Bible study. Our stomachs churn and we cannot eat.

We stay up late and wake up early. As never before, we see how much we need to know THE BOOK. As never before, we realize how weak and helpless we are. As never before, we know how much we need God's help.

Problems can promote brotherly love. During the good times, we have our get-togethers, play trivia, and enjoy each other's company; but when trouble comes, we don't care how many golf balls are on the moon! We say we know each other and love one



Tom L. Childers

another, but we never really know each other and we cannot really appreciate each other until it seems our world is caving in. During hardships, we develop an appreciation for faithful brethren that will be with us till we die.

Problems can also promote unity. Most people think problems divide. In some ways they do; but problems force us to look at what is right, and what is wrong. When we know what is right after study, prayer and fasting, and if we love the truth, we will all rally around what is right. Thus we are united.

Problems make it possible for us to see our true colors. When all is smooth sailing, everybody can be kind and sweet and say they love the Lord; but in the heat of battle, we see what kind of character we really have, and so do others. When trouble comes, it is impossible to hide what you really are.

It is not a shame to have problems. It is a shame not to be able to profit by them. It is a shame to use them as an excuse to become unfaithful. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

—P.O. Box 38, Alamo, TN 38001.

Why Have Gospel Meetings?

Ray Bush

Are there any valid reasons for our having a gospel meeting, or a “revival”? I believe there are a number of reasons, but I will only suggest three at this time.

I. TO PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

This has to be the basic fundamental reason for any gospel meeting anywhere. If the crucified Christ is not preached, why even bother to have a meeting? Christ is the Lamb of God that was sent to take the sin of the world (John 1:29), and “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” of sins (Hebrews 9:22); so he had to be crucified to redeem us (Ephesians 1:7). This must be preached.

II. FOR PEOPLE TO

BE CONVINCED AND CONVICTED

The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles for the very purpose of reproving or convincing the world of sin (John 16:7-8). People have to be convinced that they are lost in sin (Ephesians 2:1-12), and thus be convicted of their guilt so as to realize their hopeless condition without Christ.

III. FOR PEOPLE TO BE CONVERTED

People need to be converted -- turned -- from their sinful lives to a life of service to God. In the apostle Peter's second recorded sermon, this is exactly what he told people:

“Repent ye therefore and be converted,” or “turn again” A.S.V. (Acts 3:19). He told them to repent and be converted. A parallel verse is Acts 2:38 where he told people to repent and be baptized for remission of their sins. They were thus saved from past sins (v. 47).

Have you heard Christ crucified preached? Are you convinced and convicted? Are you converted? If not, “come thou with us and we will do thee good.”

—Rt. 5, Box 254, Athens, AL 35611.

“Filthy Lucre”

Continued from page 1

sufficient refuge, and that he had no need for God, the Lord said, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be?” When we trust our money, or what it will buy, more than we trust God; when we let our interest in things crowd out our devotion to God, we turn all of our money to “filthy” lucre.

What do you have in your pocket? Is it money? or is it “filthy” lucre?

—President, Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1109, Kosciusko, MS 39090.



(USPS 691-760)

W O R D S O F

T R U T H

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 26

The Biblical Way To Deal With Public Error

(No. 1)

"The problem is that many brethren do not hesitate to publicly promote false doctrine and false teachers, but then insist that we can say nothing about it without first talking privately to them." So stated Guy F. Hester, while serving as evangelist of the Garfield Heights Church of Christ in Indianapolis, Indiana in a bulletin (February 10, 1980; emphasis ours). That statement is deserving of a hearty "AMEN!" Public error demands public correction! In an excellent article in the *Firm Foundation*, February 19, 1974, brother Charles Whitmire made the following penetrating analogy in this regard:



Bert Thompson

"If a schoolboy sits at his desk and writes on his spelling paper, 'kat,' the teacher can look over his shoulder and privately correct his error without involving the rest of the class. However, if the same boy writes 'kat' on the chalkboard, and all the class is watching, the teacher cannot afford to take Johnny aside privately, tell him that 'cat' is spelled with a 'c,' and say nothing to the class. The public error would not be corrected by a private correction. The entire class is affected, and may be erroneously led to believe that 'kat' is the proper way to spell 'cat.' Now the teacher should act with love, and consideration, trying as she may to make the correction with the least possible embarrassment. However, consideration for the best welfare of

all concerned demands that public error be given public rebuttal. This is equally true among brethren. There have been some ideas advanced of late that have no basis in biblical teaching . . . when public error is involved, public refutation of that error is necessary" (p. 120).

Indeed, brother Whitmire is correct -- even though his article was written twelve years ago -- that "there have been some ideas advanced of late that have no basis in biblical teaching." One such idea was advanced in an article in the *Firm Foundation* (under then editor Reuell Lemmons), February 12, 1980, pp. 3 & 11. The article, authored by John N. Clayton of South Bend, Indiana, stated, among other things: "Perhaps Satan's most effective weapon in stopping the work of the church in the 20th century has been by his influence on some members of the church who are concerned about liberalism and modernism within the church . . . It seems to this writer that we have brothers in the church today who are either ignorant of God's teaching in this area or are so far from Christ spiritually that they are, in fact, fighting God." The article was entitled "If I Were To Take Issue With My Brother," and had as its major thrust the admonition that Matthew 18:15-17 applies to **anyone and everyone** who makes an attempt to deal with error. In other words, regardless of how the error is perpetrated, against whom it is committed, or to whom it is made known, the **only** way to deal with it is through the edict found in Matthew 18:15-17. To this we simply cannot agree!

The article to which we have just referred is not the first attempt to legislate where the Bible does not legislate. Brotherhood papers have been filled in the past several years with articles attempting to state that anyone **not** going to someone **privately** who is teaching error somehow violates Matthew 18:15-17. An amazing state of affairs, is it not, that a pass-

age as clear as Matthew 18:15-17 could be controverted so often? The brilliant Restoration scholar, J. W. McGarvey, saw the obvious need to comment on the correct exegesis of Matthew 18:15-17, and therefore stated in his classical *Commentary on Matthew and Mark* concerning this passage: "This rule of procedure is given only for cases of personal offense, where one individual has sinned against another. We are to learn from other portions of the New Testament how to deal with offenses of other kinds" (p. 159).

Charles Whitmire, in the article referred to earlier, stated:

"The passage in Matthew 18:15-17 is often cited to show that one must go to a brother privately before involving others in the matter publicly. And, indeed such is the obligation in matters of personal, or private, offense. . . . When error is taught publicly, the trespass is not against an individual, but against the Lord and his word. It is to remove Matthew 18:15-17 from its context and intended usage, to apply it to those guilty of teaching error publicly."

Error does not always come to us in easy-to-see wolf's clothing. Sometimes it appears in flowing oratory and "smoothed over" phrases. But both Peter and Paul recognized that the truth can be perverted to fit the purposes of men (II Peter 4:16; Galatians 1:7). If one knows only a certain passage, and has been trained (or is otherwise inclined) to use **only** that certain passage, ignoring other important biblical precepts dealing with the issues, misconceptions inevitably result. This is oftentimes the case in regard to Matthew 18:15-17.

We repeat: **public error demands public correction.** And quoting Matthew 18:15-17

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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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Unity Among The Apostles

Tom Lynch

Probably no one doubts that those who are working to unite the church with the Christian Church have good intentions. It is equally probable that no faithful Christian opposes Bible-based unity of all who claim to be followers of Christ.

Much of the discussion concerning unity is based on the prayer of our Lord which is recorded in John 17. Particular attention is given to Jesus' statement that "they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:11). Since this is a vital part of the controversy, it would seem to be important for us to examine the unity for which Jesus was praying: unity among the apostles. There are three points we should consider about this unity.

First, consider that before the unity for which Christ prayed could be, it was necessary to remove one who was corrupt. Jesus, you will recall, prayed for this unity to be "as we are." This was not possible as long as "the son of perdition" was one of the number. Could any consider it possible for the apostles to have unity with one such as Judas until he repented of his sin? Had Judas survived, would it have been acceptable for the remaining followers of Christ to have fellowship with him for unity's sake? Is there any reason to believe they would have desired fellowship with such a man?

Certainly no one would claim that faithful followers of God could or would fellowship Judas. Some of those who would have refused fellowship with Judas are encouraging fellowship with others who are as well caught up in sin, saying that above all there must be unity.

The second point we should be sure to realize is that the unity for which Jesus prayed was based upon commitment to him through obedience to the word. Notice Christ's own words: concerning the apostles he says, "They have kept thy word" (John 17:6). Of himself he says, "I have given unto them the

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Motivated By The Macedonians

Recently Brother Bill Cantrell who preaches for the East Huntsville Church related some points for a sermon he preached on II Corinthians 8:1-6. I have since that time adopted some of them and they have been a part of a sermon and form a part of the basis for this article.

You are aware that these verses form the background for the great compliment Paul paid those churches of Macedonia for the way they responded by giving to aid the needy in Judea. The first mention of Macedonians in the New Testament represents one asking for help, not giving it. Such a one was seen in the vision of Paul, saying: "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). We know later Paul had traveling companions from that area (Acts 19:29; 27:2). They would surely be among those who received such a compliment. Such folk would be a welcome addition for local congregations, both then and now.

These were used of Paul as an example to motivate Corinth to go ahead and complete what they promised and planned to do a year before (II Corinthians 8:10).

Notice The Circumstances Out Of Which They Gave.

Paul says, "How that in a great trial of affliction . . . and their deep poverty" (II Corinthians 8:2). You wouldn't say their circumstances for giving to help others were conducive to make it easy to give, would you? These folk are poor, and face persecution. Remember: this is not what they said about their circumstances; this is what Paul said. There is no hint that they would even think of using such to excuse themselves.

These folk did not give out of an abundance; for they just didn't have that much. They were a whole lot like that widow who gave "of her want" (Luke 21:4). They were a lot like many of our good folk in the church, who don't have very much, but that just prompts them to do more and more. They are like a mother that may be "bone tired," and hurting; but she will arise at the cry of one of her children in need -- and such will be done without a murmur.

No, the circumstances aren't very good, but that doesn't matter to the Macedonians.

2. Look At Their Capacity To Give (verse 3).

Paul said they were willing to give more than they were able to give. Really, the only thing that limited their giving was the capacity, not the willingness. Again, such is like that widow: she gave "all that she had." She went as far as she had the capacity to go (Mark 12:44).

Can you imagine what these folk would give if their circumstances were not so adverse? Can you imagine what they would give if they were in our position, with our homes, our cars, and our affluence? I know what they did without such!

3. Take Notice of Their Concept Of Giving (verse 4).



Winfred Clark

"Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift." They begged for an opportunity. They didn't view it as a burden to be shunned; but rather, a blessing in which to share. They would feel as if they had been robbed if they were passed by and not afforded the opportunity! They loved their Lord and their brethren too much to allow them not to have a part with others in aiding those in need.

This would be true in a family where a mother or father passed away. The children would no doubt provide a floral blanket for the casket of their loved one. Each family member would want to have a part so as to express his or her respect and esteem for the loved one. To pass one by, and not afford him or her that privilege, would be an injustice. Each one would surely ask to have a part! In this same way, those of Macedonia begged to have a part.

4. Look At The Cause For Such Giving (verse 5).

"But first they gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God." There is your reason! There is the background! This gives the real answer. They knew they belonged to the Lord, and all they had also belonged to him. That made them stewards of his possessions, so they were giving what he had given them. They, along with what they had, were committed to the Lord; so that makes giving a very simple matter.

Doesn't a husband belong to a wife? Isn't what he has, hers? His giving for her benefit is a natural consequence of the relationship.

The first order of business had been taken care of with those of Macedonia: they gave themselves to the Lord. Giving, along with other things, fell in place.

5. Now Take A Look At The Consequences Of Their Giving (verse 6).

"Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also." Paul says the inspiration the Macedonians had been -- in the way they gave -- now moved him to complete the task of gathering the collection at Corinth and elsewhere and get the job done. You can be assured it would be a whole lot easier because of the motivation of those marvelous Macedonians!

Was such an effort to motivate successful? Take a look at Romans 15:26, and you will see that a certain contribution was made by those of Macedonia and Achaia. Corinth was in the province of Achaia. Were they motivated as they should have been? We would hope so.

—P.O. Box 1025, Athens, AL 35611.

Short Sermons

Too many parents tie up their dogs and let their children run loose.

When experience is the teacher, you get the test first and the lesson afterward.

There are several modest people but too many of them are conceited about it.

Stopping at third base adds no more to the score than striking out.

The thing about the younger generation that worries me most is that I am no longer a member of it.

Keeping The "Unity Of The Spirit"

The "unity of the Spirit" is that unity of faithful believers which is achieved through the Holy Spirit's word. Any thing else is not that "unity of the Spirit" which Paul had in mind (Ephesians 4:3).



W. A. Holley

I have been preaching the gospel of Christ for more than 52 years. During this period of time I have observed many changes of attitude by many preachers and elders. Some of the changes of attitude have been good; but most of them, bad. In the last few years we have detected the winds of compromise in many places. Some seem to want a large and popular denominational 'church of Christ': such preachers and elders have ceased standing for the Old Jerusalem Gospel, and have been looking for an "easier religion" where terms of membership are not so strict, and where more entertainment can be brought into the church. For example, open membership, whether one is baptized for remission of sins or not, church sponsored ball teams, etc., just like the Baptist Church or the Christian Church, et al. But, thank God, there are a few who have not bowed their knees to Baal (I Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4). True soldiers of the cross will steadfastly

resist all human innovations where the church and its worship are concerned (Galatians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

Ephesians 4:3-6 says: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Herein is set forth God's holy platform for the "unity of the Spirit." Thus, the unity of the Spirit was achieved in the apostolic age. What was required then is what is required now!!

In our day the so-called "unity meeting" may be nothing more than a "unity of compromise." The participants may talk of "unity" or "union" -- but not the "unity of the Spirit" as set forth in the sacred scriptures (I Peter 4:11). We do not think it sinful to talk of Bible unity with erring religious leaders, but to do so under a dark cloud of compromise is another matter. Indeed!

Example of the Apostles

Did the apostles ever engage in compromise with other religious leaders? Listen to Paul: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (not embrace them, WAH). "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). We shall read another statement from the same writer,

the inspired apostle Paul. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: 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? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for we are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 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 6:14-7:1).

Example of Jesus

Another question: Did Jesus Christ, the master teacher, ever seek to compromise with the Pharisees and Sadducees? (Matthew 15:1-20; Luke 20:27-38). Assuredly, Jesus loved these people; but his love did not remove their sins from them!!

The notion that the Lord's church can be filled with homosexuals, lesbians, piano-players in worship, adulterers, and the like, is far from God's truth. If such wish to be saved, let them forsake their sinful ways and obey the truth of God (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21).

Jesus did, indeed, pray for the unity of all true believers. Near the time of his death, Jesus prayed: "Neither pray I for these alone,

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The Biblical Way To Deal With Public Error

Continued from page 1

from now until the Judgment Day will not change biblical precepts in this matter. No one among us disagrees with the fact that a situation in which a brother sins against a brother needs to be handled in light of Matthew 18:15-17. That, however, is not the issue at hand. The obvious question arises: "Are there any instances in the New Testament where public error was dealt with-- in a public way?" The overwhelming answer is a resounding: YES!

Paul openly and immediately rebuked Peter for dissimulation in Galatians 2:11-12. Here we see a zealous defender of the truth in positive and instant and public action. Based on Paul's writings there is no scriptural basis for delay in countering false doctrine. Souls are at stake when false doctrine is being taught -- especially publicly! Christians can do no less than follow the examples given in the scriptures on how to correct such situations. The false philosophy of "wait and see" advocated by Gamaliel (Acts 5:34, 40) is not the way to deal with public error! Paul did not practice that type of "wait and see" attitude in regard to Peter's error.

Nor did he so deal with the Corinthian brethren in their many errors. Paul deals sternly with a division of allegiance, and does it publicly in a letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 1:12-13). Paul sternly and without delay rebukes the Corinthians for harboring a fornicator (5:1, 5). Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their unacceptable observance of the Lord's supper and teaches them again the proper observance (11:17, 34). Paul found it necessary to reinstruct the Corinthians on the subject of spiritual gifts (14:1,

31). Paul corrected the Corinthians on the subject of the resurrection (15:12ff). The highly significant factor in all of Paul's Corinthian epistles is the promptness of the correction of the error! Another factor is Paul's concern for souls who would be lost if corrective steps were not promptly taken.

In the Galatian epistle Paul is concerned that the Galatians are departing from the gospel of Christ and returning to the Law (1:1, 22). And so he spends the remainder of the epistle in reinstruction in the gospel they had been taught. No "wait and see!" No delay! No attempt to correct privately that which had been done in public! Rather, we see prompt and successful handling of a troublesome situation.

The first three chapters of the book of Revelation lend insight into this matter of publicly correcting error as well. Here we have it on record that what John wrote was the testimony of Jesus Christ (1:23). What did John write? He told the church in Ephesus to repent and return to their first love or lose their candlestick (2:1, 5). Pergamos was severely rebuked for harboring the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, and was told to repent or they would be fought with the sword of his mouth (2:12, 16). Similarly, we find that in the remainder of chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation error is rebuked strongly and promptly -- and publicly! Souls are at stake. Public error demands public correction. And we would do well to remember that the more "righteous" the error appears on the surface, the more dangerous it is.

Brother Hollis Miller, writing in the *Gospel Advocate* (June 21, 1979), states the matter well:

"Some Christians tend to feel a tinge of guilt about opposing error. Their emotional desire to be kind toward all men works against their mental understanding that allegiance to truth should always receive priority. The paradox in this situation is that one is not really being unkind when truth is upheld. To the contrary, it is both unkind and unchristian to appease error in order to keep one's goodness from being called into question . . . Those espousing error sometimes attempt to defend their position by appealing to the emotions of good men and women. Few situations are more dangerous in either a local congregation or in the brotherhood at large than when an exponent of error successfully assumes a martyr's role. When such conditions arise it can be tempting for otherwise dedicated Christians to defend a personality rather than analytically evaluating the erroneous position the individual holds. If one subscribing to error can convince others that his position properly belongs in the category of opinion his opportunities for winning converts will be greatly enhanced" (p. 388, emphasis ours).

In our next installment we shall examine those people in the New Testament who taught error, and who were dealt with in a public manner -- because they taught public error. —Apologetics Pres., 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117-2752.

Should Christians Support The Salvation Army

Wayne Jackson

Some of the doctrinal errors of this movement are outlined as follows:

(1) The Salvation Army teaches that in consequence of our first parents' sin, we are born sinners, totally depraved, having inherited a disposition to self-pleasing (Handbook, pp. 85-86). The Bible does not teach such a notion. Sin is not inherited (Ezekiel 18:20), and "little ones" know neither good nor evil (Deuteronomy 1:29). God is the Father of our spirits (Hebrews 12:9); hence, when they come from him (Ecclesiastes 12:7), they are as pure as the source. Man begins to practice evil in his youth (Genesis 8:21). Jesus had a human mother. Was he at least half depraved?

(2) Salvation Army doctrine contends that man has no way to be saved simply through the gospel message of salvation; rather, he must receive a special "illumination of the Holy Spirit," so that he may personally know that word is true (Handbook, pp. 89, 133). This, of course, is in direct contradiction to Romans 1:16 which shows that the gospel is "the power of God" to save.

(3) The Salvation Army administers no baptism. They assert that it is not necessary "in order to receive salvation." They reason

that there are climates and circumstances which would make immersion impractical, hence, only repentance and faith are required (Handbook, pp. 185-186). But, Christ taught otherwise. He commanded that the gospel be preached throughout the whole world, and "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The Salvation Army has no authority to change (Galatians 1:6-10) this divine ordinance.

(4) The Salvation Army makes no provision for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Though Jesus plainly said of the memorial supper, "This do in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:24), the Salvation Army excludes it, amazingly, that they might testify to themselves and others "against the danger of trusting to any external rite as though it has virtue in itself" (Handbook, p. 88). One wonders why the Lord did not think of that! The Salvation Army "testimony" is that of unbelief!

(5) The use of mechanical instruments of music for Christian worship is not authorized by the New Testament. It is an addition to the specific New Testament com-

mand to "sing" (Ephesians 5:19), and it is well known that it was a human introduction in the 7th century A.D. But, such "music plays an important part in Salvation Army religious work . . . It is symbolic of the cheerful quality of Salvation Army religion" (What Is The Salvation Army?, p. 25). It is further symbolic of the Salvation Army's disregard of sacred truth!

(6) The Salvation Army also uses women preachers in its teaching system. Catherine Booth (the founder's wife) was a woman preacher who addressed great audiences. She wrote a vigorous defense of the "female ministry." The Bible prohibits a woman functioning in such a capacity (I Timothy 2:12ff). She cannot be a public preacher to sexually intergraded audiences.

(7) In the New Testament, the work of the church was supported strictly by free-will contributions from its members (Acts 11:29; I Corinthians 16:2). The Salvation Army is involved in various enterprises for the raising of money and, according to one of their books, must even "look to the public for some of its financial support" (ibid., p. 26).

No Christian should support this sect.
—3906 E. Main, Stockton, CA 95205.

Keeping The "Unity Of The Spirit"

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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 17:20-23). Note: This oneness is to come "through their word." "The unity of the Spirit" can never come through doctrines and commandments of men!

Hence, the "unity of the Spirit" was accomplished in apostolic times, centuries before Roman Catholicism or modern protestant denominationalism ever existed. It follows then, that the "unity of the Spirit" does not depend upon what the Baptist church, or the Methodist church, or the Christian church, and all the other denominational churches, do -- since these churches are of human origin, not being mentioned in the Holy Bible.

Some Christian church preachers claim to be interested in unity, but they are unwilling to give up those things which divide or separate them from loyal churches of Christ. Even if the Christian church should be willing to remove instrumental music from their worship, we still could not fellowship them. Why? Because there are too many other practices among them which are sinful. What are some of them? We shall note -- Women preachers and women leading prayers, choirs, special Easter and Christmas services, bringing denominational preachers into their services for the purpose of instructing Christian church members in corrupt and false teaching. These and many other errors can be cited. It is false to cry, "Peace, Peace," when error continues to run riot! (Cf. Jeremiah 8:10-11). Like the false prophets of Jeremiah's day, Christian church preachers do not wish to accept blame for their own errors, saying, "What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle" (Jeremiah 8:6).

Love is a wonderful attribute; but love alone cannot blot out sin and error. Jesus loved the Scribes and Pharisees, and Sadducees; but

he never attempted to compromise with them. It is good and right to love all Christian church members; but they cannot be won to Christ's way through compromise, but through truth and righteousness, as set

forth in God's Book -- the Bible. Let them give up the errors of their way and return to the Old Jerusalem gospel, from which they have departed, and let them do it now; instantly we shall receive them with open arms!

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Unity Among The Apostles

Continued from Page 2

words which thou gavest me" (John 17:8). Next he refers to Judas in light of the fact "that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12). In verse 14 he repeats the fact that he had given the apostles God's words; then in verses 17 he says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Finally, notice that he says concerning those who would obey the apostles words (the church, you and I) that they be united as well (John 17:20-21).

By applying very basic principles of hermeneutics it is obvious that Jesus was praying for unity among those who would be obedient to his word, the truth of God. Jesus never implies that there can be unity apart from truthful obedience. Christ did not pray that unfaithful members of the church be united; nor did he pray that sincere non-Christians be united. His prayer certainly did not involve unity between the faithful and either of the above-mentioned groups. He prayed only for his faithful followers. We today can teach no differently.

The third point we should learn from the fellowship of the apostles is, perhaps, in the light of today's the most important controversy. That point is: error is not to be tolerated in order to maintain unity. When error exists there is not one New Testament case where the apostles ignored it to preserve unity. Galatians 2:11-15 provides a powerful example. Peter fell into the sin of hypocrisy. If ever there were a sin to be ignored for unity's sake this certainly should be the one. Imagine all the trouble which could result from teaching against this sin. Paul,

however, was not disposed to let this sin pass. Upon seeing Peter's action Paul "rebuked him to the face, because he was to be blamed." It could easily be said that Paul risked unity to rebuke sin. Peter could have responded to what Paul did in a variety of ways, including dividing the church right then and there. Thanks be to God that Peter was more mature than that!

Today those pushing for unity above all else would have to say that Paul was immature, impatient, intolerant, the weaker brother, and "of the old school" for placing obedience above unity! We know this is what they would say, because that is exactly what they are saying about brethren who stand against errors such as instrumental music, missionary societies, and fellowship with brethren involved in other sins.

Paul and Peter show us a great deal concerning our attitude, and (more importantly) God's attitude in handling error. Paul boldly stood up and rebuked sin. Peter admirably corrected the sin. That is to be our basis for unity today. Obedience to the word demands that we must speak up against errors and sins, and that those who are guilty must repent.

As concerned as you and I are for unity, our desire for it does not compare with Christ's. As important as unity is, he did not pray for any compromise to be made to achieve it. He prayed that they, and we, be united in truth. To say otherwise is to misrepresent the word of God.

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Words Of

Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Biblical Interpretation

(No. V)

Consider
The Background
"To approach the study of any one of the books of the Bible without knowing something of its purpose or its principle theme would be like reading a newspaper without knowing anything about its date or its place of printing. In both cases the reader would not know whether he was reading of incidents or characters of his own time, or of things that happened thousands of years ago. There can be but little profit in this kind of Bible study. In fact, it is not Bible study at all -- it is no more than just Bible reading." (Harvey Scott, *Bible Study Guidance: "A Study In Right Living,"* 'Oklahoma City: Telegram Book Company, 1960, p. 57.)



Gary C. Hampton

First, we should ask who the author was. Of course, the author writes by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20-21). However, he writes under circumstances peculiar to him and uses vocabulary that would fit his occupation and education, thus giving it a personal touch. The Holy Spirit would select words that exactly conveyed the message he wanted, but from the writer's own background. A good Bible dictionary helps one in regard to the author's identity.

Second, we need to ask who the speaker is. This may or may not be the same as the author. For example, Matthew records the words of Jesus, Satan, the angry mob, and Pilate -- to name a few. The record of the words is correct; but, as in the case of Satan (Genesis 3:4), their words may not always be true. The speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zo-

phar (as found in Job 4, 8 and 11), are uninspired men's answers to the reason for Job's suffering.

Third, we should ask what was the author's purpose in writing. The Preacher gives his in Ecclesiastes 2:3: he is going to tell us about his search for something that was good for man. Much folly is recorded as he tells us what he told himself (1:16; 2:1, 15; 3:17-18; etc.). Using man's wisdom and approach, the Preacher pursued courses that would not result in a good end for man (2:17). His conclusion is that the key to man's happiness does not lie in man's pursuit of what he thinks is good, but in fearing God and keeping his commandments (12:13).

Fourth, we need to know when the book was written, or the words were spoken. In past lessons, we have seen that God has dealt with man in three distinct Ages. The instructions to a man within an Age would not always apply to other men within that same Age. For example, Noah was told to build an ark, and Abraham was told to leave his father's country and go to one that God would show him. Abraham did not have to build an ark, and Noah did not have to leave his father's country. Similarly, the law of the sabbath day was between God and the children of Israel (Exodus 31:12-17). Because of a failure to understand the importance of the time of speaking, some have been confused by Jesus' promise to the thief on the cross that, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Any points drawn from that story would have to apply under Moses' law since Jesus was not yet dead and his testament not in force (Hebrews 9:16-17).

Fifth, we need to know to whom the writing, or speaking, is addressed. What city do they live in? do they serve the true God? if not, what false gods do they serve; and, are there peculiar customs that go with such service? are there any other unique customs in that city to which the writer might

refer? what occupations were common in the place addressed? what is the racial mixture? Jews might be addressed with Old Testament language or figures. Gentiles would be more familiar with poets and philosophers.

Sixth, we need to ask ourselves of whom the writer is speaking. For example, which "Herod" are we reading about? which Pharaoh? It also helps to know the nature and position of the man spoken of.

Seventh, we should determine the nature of the writing. Is it biography, history, law, poetry, or prophecy? Poetry and prophecy often contain figurative language, whereas law and history seldom do.

CONSIDER THE WORDS

We must understand the meaning of the words used in a passage to correctly interpret the meaning of the passage. Some words have more than one meaning. For example, Paul tells of a man caught up into the "third heaven" (II Corinthians 12:2). The birds fly in the first heaven; stars shine in the second; and God abides in the third. It certainly helps our understanding of any passage that uses the word "heaven" to know which of the three the writer means: References to "death" may refer to physical death, death in sin, or death to sin (Genesis 24:67; Ephesians 2:1; Galatians 2:20). The word "world" can refer to that which God created, or material possessions, or sinful desire (Acts 17:24; Matthew 16:26; I John 2:15-17). "Works" can be used to describe works of merit (Ephesians 2:8-9), or works of faith (2:10; James 2:14-17).

Dungan says, "All words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless the evident meaning of the context forbids." Generally, the language of the Bible is literal, thus we should consider the literal meaning first. When the literal meaning of words would contradict other clear teachings of scrip-

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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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Congregational Autonomy

Church autonomy becomes increasingly more important to me the longer I live. It just has to be one of God's best blessings -- an extra measure of grace.

I am thankful for the church -- and glad beyond words to be a part of the church in the universal sense. Wherever I go, I am a member of that body.

I treasure that blessing. But I am also thankful for the local body of believers among whom I work and with whom I worship on a weekly basis. Local churches have personalities, just like individuals do. Some are outgoing and warm; some are withdrawn and formal; some are in between. Some have a heavy emphasis on missions (as do we); some a real "push" on local evangelism; some cater to various programs; some are big in benevolence. Every local church has its distinctive peculiarities.

Balance is important in our relationship with other congregations. We cannot afford to be overly critical of another congregation -- nor overly infatuated with it. When under the leadership of its elders a congregation makes a decision which we do not feel is the way to do a thing, it is not our place to criticize nor second-guess that leadership. By the same token, we need to understand that what is done by another congregation might not be nearly as effective if tried here. It does no one good for us to continually hold up what is done elsewhere before the people of a given church and urge constantly that it be adopted. It might be ever so effective there; but it might not have the support of the people in other churches.

Continued on Page 3



Nick Hamilton



Flavil H. Nichols

More About ACU and Evolution

Earlier this year in Words Of Truth I published Wayne Jackson's review of the book reporting the alleged teaching of evolution by two biology professors at Abilene. Subsequently I received copies of the typed report by ACU. Also Dr. C. G. Gray of the University administration contacted me by phone. I explained that our guidelines call for articles no more than 3 (or 4) pages long, but the report was triple that. However, if the University would submit something comparable in length to the article I did publish, I would consider it for our columns. He said it would be forthcoming; but more than 3 months have elapsed and it has not arrived. Inasmuch as the report since then has been printed and mass mailed across the country, I see no point in running it in Words of Truth.

Comes now an article by Wayne Jackson, reviewing the ACU Report. Rather than divide it into 'installments,' it appears below it [in its entirety], although it far exceeds our usual 3 pages.

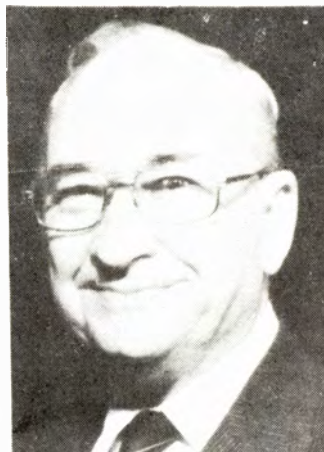
The ACU Evolution Scandal — Continuing Fallout

Wayne Jackson

It has been five months since Dr. Bert Thompson's powerful book, *IS GENESIS MYTH? — The Shocking Story of the Teaching of Evolution at Abilene Christian University*, made its debut. During this brief span, almost twenty thousand copies of this devastating expose have been distributed. The effect has been like a tidal wave across the brotherhood of churches of Christ. Interest in this issue continues to run high. Hundreds are still inquiring: "Were the professors who taught evolution as fact relieved of their responsibilities?" "How has the ACU administration responded to this crisis?," etc. The purpose of this article is to up-date this controversy.

ACU's "Investigative Report" — Many have doubtless seen the "Abilene Christian University Institutional Statement" (Dated February 17, 1986), together with the accompanying "Abilene Christian University Investigative Report" (Dated February 13, 1986). First issued in a nine-page, typed document, these articles have since been widely distributed via other media. Can you imagine a nine-page paper refuting a well-documented book of more than two hundred pages? One doesn't go bear hunting with a switch!

This writer does not intend this article to be an exhaustive refutation of the ACU Report; actually, such is not needed, for there is not



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

one issue raised in the Report that was not anticipated and answered in the book, *IS GENESIS MYTH?* We would, however, briefly comment upon a few matters.

First, have you heard the story about the farmer who hired a fox to investigate who had been stealing his chickens? Well, he must have lived in Abilene! When there was suspicion of an evolutionary scandal at ACU, who was selected to "investigate" the matter? Why three ACU Board members, of course. How would such a procedure have fared during the "Watergate" controversy of the Nixon administration?

Second, upon reading ACU's response, my first thought was: "Is this the best they could do?" The Report does not, in any responsible way, address the hardcore evidence that incriminated Professors Kenneth Williams and Archie Manis. It was a nonsense "Defense." I cannot but be reminded of the anecdote about the lawyer who was asked if he had successfully defended a certain client. "Yea," he replied, "I got him off with the 'Chair'!" That is the type of defense the "Investigative Committee" gave Manis and Williams. Here are some interesting questions that ACU simply will not address regarding this controversy.

1) Were atheistic materials used in ACU biology classes, e.g., the works of Gould, Montague, etc.? ACU has never denied that these writings were used.

2) Is there any evidence that either Manis or Williams ever refuted, in any way, the evolutionary doctrine that was presented in their classes? Not one shred has come to light. Is it not odd that the "Investigative Report" included nothing on this?

3) Is it not true that Manis distributed his "Evolution Notes" affirming that "the fact of evolution is beyond dispute" -- with utterly no disclaimer connected with that document? Is there any of you who reads these lines who would: (a) author an article affirming that evolution is true; (b) sign your name, and (c) distribute the document as is -- and then, expect folks to believe that it does not actually represent your views? Get serious!

4) Has a single piece of evidence been introduced which reveals that either Manis or Williams presented a scientific case for creation? Again, the Report is strangely silent regarding this.

5) In connection with the Manis notation that Genesis 1 is a "Myth," the Report defends the Manis definition that "myth" was simply used to denote "a body of information essential to understanding a culture." In the intervening months, ACU defenders have been challenged to cite any conservative, scholarly source that so defines "myth." They have remained deadly silent.

6) The Report contains Manis' statement: "I do not believe in theistic evolution." That statement was made, of course, after the "fat was already in the fire." A document in Manis' own handwriting stated: "I do

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More About ACU and Evolution

Continued From Page 2

believe in change, and nonrandom gene shifts in populations -- that brand or type or definition of evolution" That admission is especially interesting in light of the fact that in his "Evolution Notes" [which ACU admits represents a strictly evolutionary viewpoint] Manis cited "nonrandom shifts in gene frequencies" within a population as one of the vital features of "Darwin's revolutionary contribution to human knowledge" (Is Genesis Myth?, p. 11). The Manis admission clearly reveals that he believes in Darwinism! The Report, of course, avoided addressing such matters.

7) Why did the Report not explain this handwritten admission from Manis: ". . . evolution . . . is presented [at ACU] as a body of scientific thought supported by a body of scientific evidence," and that "there is no decisive evidence" against it? There is no way to "explain" it; it's best to ignore it!

8) Has anyone attempted to explain the fact that Manis urged his students to study Genesis, along with the "modern synthetic view of evolution" and then, from these two concepts, synthesize "a personal statement of belief about origins"? Is it not strange that the Report passes over all such points?

"With Friends Like These. . ." — The ACU administration, in their attempt to save face with the brotherhood, has repeatedly contended that their professors very simply "misunderstood" relative to the teaching of evolution. Not so. Their positions are manifestly evident to any fair investigator. As a matter of fact, some of the University's most rabid defenders have acknowledged the evolutionary nature of the instruction, and have applauded the same! Note a sampling from some of the letters that Apologetics Press has received, or that have appeared in the ACU paper, *Optimist*.

"Evolution means an orderly development. The theory of evolution says that plants and animals have changed through generation after generation and are still changing today. One does not have to be a scientist to affirm this basic premise, it stands on ones [sic] own history of development . . . In the final analysis whatever is ultimately true about evolution which is presently beyond our knowledge, its author is God. God can choose to express Himself as He sees fit because He is GOD. He, too, is unprovable calling for faith. Our faith is not in the What, Why, or How. Our faith is in the Whom. Would our faith be so weak and frail if we discovered that the Genesis account of creation like Revelation is metaphorical?" (B.W., Duncanville, TX, parent of the ACU student).

"We don't know whether Genesis is an allegory or a recitation of fact. In either case, we firmly believe that God created the universe, no matter what way He chose to do so!" (M. & A. R., Dallas, TX).

". . . evolution fills God's creation and is observed in biological studies. Evolution deserves our attention as an observable property of God's creation" (K. S., Shawnee, OK).

"[Dr. Thompson] has a very narrow, traditional, and most literal interpretation of Genesis 1. His faith does not allow him to objectively evaluate scientific data that suggest a modification of traditional Biblical interpretation. My faith also requires God as creator and man as a special product of His creation. The relative roles of supernatural events and natural processes in generating

biological diversity is still unclear to me. While I respect the need of some to hold to a traditional interpretation of Genesis 1, I cannot condone a dishonest approach to science in the name of Christianity. Whether evolutionary theory is 'fact' or not, it provides the best available working hypothesis for the advancement of medicine, agriculture, and other applied biological sciences. To train biologists without a basic knowledge of the mechanics of evolution is tantamount to graduating mathematicians without exposure to algebra. Hopefully, at a Christian university good science can be taught by faithful Christians, dispelling any misconception that the two are incompatible" (J. E. W., College Station, TX, former biology professor at ACU).

"We must realize that Genesis was not written as a literal account. It was written as a myth, in the literal sense, not as falsehood; as a popular, illustrative, even parabolic explanation of creation . . . Seen in its correct literary perspective, Genesis 1 allows for theistic evolution to become less than anathema, and to seem quite palatable to believers who perceive that modern science is something other than a tool of the devil, something to be blindly denied and feared" (A. B. R., Abilene, graduate of ACU).

The foregoing quotes are but a sampling of those we have on file. These are not "critics" of ACU; they are supporters. They understand perfectly well what is being taught, and they are proud of it. I am reminded of the saying, "With friends like these, who needs enemies?"

More Evidence Comes To Light — With almost each passing week more evidence is coming to light which further demonstrates that ACU has "winked" at the teaching of evolution in its science department for several years. For example, in late February (shortly after the book was in circulation) Apologetics Press received a letter from Dr. Kevin McLeod, a resident physician with the famous Scott & White Clinic of Temple, Texas. In this correspondence (too lengthy to quote entirely here), Dr. McLeod declared:

"The years 71-76 involved my presence at ACU where I graduated with a degree in Biology. I entered graduate school at Texas Tech University in Anatomy and then went on to graduate from medical school in '83. I am presently in residency for Orthopedic Surgery here at Scott & White.

"As a boy fascinated with dinosaurs, I plagued Sunday school teachers with questions about evolution. I attended ACU and learned evolution in my biology, chemistry, and physics classes. I say I learned evolution (I mean the macro-evolution model of soupy seas to Soupy Sales), without comment, discussion, without refutation, alternative, and certainly without mention of creation science. I was comfortable as a theistic evolutionist for years having this as my background." Incidentally, Dr. McLeod provided documentation of having protested the teaching of evolution at ACU in 1980! And Bill Teague has the gall to continue that same old line about the criticism of "one disgruntled student!"

Consider the testimony of Jake MacLeod, Executive Vice President of Western Communication Service, San Angelo, Texas. In a letter dated February 26, 1986, brother MacLeod says (in part):

"I have just finished reading your report

[IS GENESIS MYTH?] regarding the teaching of Evolution at ACU. I am sad to admit that I agree with your conclusions. I was a student of Dr. Ken Williams in 1973 and 1974." Brother MacLeod goes on to point out that he was a sophomore transfer student from Cornell University and that he held Dr. Williams in high regard. However, he continues: "I suppose it was a result of sheer ignorance that I did not challenge the apparent lack of continuity between the proposed geologic progressions and the first chapters of Genesis, but I do remember it striking a strange chord. I simply never challenged Dr. Williams' authority. I assumed that Genesis and the geologic tables somehow dovetailed into a logical progression of events but did not violate the words of Genesis nor the 'facts' of evolution. Needless to say I never found an adequate explanation."

Brother MacLeod further observes that he eventually became an elementary school teacher and that tragically: "I taught a strange home-brewed brand of theistic evolution . . ." Yes, a theistic evolution that he had learned at Abilene Christian University! Our brother penitently declares: "Unfortunately I will never have an opportunity to re-teach the students, who, as a result of my ignorance, are misinformed regarding evolution and creation. The bottom line is that I was not armed with any information from the ACC [Abilene Christian College at that time] science department to support the Genesis account of creation. Creation was never discussed nor was the topic ever remotely approached in any of the science classes that I attended while at ACC . . . I must admit that I feel somewhat short-changed and very regretful for having promoted theistic evolution."

Photocopies of the full text of both of these letters are available from Apologetics Press, Inc., 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117. A contribution to help with postage would be appreciated.

Additionally, we have been contacted by students who are still enrolled at ACU who state that the book, IS GENESIS MYTH? is quite accurate, and that they intend, once they are away from the University, to tell their side of the story!

And so, ACU officials continue to suggest that we should simply trust them -- ignore the evidence and accept their plea of innocence. If such a procedure were followed in society, there would be no need for prisons!

—3906 East Main, Stockton, CA 95205.

Congregational Autonomy

Continued From Page 2

We are bad to do that. It is a case of "me-too-itis." One church has an effective bus ministry; we we all chorus, "me-too." Or, one church begins a good work among the singles, or in a needed community area -- like a jail -- or some other work is started; and before long every congregation will have dozens of folks insisting we get involved in the same work, too. Appreciation is better than envy. Let us learn to rejoice with our brethren when good is accomplished.

—Pleasant Valley Church, Brady Station, Box 5506, Little Rock, AR 72215.

Fifty Years A Gospel Preacher

George Lebourn Mann was born in Marion County near Bear Creek, Alabama, May 5, 1914. He was the third of nine children born to John Oliver and Susan Elizabeth (Burlison) Mann. The family lived in the Barn Creek community. The family attended the Barn Creek church of Christ. When he was about eleven years old the family moved to the Byrd community about seven miles west of Hamilton.



From early childhood he determined to become a gospel preacher. While yet a child he would stand on the bank of a little ditch near the house and "preach a sermon." He then would baptize sticks of stovewood in a little pool of water. He says the reason his mother became such a good cook was because he provided her with some of the "most righteous" stovewood available!

His first school days were spent at the Mann School in the Barn Creek community. He remembers the first Mann School House. It was one room, furnished with split-log

benches without backrests. This building was located about 300 yards from where he was born and lived. Later a new school house was built about two miles away. This was the first school he attended. Later he attended Byrd Jr. High, and the State Secondary Agricultural School in Hamilton, from which he was graduated in 1935. He was awarded the American Legion Medal of Honor for being the "best all-around boy" in his class.

In July 1931, while visiting relatives in the Barn Creek community and attending a gospel meeting in which Chester Estes was preaching, he responded to the Lord's invitation and was baptized into Christ by Chester Estes.

Upon graduation from high school, Harding College, Searcy, Ark., gave him a scholarship. The second year he transferred to Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tenn. After attending several other colleges in cities where he lived and preached, he joined the Administrative Faculty of David Lipscomb College and attended classes as time permitted. In 1969, he was graduated from David Lipscomb College with the B.A. Degree and a Major in Bible. On August 11, 1935 he married his high school sweetheart, Miss Ruby Mae Summerford. Born to this union were two sons: George Robert and Gary Dale. George Robert passed away on June 25, 1959, while a pre-med student in Nashville, Tennessee. Gary Dale is married and lives in Indianapolis, Ind., where he is employed by Blue-Cross-Blue Shield.

Brother Mann preached his first sermon on

the third Sunday in February, 1936, at his home congregation in Hamilton, Ala. Bro. W. T. Allison and the elders invited him to preach his 50th anniversary sermon there February 16, 1986. A large crowd assembled to hear the sermon, which was broadcast over the local Radio Station. Brother Mann has preached in 14 States, the District of Columbia, and in Israel.

He has preached full time for the following congregations: South Haleyville, Alabama; Coalinga, California; Palacios, Texas; Waverly Avenue, Columbus, Georgia; Bessemer, Alabama; Douglas, Arizona; Scottsboro, Alabama; West Columbia, South Carolina; Fayette, Alabama; Bristol Road, Flint, Michigan; Huntsville Park, Huntsville, Alabama; Northeast, Indianapolis, Indiana; Russellville, Kentucky; Cross Plains and Adams in Tennessee; Rainsville, Alabama; Burlison, near Hamilton, Alabama; and Cherry Hill, also near Hamilton.

Brother and Sister Mann moved into their own home in their home town of Hamilton, Alabama, in April, 1979. For the past few months he has been helping in VBS and doing "fill-in" preaching. He and his wife are members of the Hamilton church of Christ and his work is endorsed by the elders there. For short meetings or "fill-in" he can be contacted by phone: (205) 921-9144, or at the address below.

—Rt. 3, Box 29, Hamilton, AL 35570.

(Editor's note: One who heard him preach his 'Golden Anniversary' sermon wrote the following poem as a tribute to brother Mann.)

FIFTY YEARS OF PREACHING

Judy Epperson

It was fifty years ago today
He began to preach the truth.
A lean young man of twenty-one,
Still in the prime of youth.

Some said, "He'll never make it;"
"No — he has not what it takes."
But, as time moved swiftly on,
A great preacher he did make.

He found the path not easy.
With roses there were thorns.
But, he used them in his mission,
And never was forlorn.

His wife, a source of strength,
Gave him courage to get through
The days he was discouraged,
Times of toil, and heartaches too.

To fourteen states he's traveled,
The great gospel news to sound.
And even into Israel,
Near the well of Abraham.

He has lived a life of influence,
--As did the apostle Paul.
And through his great example,
Helped hundreds not to fall.

When asked of his success,
Lebourn says without a frown,
"It is by the Grace of God.
THAT I AM WHAT I AM."
He knows his work will end one day,
And he wants to meet us there.
So he gives to all the directions
To his "office" --which is upstairs!
—Rt. 1 Box 234, Bear Creek, AL 35543.

Biblical Interpretation

Continued From Page 1

ture, then we can consider the figurative meaning. We should be careful, however, not to confuse our own speculations with what the Bible actually teaches. If a literal understanding contradicts my speculation, it is the speculation that must be thrown out. For example, in Genesis 1:3, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Since verse 2 speaks of the darkness, we feel confident in saying God literally created light. Yet, some refer us to John 1:1-9 and suggest this is the same light. Obviously the text will not allow us to take such a position, for the word "light" here is used figuratively to speak of Jesus. We know it is figurative because Jesus became flesh and dwelt among men, as verse 14 tells us.

"Commands generally, and ordinances always, are to be understood in a literal sense" (Dungan). For example, Jesus decreed that belief and baptism are necessary to save a man (Mark 16:16). Both belief and baptism are literally required, with no hidden figurative meaning. One command that is stated in figurative language is found in Matthew 5:16. However, the Lord's meaning is clear.

A word must be understood to mean what it would have meant to those being addressed. In Matthew 24:34, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all things be fulfilled." The Greek word is "genea" and means 30 to 40 years. Premillennialists try to suggest it means the end of the world or race; but other words in the Greek carry those meanings. Dungan notes, "The word tempt, many times, occurs in the sense to do wrong; but generally it has the meaning of to try, or prove." Thus, God tested or proved Abraham, according to Genesis 22:1.

Sometimes the author defines his own

meaning. This will never go against the generally-understood meaning, but may specialize its usage. For example, the word "elder" was used by the Jews to describe an older man. Often in the New Testament it refers to a special office (I Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 3:5-6; I Timothy 3:1-8; 5:17). That is the office of an overseer or bishop. In John 2:18-21, John tells us Jesus was not speaking of destroying the temple the Jews worshiped in, but his own body. John (7:38-39) lets us know that Jesus is using "rivers of living water" to describe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which would come after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Matthew quotes Isaiah's prophecy and tells us "Emmanuel" means "God with us" (1:23).

Words describing a definite action (like jump, run, sprinkle, etc.), have but one meaning. Action ordered by such a word can only be accomplished by obeying the strict meaning. One cannot, for example, sprinkle or pour to "baptize," since baptism is a burial (Romans 6:3-4).

To understand the meaning of some words, we must be acquainted with the rules of grammar. For example, some read I Corinthians 11:27 and conclude they should not partake of the Lord's supper because they do not think themselves worthy. Once we realize that the word "unworthily" is an adverb (not an adjective), we can see that Paul is not speaking of an unworthy person, but an unworthy action. The Corinthians are being warned against unworthily partaking, an action which comes by thoughtless hurrying, and refusing to contemplate the great sacrificial act of God's Son on the cross of calvary.

(To be continued).

—2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36608.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

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Biblical Interpretation VI

Figurative Language

Most of us use figurative language without giving it a second thought. We may say, "She is as pretty as a picture." Or, "I'm caught between a rock and a hard place." When many good things have been coming our way, we may say, "My cup is running over." Seldom does anyone have difficulty understanding our meaning. However, when a child hears a figure of speech used and takes it literally, the result can be very disturbing. For instance: "If you do that one more time, you are going to be in hot water." Similarly, all must be careful to understand the figurative language of the Bible lest we become confused as to the Lord's intent.



Gary C. Hampton

A **SIMILE** is an explicitly stated comparison using the words "like" or "as." The Psalmist says the blessed man who delights in God's law is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water" (Psalm 1:3). In Luke 10:3 Jesus says: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." In the parable of the judgment day, Jesus said, "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32). God promised Abraham, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Genesis 22:17).

A **METAPHOR** is much like a simile: it uses comparison by direct assertion in which one thing is described in terms of another. God told Jeremiah that he had made him "a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land" (Jere-

miah 1:18). God is simply describing how he had made Jeremiah strong, using terms that would describe a secure city. The Psalmist said, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (23:1). In describing the bread partaken in the Lord's supper, Jesus said, "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). Since Jesus was bodily present at the time of that statement, we know that he meant the bread metaphorically represented his body.

When the name of one thing is used for another because the two are frequently associated (or one calls the other to our mind), it is called **METONYMY**. When Jesus said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20), he was obviously talking about the contents of the cup. When Abraham told the rich man, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29), he was referring to their writings. Deuteronomy 17:6 speaks of a man's being put to death "at the mouth of" two or three witnesses. The "mouth" stands for the words, or testimony, that came out of it.

In an **ALLEGORY**, the main subject is dropped out and one similar in qualities and circumstances is put in its place. The Psalmist sings, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land" (Psalm 80:8-9). These verses, and those that follow, perfectly describe Israel, but a vine is put in her stead. Thus, we have an allegory. Paul uses a soldier's armor to describe the Christian's means of defense against the enemy, Satan (Ephesians 6:11-17). In Galatians 4:21 - 5:1, Paul compares Moses' law to Ishmael, the son of the handmaid, and the law of Christ to Isaac, the son of Abraham's wife, who was a free woman.

A **SYNECDOCHE** is a figure of speech in which a part is used to stand for the whole,

or a whole for a part. Jesus says, "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16), but we know he was particularly concerned here with all men in the world. In Genesis 46:27, the word "soul" is used to stand for the person. One condition of salvation may be mentioned in place of all conditions (Acts 16:31; I Peter 3:21). The plural is put for the singular in some instances. Genesis 19:29 talks about destroying the "cities" in which Lot dwelt. Sarah asks, "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?" (Genesis 21:7). Genesis 46:7 speaks of Jacob's "daughters;" but we know Dinah was his only daughter. A definite number or time may be put for the indefinite. Paul said he would rather speak five words with understanding than ten thousand in a language the hearers did not know (I Corinthians 14:19). We understand him to mean that he would rather speak very few words that people understand and learn from, than a large number of words they could not understand. When the Psalmist says the cattle on a thousand hills" are the Lords, he means on all the many hills worldwide (50:10).

IRONY is used to express a meaning other than the one stated. It is a form of ridicule whereby one shows another's error by appearing to take his side. Job tells his friends, "No doubt but you are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (12:2). Elijah used irony when he spoke to the prophets of Baal in I Kings 18:27. Also, the prophet Micaiah used irony as he spoke to Ahab (22:15). We would not know it was irony if Ahab had not detected the tone in his voice and questioned him further.

Dungan defines **SARCASM** as, "to tear flesh like dogs; to bite the lips in rage; to speak bitterly; to sneer." This differs from irony because it carries a stronger, even, more hate-

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Words of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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— Acts 26:25

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Hur: The Helper Of Moses

No leader can succeed without able assistants. Moses accomplished his mission with the help of good men like Aaron and Hur. So today, no preacher can accomplish great things for God without faithful helpers.

Less than three months following their escape from Egyptian bondage, the young nation of Israel was threatened by the evil Amalekite tribe. Moses commissioned

Joshua to lead Israel's troops in the conflict while he, Aaron, and Hur went to the mountain top to observe the battle and direct his forces. There before the warring hosts, Moses held up the staff of God as a banner for his warriors. When his arms wearied and the staff was lowered, Amalek prevailed. So long as the staff was upheld, Israel prevailed. Aaron and Hur held up Moses' weary arms until the victory was won. From Hur we learn many useful lessons.

About the Man

Hur was of the tribe of Judah (I Chronicles 2:19-20). His father was named Caleb, his mother was Ephrath. Jewish tradition says Hur was the husband of Miriam, but this is unconfirmed. He had a son named Uri and his grandson Bezalel was the craftsman who built the Lord's tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-7).

The Occasion

Israel was encamped at Rephidim. When no water was found, the people murmured against Moses and were almost ready to stone him (Exodus 17:1-4). God gave them water from the rock.

"Then came Amalek and fought with

Continued on page 4



John Waddey

The Search For Life's Origins

Don Ruhl

The initiation, maintenance, and complexity of life points to God. "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse" (Romans 1:20). This is true because, "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). This has been done by God in order "that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

To acknowledge God has some implications. To say the God of the Bible is responsible for life on earth, is also to say:

—We owe service to him.

—We are accountable to him for our actions.

—We are obligated to conform to his standard of morality.

If man can prove that organic evolution is the author of life, then man will conclude that he is not answerable to God, and that God does not exist.

THE ZEALOUS EFFORTS OF MAN

In the June, 1984, Volume 15, Number 3 issue of the prestigious journal *Smithsonian*, there was an article entitled, "The Search for Life's Origins -- And a First Synthetic Cell." The article speaks of scientists who are trying to re-create the beginning. By doing this they think they will have the power to make "synthetic life." No doubt if men are able to do such, they will conclude that God does not exist. But who provided the materials? the knowledge? the ability? Truly these men will only demonstrate the need for a creator. Why cannot the materials create themselves into life?

'LIFE STARTED ITSELF' — ARGUING FOR SPONTANEOUS GENERATION

The thrust of this *Smithsonian* article argues for the disproven theory of spontaneous generation.

Now, as their research goes beyond the building blocks, scientists are trying to demonstrate how the basic components could have evolved and organized themselves into the first cell. They are trying to show how, before there was life, molecules could have made copies of themselves through a primitive kind of reproduction, grown more complex and evolved through accidental errors like mutations -- and also how conditions in their environment could have enforced a kind of "natural selection" to direct their evolution toward life (page 43).

One scientist explains (?) how tides washed ashore and dried out, and repeated this process as smaller molecules became bigger, "... until one of these suddenly found a way to replicate itself" (page 47). Also, "with the wealth of biological precursors apparently well established, scientists have turned to the question of how life could have organized itself out of that original organic soup" (page 48-49).

This is a bigger miracle than described in Genesis one. Genesis says that God, an independent power, worked to create life. Evolution argues life, intelligence, and power were absent in the beginning -- but still managed to create itself. This article implies that there was mind in the beginning to organize life.

In the 1800's Louis Pasteur, who gave us pasteurization, forever proved spontaneous generation to be false. *Encyclopedia Britannica III* says: "Pasteur's work discouraged many scientists from discussing the origin of life at all." For, "... life must somehow arise from non-living matter; if not, how had life come about in the first place?" (*Macropaedia*, Volume 10, page 900). Paul's words trumpet the truth: "because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21).

MATERIALS AND RAPIDITY OF LIFE

(David White) has proposed that living systems were formed far more rapidly on the primitive Earth than most scientists have supposed, and from much simpler compounds than are usually thought to be necessary (page 44).

Such statements are becoming frequent; for the evolutionist must fill his 'missing links.' Listen to Genesis 2:7: "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Indeed God took the simplest matter and by the command of his voice made man instantly.

Again the article says,

It is the increasing ability of scientists to measure and manipulate these basic molecules in the laboratory that is producing a new wave of experiments, and theories about the origin of life (page 45).

Without the "ability" of these scientists, such experiments of recreating the beginning in order to make (?) "synthetic life," would not happen! In the beginning, therefore, there was One who had the ability to manipulate molecules and create life.

Have not these scientists wondered where these ingredients for making life came from? The Psalmist said, "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:6, 9). Can something come from nothing? The negative is self-evident. Therefore something has always been. But the universe, which is matter, is not eternal -- as the laws of thermodynamics demonstrate. The other alternative is mind. Again the scriptures speak the truth: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:2).

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

On page 49 the *Smithsonian* presented a perplexing situation:

Even the simplest living cell needs nucleic acids in order to make its proteins, and proteins in order to make its nucleic acids. Thus, to ask whether the first cell evolved from nucleic acids or proteins is like asking, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?"

Since something does not come from nothing, one of them had to begin miraculously. In Genesis 1:20-22 the record says that God cre-

Continued On Page 3

Biblical Interpretation VI Figurative Language

Continued from page 1

ful tone. It was used as they mocked Jesus before and during the crucifixion (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:31-32).

When one used a **deliberate exaggeration** for emphasis, he is using a **HYPERBOLE**. The ten spies said they were as **grasshoppers** in their own eyes when compared to the sons of Anaak (Numbers 13:33; also Detereonomy 1:28). John closed his book by saying there were many other things Jesus did, "which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (21:25). In Ephesians 3:8 Paul describes himself as "less than the least of all saints." He tells Timothy that he was the **chief, or greatest, of sinners** (I Timothy 1:15).

An **APOSTROPHE** is an address to an absent person as though he were present, or an address to inanimate things. After hearing of Absalom's death, David cried out in his chambers and spoke as if his son were there (II Samuel 18:32-33). Toward the end of the resurrection chapter, Paul speaks to death as if it were a person (I Corinthians 15:55). The Psalmist describes God's miracles at the Jordon and the Red Sea and then asks those two waters some questions (Psalm 114:5-6).

PERSONIFICATION is being used when an inanimate object is described as if it were alive, or animals are given the feelings of men. The Psalmist did that in his description of the miracles (Psalm 114:3-4). Moses tells of the earth's **opening her mouth** and **swallowing up the people of Korah's rebellion** (Numbers 16:31-32). Habakkuk depicts the **mountains with human emotions** and the **deep has having a voice** (3:10-11). Isaiah (14:7-8) describes the **rejoicing** at the overthrow of the king of Babylon as extending to the **trees**.

INTERROGATION is a figure of speech using questions to plainly declare for, or against, a certain point. In other words, no real answer is desired. In John 7:50-51, Nicodemus used it to point out that the law did not allow a man to be condemned without a

hearing. Paul likewise used it to declare himself a free man, an apostle, one who had seen Jesus and one of the teachers who started the work at Corinth (I Corinthians 9:1). He also used it to show that Jesus' name is the only one we should wear (1:13).

A **EUPHEMISM** is an agreeable expression which is substituted for something delicate, offensive, or unpleasant. For example, Genesis 4:1 says, Adam "knew" his wife, and she bore a son. Acts 7:60 says Stephen "fell asleep," instead of saying he died (Compare I Thessalonians 4:13).

A **PARABLE** is a story with facts that are true to life and is used to illustrate spiritual truths. In the Greek, *para* means beside, and *ballein* means to throw; hence, to throw along beside. The purpose for such is comparison. Parables have four basic purposes: (1) to conceal the truth; (2) to reveal the truth; (3) to embalm the truth; and (4) to cause men to assent to the truth before they realize such truth will expose their guilt. Matthew 13:10-17 shows the first two purposes. Any story from common human experience has a way of becoming etched in our memories, thus the truth is embalmed. King David was one man who was enraged at the telling of a parable only to discover that the illustration applied to him (II Samuel 12:1-14).

TYOLOGY is also an instrument used by inspired penmen. A **type** is an Old Testament person, event, or thing that foreshadows a New Testament person, event, or thing. Both the type and anti-type must be actual things in history. The anti-type is always superior to the type. The two will not be exactly the same, but one main item of correspondence will usually be found. Melchisedec was a **type of Christ**, in that he was priest and king (Genesis 14:18-30; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20-7:2). The **brass serpent was lifted up** in the wilderness to remove the effect of the sting of the serpent, just as **Christ was lifted up on the cross** to remove the effects of sin and sting of death (Numbers 21:9; John 3:14-15).

A **SYMBOL** is a sign which, when seen, reminds one of something else. The **rainbow** is probably the symbol we are most familiar with. It is a token of God's promise never to destroy the world again by water (Genesis 9:8-17). Jeremiah (1:13-14) describes a seething pot, or caldron. As Dungan notes, for a man to be able to see into such would indicate it was tilted so much as to endanger him with a scalding. It was a symbol of the punishment coming upon Jerusalem and Judea.

To **INTERPRET FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**, one must follow several basic rules. (1) **The first is to let the author interpret it for you.** Jesus does this at the end of the parable of the sower (Luke 8:4-15). Ezekiel (37:1-10) tells of a valley full of dry bones. We would not know what this stood for were it not for verses 11-14 explaining that this represented Israel and her lost hope. God was going to restore her and put life back into her scattered "bones." (2) **Second, we should let other inspired penmen tell us the meaning.** We do this with Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18-23. Peter explains the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:14-21. (3) **Third, we should let clear teaching on the same subject guide us in our understanding of the less clear.** Psalm 41:9 tells of a friend who raises up his heel against the one who trusted him. Peter helps us see this as a reference to Judas (Acts 1:15-18). (4) **Fourth, be careful not to make an analogy say too much.** Our heavenly Father should not be considered to be an "unjust" judge because of the parable that is meant to teach persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-8). We also must realize that figures can be used to represent different things. Jesus is called the Word (John 1), but not every use of "word" refers to him. —2576 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mobile, AL 36608.

The Search For Life's Origins

Continued from Page 2

ated birds on the fifth day of creation. He decreed that birds would produce after their kind by means of eggs.

On page 47 the problem is further stated:

The problem was that the kinds of organic molecules essential to life could not be synthesized from the inorganic molecules of the nonliving world. But if only living cells could make the organic compounds needed to create life, how could the process ever have gotten started?

Perplexed, they set out on a series of experiments they hoped would produce the needed compounds. The compounds would then somehow create life. They made the compounds; but still no life. On page 50 this self-incriminating confession is made:

"Only cells are capable of replicating themselves," observes Queens College biologist Barry Commoner . . . "If something is self-replicating, it's got to be able to do it by itself, with no clever biochemist standing on the sidelines helping it along."

Life comes from life! Non-living matter does not give birth to life. This leaves no other option but God. Not wishing to acknowledge him men still search for the impossible.

NEW WAYS OF THINKING,
AND NEW WORDS?

The Smithsonian article claims today's evolutionists have new ways of describing evolution. "Autopoiesis," which means self-producing, and "autogen," which means self-generation, are two of the new words. These are deceptive ways of saying **spontaneous generation**. But they are fearful of using the latter description because of Louis Pasteur's devastating experiment in the 1800's.

Evolutionists recognize that they need new ways of thinking because, ". . . looking at nucleic-acid replication by itself does not necessarily lead to self-maintaining systems" (page 51). Once life got started, how did it keep itself going? Again the answer is found in God: "for in him we live, and move, and have our being . . ." (Acts 17:28). ". . . in him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). He upholds "all things by the word of his power . . ." (Hebrews 1:3). Moreover, I would add that looking at nucleic-acid

replication by itself does not necessarily lead to self-improving systems.

THE HOPELESSNESS OF EVOLUTION

This article by Paul Trachtman in the Smithsonian makes one thing apparent: **evolution leaves us with no answers.** The General Theory of Evolution leaves the human race without hope, without value, without purpose and without aim in life. It teaches that we are no better than our pet dog or the rock in our garden.

There is hope, and it is found only in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Ephesians 2:12-13). —2521 Nile St., Klamath Falls, OR, 97603.

Short Sermons

Be careful what you start while trying to stop something.

"From the amount that some people give to the Lord, they are positive that it is the little things that count."

Hur: The Helper Of Moses

Continued From Page 2

Israel in Rephidim" (Exodus 17:8). It was a sneak attack from the rear. They preyed upon the weak and the stragglers, attacking when the Hebrews were weary and faint from their long march (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).

The Amalekites were descended from Esau, through his grandson Amalek (Genesis 36:9-12). They occupied the peninsula of Sinai, from the southern hills of Judah to the border of Egypt. So evil were they that God declared a perpetual state of war between them and Israel, and further ordered their extermination (Deuteronomy 25:19). King Saul failed in God's commission to stamp them out (I Samuel 15:1-3). Later David scattered their remnant (I Samuel 30:17-18).

Moses' Part in the Battle

Moses played a spiritual, not a physical role in the conflict. While Joshua and his troops strove with flesh and blood in the valley, Moses wrestled with principalities and powers on the mountain (Ephesians 6:11-12). The angel of Jehovah related to Daniel how "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood (him) one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me . . ." (Daniel 10:13). Such spiritual conflicts are no less real because they are invisible.

Among the ancients, to lift up hands before God was to engage in fervent prayer (I Timothy 2:8). The intercessory prayers of Moses had a decisive influence upon the outcome of the battle that day.

Some might criticize Moses because he did not take a weapon and join his troops. But Moses at age 80 was not suited for combat. He was, however, suited as well for prayer as was Joshua for the fray. As Paul puts it, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" divides to each as he will (I Corinthians 12:4, 11). Had Joshua and Moses exchanged places, it is likely the battle would have been lost. As it was, each did his part and contributed to the victory. Too often leaders of God's people forget their primary duty as spiritual leaders. Thus, they leave the mountain top and enter the valley of mundane and physical tasks and, consequently, God's cause suffers. Preacher's frequently get so enmeshed in the physical, material needs of the congregation that they neglect their spiritual duties. And a spiritually starved preacher will inevitably leave a spiritually starved congregation.

What Hur Did That Day

Hur was concerned for the physical well-being of Moses. When he saw his leader was weary, he provided a stone for him to rest upon. Such helpers are needed in the church today. Thoughtful concern can multiply the effectiveness of a gospel preacher. Considerate helpers make it possible for God's teacher to be free from concern about his own or the church's physical needs. We walk in the steps of Hur when we see that our preacher's housing, transportation, and office needs are supplied. Hur did not himself hold up the rod of God, but he made it possible for Moses to do so.

Hur strengthened Moses by his presence. Had he not been on the mountain at that time, he would not have known, much less have met, Moses' need. Even so, Christians are needed who will "be there" when the church assembles or when there is work to be done. Only those present know the needs and are able to grasp the opportunity to serve.

Moses was encouraged by Hur's under-

standing. Hur knew why they were on the mountain while the battle raged below. Israel desperately needed Moses' intercession before God. Hur understood the issues involved and how they should be met. Every elder and preacher needs that kind of informed and understanding followers.

Hur strengthened Moses' ministry by saving him from criticism. Had Israel failed in battle, they would have blamed Moses as they did on other occasions. By upholding Moses' hands, Hur helped to avoid both defeat and subsequent criticism. Instead there was resounding praise for their leader. Any leader must be able to take criticism if he is to succeed; yet one can be overwhelmed by too much of it. We need to help shield our leaders whenever possible.

Hur dedicated himself to enlarging the ministry of Moses. Moses was their leader! To lead well he needed the assistance of other good men. Hur met that need.

Lessons To Remember

The apostles, like Moses, saw the need to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). As a result, the word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied (Acts 6:7).

It is reasonable to assume a similar cause/effect relationship today.

Blessed is the spiritual leader with helpers like Hur. Paul was blessed with Timothy and many other such co-workers (Philippians 2:19-20).

We can hold up the hands of God's ministers today by daily praying for them (I Thessalonians 5:25) and by assisting them in the physical side of their work.

Israel learned from Moses the power of intercessory prayer. Their victory was contingent upon Moses' intercession. His prayer was as essential to their triumph as was the bravery of Joshua's troops.

The Hebrew soldiers trusted God and fought with valor that day. Oliver Cromwell exhorted his English troops "Trust in Providence and keep your powder dry!"

They fought and won the battle, but they ascribed the victory, the honor, and glory to Jehovah. They erected a monument to Jehovah-nissi, which meant "Jehovah is my banner." Today, Christ is our banner in whose name we will fight and win (John 3:14).

*The author is indebted to Herschel Hobbs for the heart of this lesson.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Why Christ Died

The cross and the death of Jesus Christ is central in the theme of man's redemption, in Christian worship, and also in living the Christian life. In the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary one sees the just dying for the unjust, the righteous sacrificed for the unrighteous, the innocent paying the price for the guilty. John the baptizer stated, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Isaiah prophesied of the sufferings that the suffering Saviour would take upon himself for the sinners of the world (Isaiah 53). Let us notice some reasons why the Son of God, Jesus Christ, died upon the cross of Calvary.

Christ died in order to become King. Jesus the Christ came not as a conquering great military leader riding on a prancing stallion; but he came riding on a lowly ass colt (Zechariah 9:9). He came not to forcibly subdue nations, cities, and lands; but to win the hearts of those who would obey him. He did not come as a statesman, but yet he delivered many great sermons and was the Master Teacher. He came to "minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). By the cross, he became King of kings, Lord of lords, and Saviour of souls (Hebrews 2:9-10). He died to become King over our souls.

Christ died in order to prove his Messiahship. By the cross, Christ demonstrated himself to be the Anointed One. The Hebrew writer speaks of Christ's purging our sins and

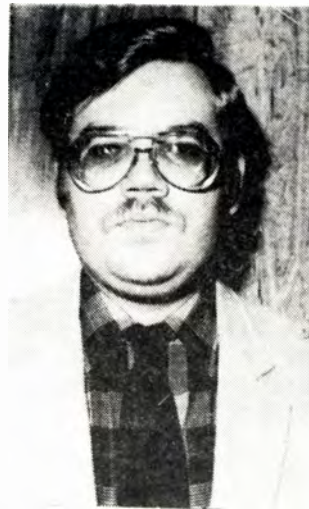
reigning on the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 1:2-4). Christ had victory over death by his resurrection on the third day (I Corinthians 15:1-19). Christ proved his Messiahship by his death on the cross.

Christ died to manifest God's love for man. God's love is described by Paul: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). John spoke of the degree of God's love as he wrote, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God's tremendous love for man caused his Son to die on the cross.

Christ died for our sins. Christ's blood was shed in his death as an atonement for our sins (Romans 5:9-11). His blood reaches backward and forward in redeeming man. His blood covers our past sins, and our future sins, as one meets his requirements for pardon. He is our "propitiation" (I John 2:2). He is our "mediator" (I Timothy 2:5). He brings sinful man back into friendly relations with God the Father, after our separation because of our sins (Isaiah 59:1-2). Our sins put the Son of God on the cross!

In his death, Jesus the Christ sustained the majesty of divine law which sinful man had trampled under foot. Christ paid the penalty for its violation. By his resurrection from the dead he was "proved to be the Son of God" (Romans 1:1-4). Thus because of his death, sinful man can live forever in the bliss of heaven by obedience to heaven's terms of pardon.

—P.O. Box 544, Bay Springs, MS 39422.



Harold Bigham



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 29

"It's Everyone's Job"

In Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus taught a wonderful lesson regarding the proper use of talents. In this parable, talents are given to three servants: five to one, two to another, and one to the third. These servants were expected to invest their talents in order that more talents might be gained. The story shows that the first two servants gained five and two talents, respectively; but the third servant buried his talent in the ground and thus gained nothing.



W. A. Holley

We are here emphasizing the importance of "every one" meeting his duty or responsibility. We may wish to avoid our duties; but God nevertheless requires us to give account to him (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). For example, God keeps up with one who steals and brings punishment upon him -- whether the objects stolen are God's holy word, or material possessions (Zechariah 5:1-4; Jeremiah 23:30).

Now we shall present several categories designed to impress upon the minds of honest readers the importance of human response to God's demands. God and men are required to work together in matters of salvation. The book of Deuteronomy (chapters 27 and 28) illustrate this principle wonderfully. The reader should take note of the "if thou shalt hearken" --and "if thou wilt not hearken," passages.

(1) Where Lord's day attendance is concerned, "it is everyone's job." No other one can attend the services of the Lord for you (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-25). Excuses are of no avail (Luke 14:15-24). The excuses offered in the text cited are ridiculous and foolish -- but no more so than any excuse you may offer.

For example, one brother, when ask to lead in prayer, asked to be excused because he had left his glasses at home! There is a difference between a Bible reason and a foolish excuse! Worship attendance is "everyone's job."

(2) Where obedience to the gospel is concerned "It's everyone's job." Every responsible person on earth should obey the gospel of Christ. The gospel is composed of facts to be believed (I Corinthians 15:1-4), commands to be obeyed (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4), promises to be enjoyed (Romans 6:22), and threats to be feared (Mark 16:16). God has no means by which he forces men and women to obey his will, but those who refuse the overtures of the gospel are certain to be lost (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). It is possible for one to sin away one's day of grace. That is exactly what the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum did because they rejected Jesus and his message (Luke 10:12-16).

Thus, your parents or others cannot obey the gospel of God for you. No one else can believe for you, repent for you, confess Jesus Christ for you, or be baptized for you (the Mormon's practice, notwithstanding). These are commands that you must obey for yourself. "It's everyone's job."

(3) The formation of good habits is each individual's business. Bad habits are always detrimental; good habits are always expedient. It is never expedient for one to become addicted to alcohol, or tobacco, or marijuana, or cocaine, et al. As a rule, habits formed early in life persist throughout one's life-time, whether good or bad.

Sow an act and you reap a habit.

Sow a habit and you reap a character.

Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

—Charles Reade.

Good habits are good to live by and they are good to die by. It is said that "Jeb" Stuart, of Civil War fame, while he lay dying, was offered a flask of whiskey to relieve his great suffering. Refusing it, he said that he had

promised his mother that he would abstain from strong drink.

(4) "It's everyone's job" where moral standards are to be maintained. Any girl, in an effort to prove(?) her love can throw her life away if she so chooses. Only within the bonds of holy matrimony is the place where physical intimacy between the sexes is to occur. We quote: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). No amount of rationalization, however persuasive, can remove one's responsibility toward God's commands! Yes, girls, it is up to you to maintain your virginity -- even in this promiscuous age.

Under normal circumstances, any girl who does not keep herself until after marriage is headed for severe pain and shame and suffering which she probably cannot even anticipate. To show what we mean, we will quote a few lines from a teen-age girl who knows about this problem from her own experience: She wrote:

"I was seeing this guy for two years on and off. I was really in love with him, but I was really stupid. When I told the baby's father, he couldn't believe it; he told me to get an abortion. I was so mad. I couldn't believe he said that. I thought he would want the baby and would want us to get married; but I was wrong. Since I wouldn't get an abortion, he didn't want anything to do with me . . . He was real mean and cold . . . I lost a lot of friends when I began to show . . ." What a sad story! All young people should profit from the real experience of this young girl.

We do not excuse or condone the young man's responsibility in this unhappy affair. Of course, he is responsible; he must share responsibility for his actions. Sex is not a game to be played with by responsible people. All accountable people must reap as they sow (Galatians 6:7-8). David the king, in his affair with Bathsheba, was made to reap as he had

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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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"It's Everyone's Job"

Continued From Page 1

sown (II Samuel 11:1-5; 12:7-14).

Yes, others may contribute to our sinfulness. But, when, in the final analysis, we come face to face with our sins, we must recognize them as **our own** transgressions -- not the sins of our parents, nor boy/girl friends, nor our neighbors. If you drink, it is **you** who did the drinking! If you commit adultery, it is **you** who committed adultery, no matter who else may have been involved. "It's everyone's job!"

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Lectureship To Explore "Bible Doctrine Of Sin"

"The Bible Doctrine of Sin" is the theme of the 1986 Faulkner University Lectureship (Formerly Alabama Christian College) in Montgomery, to be held October 5-9 on campus.

A partial list of evening speakers includes Leroy Brownlow of Fort Worth, Texas; Willard Collins of David Lipscomb College; Charles Coil of International Bible College; Hugo McCord of Oklahoma City; and William Woodson of David Lipscomb College.

Lectureship Director Wendell Winkler calls the event, "The most extensive program in our history." He said the lectures will span four days and include fifty-eight sessions. Several sessions will be held concurrently.

The lectureship will also include the Alumni Luncheon, Ladies Luncheon, Leadership Dinner Honoring Wives of Preachers and Elders, and Brotherhood Periodicals Luncheon. A session to disseminate sermon outlines will be a part of the program again this year.

"Take Heed How You Hear"

INTRODUCTION

Revelation heralds the charge: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9). However, men listen and react differently to the Bible (Cf. Nehemiah 8:1, 5, 6; Ezekiel 33:30-31; Acts 2:37; 7:54; 17:32-34).

Jesus' "Parable of the Sower" addresses the importance of listening properly to God's word (Cf. Matthew 13:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23). This brief study will set forth an attempt to analyze Luke's account of this parable; and, then, make a few applications of the same.



Dan Winkler

I. THE "PARABLE OF THE SOWER" ANALYZED

Luke's account of this parable (Luke 8:12, 15, 18) projects four possible ways to hear and react to holy writ. Each possible reaction may be summed up in two words:

(1) **The first possible reaction to holy writ is summed up in the words "no reception"** (Luke 8:13). In Palestine, well-packed, hardened walkways separated narrow strips of soil that were prepared for planting. Seed that fell upon these hard paths was soon plucked up by birds and, thus, did not germinate, grow, and bear fruit. Even so, it is possible for one's heart to be hardened to the point that God's word will not be received.

Matthew's account of this parable identifies **prejudice** as a factor causing such a condition of the heart (Matthew 13:1-23; especially vs. 10-18). "Prejudice" may be easily defined by a casual glance at the word. It means to "pre-judge." Now, to follow in stride with the noble example of those who received the word (Cf. Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1; 17:11), one must study the Bible today without preconceptions, and with an open mind.

(2) **A second possible reaction to holy writ is summed up in the words "no root"** (Luke 8:13). In Palestine, rocky soil consisted of a thin layer of soil resting upon a large limestone base. Such could not provide the moisture and plant nutrition needed for adequate root systems, and, thus, the sustenance of plant life. Even so, it is possible for one's heart to be so spiritually malnourished that he has not the depth to withstand temptations that are sure to come, nor to stand for the truth he once received.

Convictions must run deep. In fact, Matthew's account of this parable uses the word "persecution" for Luke's "temptation" (Matthew 13:21). Thus, Bible-produced-convictions must run so deep that they are capable of withstanding the pangs of ridicule and persecution. Christians are to be "rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17). They are to be "rooted and builded up" in Christ, as well as "established" in their faith (Colossians 2:6-7). So a study of and a reaction to holy writ needs to flow from and stand upon a heart of conviction (Cf. I Corinthians 16:13).

(3) **A third possible reaction to holy writ is summed up in the words, "no resistance"** (Luke 8:14). It is possible for prepared ground

to look clean while she still cradles wild seed within her bosom. Consequently, good seed that is sown germinates and grows along with the seed of weeds and wild grasses. Eventually the tender plants produced by good seed are choked out by the wild grasses and the thorns. Even so, it is possible for the selfish desires of the heart to choke out the word of God.

Jesus' parable identifies three problem areas which potentially feed selfish desires: cares (Cf. I Peter 5:7), riches (Cf. Matthew 6:19), and pleasures (Cf. Philippians 3:19; I Timothy 5:6; II Timothy 3:4) of this world. The "desires of the flesh and of the mind" cause one to be "dead in his trespasses and his sins" (Ephesians 2:1-3). Christians must not love such (I John 2:16) nor study the Bible from such selfishness.

(4) **A fourth possible reaction to holy writ is summed up in the words, "reception and results"** (Luke 8:15). A deep bed of soil, free of wild seed and well prepared, was the sower's delight and desire in Palestine. Even so, the honest and good heart which hears the word of God (Matthew 13:16), holds fast to the same (Philippians 1:27), and works patiently (Hebrews 12:1), is a delight to God.

Observe how this **proper** reaction to God's word counteracts all three foregoing **improper** reactions to God's word. (a) The "honest and good heart" counteracts prejudicial hard-heartedness. (b) "Bringing forth fruit" counteracts those who are choked out and "bring no fruit to perfection." (c) Bringing forth fruit "with patience" counteracts those who "fall away" by ceasing to believe. Indeed, one should approach a study of the Bible with an honest heart, ready to build convictions based on scripture, and work in keeping with the same.

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

(1) **Apply this parable to the requisites for becoming a Christian.** To become a Christian one must believe in Jesus (Mark 16:16; John 8:24; Acts 8:37; 16:31), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30), and be immersed in water for the purpose of having his sins washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). Prejudicial preconceptions, the temptation to make excuses, and selfish desires, must not prevent man from receiving and being a doer of the word (Cf. James 1:21, 22) in these requisites.

(2) **Apply this parable to a dedicated life.** Christians are to "abhor that which is evil" (Romans 12:9). Temptation is not a set of "tinker-toys" to be played with; it is a raging fire that, if yielded to, will set one on course to a devil's hell. Temptation is not a harmless pup to be cuddled and petted; it is a carnivorous beast that will consume one's soul and rob him of his eternal destiny in heaven. Thus, Christians should "abstain from every form of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22) and not be tempted or lured through prejudice or selfish desires to do anything less.

(3) **Apply this parable to the singularity of the church.** Paul wrote the bold statement, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4) and identified that spiritual body as "the church" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Even further, twelve times in ten verses Paul indirectly established the singularity of the church using words such as, "the church," "the body," "it," "a glorious church," (Ephesians 5:23-32). One must not allow denominational prejudice nor the temptation and selfish desires to broaden

Continued on Page 3

A Matter Of Ignorance?

The Bible is clear in its admonitions about withdrawing from the disorderly. The apostle Paul demanded that those who teach things contrary to sound doctrine be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18). This same apostle commanded us "not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer,



Victor M. Eskew

or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat" (I Corinthians 5:11). To the church in Ephesus the following injunction was given: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). And to the church at Thessalonica, note these words: "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).

Although the action of withdrawal is a clear command of Jehovah God, many local congregations of the Lord's people have not practiced it, are not practicing it, and some probably will not practice it! One of the prominent excuses for not doing it is because members of the church are ignorant about the matter. When the subject is mentioned, one of the first things said is: "We need to have a class on this subject, because we do not know what is involved in the action." Thus, a preacher has to spend weeks and months teaching individuals what the Bible has to say about the subject of withdrawing fellowship.

This writer sincerely feels that the cry of ignorance with regard to withdrawal of fellowship is in some cases merely an excuse which individuals have in order to get out of having to do that which the Bible very plainly tells us to do. Be it granted that there are some individuals, primarily new converts, who might be ignorant about the matter. But for the biggest portion of the church, this statement probably is false.

“Take Heed How You Hear”

Continued From Page 2

the basis of Christian (?) fellowship, to prevent his accepting God's law of inclusion and God's law of exclusion.

CONCLUSION

Said the father to his excited son, "Slow down, Son, you are talking too fast!" Said the son to the father: "No, Daddy, you are listening too slow!" Some are listening to God too slow, if they are listening at all. How pertinent is the charge of Jesus, "Take heed how you hear."

—P.O. Box 166, Huntingdon, TN 38344.

The fact is that people know exactly what is involved in this action. The very words by which the action is described indicate what must take place. Also, most of those who use this excuse of ignorance have had a Bible on their shelves for years, and much is contained therein on the subject. Too, faithful gospel preachers have never neglected this area of church responsibility in their preaching and teaching. If the truth were known, some congregations which use this excuse probably do so with each preacher who comes along! And therefore, they have been taught several times about the matter. In addition, many tracts and books have been written on "Church Discipline." These could have been purchased and studied by those who persist in ignorance about the action of church discipline.

No, ignorance is not the true reason churches have not practiced the withdrawal of fellowship. This excuse is merely used in order to bide for a little time. The real reason the action will not be taken is because many members know that they have mates, mothers and fathers, children, brothers and sisters, and close friends who would need to be withdrawn from if the action were implemented. They enjoy their weekends together, the daily association, and trips together out of town, too much to have to obey the command to "withdraw from" their disorderly kinsmen

and friends.

Those who feel this way are not the disciples of Christ which they think they are. Their actions indicate that they love their relatives more than their Savior. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). They have deceived themselves in this matter. To them the apostle Paul's words can be addressed. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Brethren, this is not a laughing matter. It is not a subject upon which we should think lightly. It is a command of God (II Thessalonians 3:6; Revelation 22:14). It involves the soul of the sinner (I Corinthians 5:3-5). It involves the soul of the sinner (I Corinthians 5:3-5). It involves the purity of the church of our Lord (I Corinthians 5:6-8). Let us quit hiding behind pretended ignorance, and practice that which God demands on this vital subject. If we continue to refuse, many stripes will be the wages which we will have earned in the last day (Luke 12:47; Romans 6:23).

—P.O. Box 126, Belmont, MS 38827.

The Will Of The Father

Clifford Dixon

"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). Here we see that one must do the will of the Father in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. What is the will of the Father in heaven? There are two main Greek words rendered "will:" "thelema" and "boulomai." "Thelema" (in this text) means will, commands, and desire. "Boulomai" expresses more strongly the desire in the deliberate exercise of the will. So the will of the Father refers to the desires, commands, and wishes of the Father. As a people we should be eager to obey God so that we will be pleasing to God.

1. We need to notice the willingness of God in our behalf: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). Also our prayers are to be made for all men. God wants all men everywhere to be saved. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:3-4). So it is God's will that all men be saved, and he has made ample provisions through Jesus Christ his Son.

2. We need to realize that God's will or commands are the commands of the gospel. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Ephesians 1:9-10). The "mystery of his will" is identified in

Ephesians 3:6 as the gospel. It is God's will that this gospel be the message of redemption to mankind. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). Paul told the Corinthians that "in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Corinthians 4:15). According to Acts 18:8 the Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized. This is God's will for everyone.

God wants Christians to allow the word to transform their lives. He said, "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).

God also wills to work in us as we continue to obey the commands he has given. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). To accomplish this, God desires that Christians: (1) Learn his will (Romans 12:2); (2) Flee from immoral conduct (I Thessalonians 4:3); (3) By well doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men (I Peter 2:15); (4) and Always abound in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).

3. Christ did the will of God while on earth (John 5:30). He taught the disciples to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Christians are told, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14). Jesus in Gethsemane prayed, "Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42), and we are told that he "was heard in that he feared" (Hebrews 5:7). His cup was not removed, but he was given the

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"Where's Your Bible?"

Almost everyone has heard the story of the important paper that has been discovered in the family Bible. The fact that it had not been used for many months made it possible for such a paper to be lost. In many homes the Bible is hardly more than a filing cabinet -- a place to keep the records of the family tree.



Dan Jenkins

How much change would there be in your life if you lost your Bible? How long do you think it would be before you noticed it? Would you discover that now you have more time to read other books, to visit, to watch TV, or to talk on the telephone? Would the absence of the Bible make any drastic change in your lifestyle? Suppose the government decreed that it would be a criminal offense for anyone to have a Bible in his home, and removed your Bible from your home: Would it affect you at all?

When God gave the ten commandments

and the other laws through Moses, they were kept in and near the golden ark in the Most Holy Place. Their "Bible" was never in their homes; yet note that he said: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6). Again he said: "Therefore shall ye lay up these words in your heart and in your soul . . ." (Deuteronomy 11:18). No Bible was found in their homes; yet it was found in their hearts! Notice carefully the words of David, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

In reference to Christianity, God foretold:

"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33). Biblical faith and the righteousness that comes from it are based on these words, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart . . ." (Romans 10:8). Finally hear the words of Paul, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom . . ." (Colossians 3:16).

Beloved, where is your Bible?

—125 Dory Road South, North Palm Beach, FL 33408.

Prayer And Evangelism

Mark records, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.



W. Edwin Kearley

And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils" (Mark 1:35-39).

One who has a definite place in his life for prayer has that which distinguishes a deeply religious person from all other people. No finer example of this truth can be found than the one which Jesus left for us. He prayed because he felt the need of his Father's help and companionship. When Jesus prayed, he was communing with God, while surrendering himself unreservedly to all the emotions of divine love. He had love both for the Father, and for all mankind. He communed with God so that he might better dedicate himself to the work which he had undertaken.

The Savior could have prayed upon his couch; but he did not. Instead, he sought a quiet place where he could be alone with his heavenly Father. If the Lord needed to pray, how can we profess to follow him and live without communion with God? (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Matthew gives a fuller account of this preaching trip throughout Galilee: "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan" (Matthew 4:23-25, A.S.V.).

Instead of staying in one place, Jesus sought

to arouse the entire country of Galilee. That which the disciples evidently regarded as a large work, was indeed small in comparison with the outlook of Jesus. People who understand it is God's will for all people to have an opportunity to hear the gospel will never be satisfied with a single effort, however great, in one place (Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:23).

—103 Elena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Fifth Annual Denton Lectures Planned

Dub McClish

The FIFTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES, November 9-13, 1986 will be devoted to "A Study of the Book of Galatians" by 34 speakers delivering 35 lectures at Denton, Texas. A major aim of the lectures is to help combat and expose religious error both within and without the church. The lectureship book (approximately 500 pages) will match those of previous years (*Studies in I Corinthians*, *Studies in Hebrews*, *Studies in the Revelation and Studies in Acts*). Cassette tapes and video tapes will also be available.

A daily "Discussion Forum" (Monday-Thursday) will discuss assigned subjects of controversy. The subjects this year will be: "Are Men Saved By Grace Alone?"; "Must Men Use Logic to Understand the Bible?"; "Are All Men Under All of the New Covenant?"; "Does Galatians 6:7 Allow for Evolutionary Theories of Any Kind?"

Exhibit space is available for both commercial and non-commercial interests, subject to invitation and/or approval by the Pearl St. elders. Housing in the homes of local Christians will be provided as long as it lasts. Several major motels are located in Denton. Hook-ups for travel trailers and motor homes will be provided on the church parking lot. For further information, inquiries may be addressed to: Dub McClish, ADL Director, 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201, or phone 817/387-3531, 387-1429.

The Will Of The Father

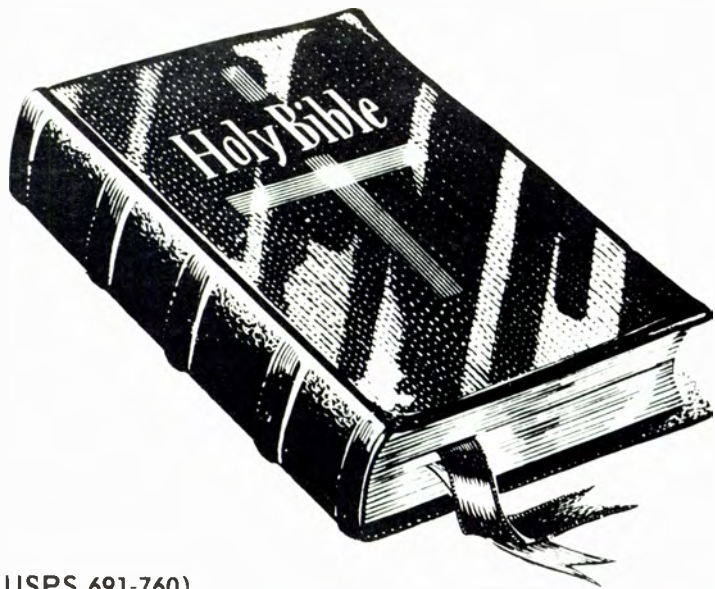
Continued From Page 3

strength to bear it (Luke 22:43). So our prayers are to be as those of Jesus, making our petitions, then prefacing or modifying them with: "Thy will be done, and not ours."

4. We are to place ourselves under the will of God in every action of life. James states, "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into the city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15). Man proposes, but God disposes! Every thing we plan is dependent upon God's will. The rich farmer of Luke 12 learned too late not to leave God out of his plans. He left his earthly riches behind when he died and had no provisions laid up in heaven. How terrible to leave God out of one's thinking! To do as James enjoins here is to recognize God's hand in the affairs of men. It is also to recognize the need of God's assistance. It causes us to realize that without God's help we cannot possibly succeed; and that if he is not willing for a thing to be done, it is best that it fail. Solomon put it, "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" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

In conclusion let us realize that God wills that we be saved; therefore let us seek God's will (commands), and pray that God's will be done, and place ourselves under his will in every action of life.

—P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1986

NUMBER 30

Cigarette Smoking

What about the habit of smoking tobacco? Is it a good habit? or, a bad one? Will you, dear reader, answer this question honestly and sincerely?

From an economic point of view, smoking tobacco costs the United States an estimated \$60 billion per year.

In another report, we are told that "disease and lost productivity due to smoking are costing the U.S. about \$65 billion a year -- more than \$2 for every pack of cigarettes bought . . ." We are farther told that "cigarette smoking causes more than 350,000 deaths each year. This is more than all other drug- and alcohol-abuse deaths combined" (AMA Journal, 1984). At this rate of spending, the National Debt could be retired in a few years if we some how could use all the money spent for tobacco.

In 1982, Dr. C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General since 1981, warned: ". . . Cigarette smoking is clearly identified as the chief preventable cause of death in our society . . . Cigarette smoking causes 30 percent of all cancer deaths in the United States." In 1983, Dr. Koop again emphasized the danger of heart disease caused by smoking cigarettes. In 1984, the good doctor renewed his warning, saying: "We can say again today, with more certainty than ever, that cigarette smoking is the most important health risk in this country, responsible for more premature deaths and disability than any other known agent."

The foregoing language is strong indeed! Should not all sensible people take warning??

What does the Bible teach with regard to the use of cigarettes and other forms of tobacco?



W. A. Holley

Is it a sin to smoke tobacco? or to chew? or dip? We think it is.

Some may object by saying that the words tobacco and cigarettes are not used in the Holy Scriptures. Yes, we know and understand; but, does this prove that the use of tobacco is acceptable in God's sight? Again, we think not.

Have the tobacco users ever considered the fact that the following words are not used in the Bible either: marijuana, cocaine, hashish, heroin, liquor, beer, etc. But, are reasonable people justified in thinking that, just because these words do not appear in the text, they are permitted to use these substances, without any transgression of Biblical principles?? Surely, not!!

We shall now suggest a few passages for your consideration.

(1) I Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." "The person who is addicted to gluttony and drunkenness sinneth against his own body, in the same sense as the fornicator doth. He debilitates it, by introducing into it many painful and deadly diseases" . . . says MacKnight, commenting on the verse quoted above. Since smoking tobacco causes cancer, why is smoking not a sin against one's own body?? (Please see context, I Corinthians 6:15-20).

(2) I Corinthians 10:31-33 is another text which we shall consider. We quote verse 31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." MacKnight in his commentary on *The Apostolical Epistles*, says: "Do all to the glory of God -- By this precept the apostle hath taught us, that our greatest duty is to promote the glory of God, by regulating all our actions according to his will . . ." We ask: How can one smoke cigarettes, or chew tobacco, or dip snuff, to the glory of God? Who can imagine Jesus, or Paul, or any other New Testament follower, using tobacco in any form??

(3) We call attention to II Corinthians

7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." What is the meaning of this verse? Well, to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," means Christians must not permit their bodies to become the servants of sin (Romans 6:16). Our "spirit" needs to be kept clean and pure and holy because actions, whether right or wrong, originate in the heart (Matthew 15:15-20; Proverbs 23:7). A defiled spirit corrupts one's life, even where there is no outward sin. The use of tobacco cannot make a Christian more attractive to God.

(4) Have you read 3rd John 2 lately? It reads: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." John has Gaius (a brother in the Lord) in view. John wants Gaius to prosper financially and also to be in good health. We raise the following question: Does smoking aid one's prosperity? Again, Does cigarette smoking improve one's health? The answer to these questions can be found in 350,000 deaths per year which are attributed to the use of tobacco!

Just think how the lives of countless people would be improved wonderfully, if those who sell intoxicating liquor and tobacco were denied advertising privileges of all kinds for five years.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Short Sermons

Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.

If you would stand well with a great mind, leave him with a favorable impression of yourself; if with a little mind, leave him with a favorable impression of himself.



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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Of What Denomination Are You A Member?

Often in conversations with our friends and relatives, the question arises, "Of what denomination are you a member?" Since the Bible is our source of authority (II Timothy 3:16-17) and no other, we must open up the pages of God's word and find the answer.

Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Any person educated in the English language will always tell the querist that "it" refers to what is mentioned, that being in this verse, "church." Christ said that he would build his "church," not "churches!" This rules out denominationalism! Denominationalism is built on the creeds and doctrines of man (Matthew 15:8-9). The church of Christ is built upon the confession that Peter made that Christ is indeed the Son of the living God. The apostle Paul condemned denominationalism by asking: "Is Christ divided?" (I Corinthians 1:13), and by beseeching them to all speak the same thing (I Corinthians 1:10). Of course, denominations did not come on the scene until many years later; but he did not want the church at Corinth to be followers of imperfect humans, and by very implication to reject the perfect Christ.

The Christian's answer to the question captioned in this article is simply, "I am not a member of any denomination!"

A Christian should be able to explain: "I am simply a member of the blood-bought insti-



Harold Bigham

Continued On Page 4

My Sermon To The First Methodist Church

W. Wayne Coats

(Editor's note: Brother Wayne Coats was invited to speak to the First Methodist Church in Donelson, Tennessee. He accepted only on the condition that he could present what he believes to be the truth. The following address is what he presented. Obviously he could not cover in detail all the points one would want to discuss. He writes: "Some of these matters were discussed more fully in the question-and-answer period. This was especially true of why I do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship.

"The questions were many, explicit, pointed, and denoted a very inquisitive audience. In fact, there were so many questions, and so little time, that I was invited back the following Sunday for one hour of questions and answers, and I did return for that second session. No holds were barred in the questions, nor in the answers."

This sermon has been printed in tract form, and may be ordered from him at the address following the text. The attitude of brother Coats is truly that of a Christian: "May those who heard the lesson, and those who read the copy, try to have the sincerity and honesty which I tried to maintain as the lesson was given." I commend to you the following sermon. -- FHN).

I assure you that my heart overflows with gratitude because of the opportunity to be with you on this bright and beautiful morning. I am profoundly grateful for the invitation extended to me by my good friend and neighbor to come over and present some thoughts relative to the church of which I am a member, which as you know is the Church of Christ. I commend you for having this study series and trust that only good will come therefrom.

Your invitation has been extended to me because I believe differently than you. Obviously, if we all believed and spoke the same things, if we had the same mind and the same judgment, if we enjoyed the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, then you would not have this special study series.

Because I teach so very differently from your preacher here at First Methodist, I will very obviously say some things which will sound strange to your ears, but that is why I'm here. We can all recall reading about Paul speaking in Athens and some of the people said, "For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (Acts 17:20). Please listen carefully, make notes if you care to, for we will have a question-and-answer period at the close of my lesson. I want you to feel perfectly free to ask anything you feel to be pertinent.

The doctrines of the Methodist Church and the things which I believe are similar in some areas, and as far as the poles apart in others. I studied "Methodism" under Bishop Henley at Vanderbilt University, and had several courses over at Scarritt College in an effort to see what makes the Methodist Church function. The bishop somehow couldn't make a Methodist out of me, and I failed to make the bishop a member of the Church of Christ. We discussed our differences more than once.

What are those things most surely believed

among us? I shall present some of these matters, and give scriptural quotations as proof texts. In other words, I'm saying that it isn't my position to just believe a matter; I need to be able to show by the scriptures why I believe certain principles to be true; and of course, you desire to know why I believe as I do. You have asked me to be here and tell you where and why we differ.

I cannot see that God has left man without a divine standard. We must not assume that we are at liberty to do that which is right in our own eyes. The inspired John wrote, "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). We must abide only, solely, and entirely by the scriptures as our standard of faith and practice. We must accept some sort of yardstick that is absolute. This is not an effort to be eccentric, odd, or strange; but because of certain simple statements in the scriptures, I am convinced that we must not try to be regulated in matters religious by some standard other than the inspired, inerrant, infallible word. Yes, I do believe the Bible to be that standard.

When Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica, he said, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). Unless there is some acceptable rule, we can never prove anything. We believe the rule by which all men are to be governed is the written word. It claims to be inspired of God. The apostle wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). We have the inspired record given by Jehovah and hence there is no need for any additional regulations. May we recall for a second time the passage which says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). Jesus said, "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" (Revelation 22:18). I suppose this seems odd that we have no written creed, such as a Discipline, Manual, Book of Common Prayer, or Catechism; but we just try to restrict ourselves to the Bible, believing that God's word is sufficient.

One of the points with which I need to deal, is the fact that we do not attempt to follow the Old Testament as we work and worship. We believe that we are to be governed by the New Testament. I need to tell you why we hold these views in order for you to understand the reason for my position. We believe the Old Testament came from God, and is therefore the Word of God. "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

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My Sermon To The First Methodist Church

Continued From Page 2

hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). The Old Testament was given to help men along the way until Christ eventually came. I will make a quick excursion through the book of Hebrews and cite some verses which point out the fact that we cannot be governed today by the Old Testament. I'm cognizant of the fact that even the devil can quote scripture, but these verses which I shall cite obviously teach something; and I have no desire to use any verse in a wrongful manner. (You might keep this in mind as we have our question period later).

The Old Testament period began with the father serving as the priest or functionary in behalf of the family. Abraham is an example of this system. After the law of Moses was given at Sinai, the situation changed drastically. The tribe of Levi was subsequently selected to furnish the priests (Hebrews 7:5). These priests comprised the hub around which Israel worked and worshipped. The Levites are not serving as our priests today; but Christ is our High Priest. Notice as I quote a few verses which support this idea. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (Hebrews 4:14). "As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:6).

The priesthood changed from Levi to Christ. "For the priesthood being changed there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Hebrews 7:12). Jesus was not a priest on earth, and could not be, because he was not of the tribe of Levi, but sprang from the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). He began his priestly work when he went back to heaven, and (of course) with his becoming priest, the law changed. Is it not conclusive then that I am not to try to observe a law that is no longer in force? Where could I find the tribe of Levi? and a priest therefrom?

Our Lord is the "... mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). We are under the New Covenant and not the Old (Hebrews 8:7-13). "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Hebrews 9:16-17). When Jesus died on the cross, "... He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:9-10). We thus have a new law and walk in a new way (Hebrews 10:20). We look not to Moses but to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2). It is by Christ Jesus that we "... offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually ..." (Hebrews 13:15).

These scriptures have been presented in order for you to see clearly why we do not attempt to follow the Old Testament in work and worship. It served its purpose in leading men along the way until Christ came; and then, having been fulfilled by Christ, it was taken out of the way; it was abolished; indeed, it was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14).

Another point which I believe to be impor-

tant is why we call ourselves "Christians" and object to the wearing of names and designations not found in the Bible. We really have no desire to be cranky, or curious; and it doesn't especially appeal to me for someone to think that I am narrow minded, or bizarre. As a member of the Church of Christ, I claim to have been added thereunto by the Lord. Perhaps you may have discussed with family members or friends the fact that we do not use the expression, "joining the church." I imagine to a group of Methodists, this sounds pretty silly, doesn't it? I shall try to be brief, but explicit, as I set forth the matter, and that of course is the reason you have asked me to speak.

I suppose all of us believe that Jesus really did build or establish his church, just as he promised in Matthew 16:18-19. We differ as to what it might be like; but no student of the Bible will disagree with the fact that Christ built his church. He purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). When he ascended upon high and was seated at God's right hand, he became head over all things to the church which is his body (Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus Christ is not only head of the church, he is head over all things to the church. If he is head of and to the church, then that just about eliminates man from setting up regulatory boards or groups to determine what Christ has already determined!

For a very simple illustration of what I mean, when we read the second chapter of Acts, we are able to learn that the inspired apostles preached to those people who had gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. As the gospel was preached, the sinners were deeply disturbed and cried out, "... 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, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). Verse 41 tells us that some gladly received the word and were baptized, "... and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." In verse 47 we read, "... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Since the church is the spiritual family of God, he did the adding thereto. The saved, and only the saved, were added to the church. There were no additions to the church except the saved. Such as were being saved were daily added, and such as were not being saved were not added to the church. The church doesn't save; but it consists of the saved. Christ is the savior; but he is the savior of the body, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). Since the Lord adds the saved to the church, then we just do not know how it would be possible for one to join the family of God. This is the sole prerogative of God, and he makes no mistakes. When we act according to the terms laid down by the inspired apostles, we too will be added to the church. God is no respecter of persons; and therefore I should feel compelled to be as eager to obey God as were those on Pentecost.

Although I have discussed the matter in the preceding point, perhaps I should explain in more detail the belief which I hold with reference to the complete plan of salvation. In my preaching I try to show that God requires people to believe before they are baptized. Jesus placed belief before baptism in Mark 16:16. I also show that repentance was placed

before baptism by the apostles (Acts 2:38).

One of the points which I present in my preaching is that baptism involves a burial in water. The inspired apostle wrote, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). He again wrote, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

After baptism, I point out that one can so sin as to be finally lost. There are many warnings in the Bible which we must not overlook. There were those in Galatia who ran well for a little while, but later fell from grace (Galatians 5:4). The church at Corinth was warned by the example of Israel; and Paul concluded by saying, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). When Jesus depicted the judgment scene, we recall how some of those in the kingdom were gathered out and they received their portion with the lost (Matthew 13:41-42).

I shall now add some brief remarks relative to our worship. In preaching I try hard to get people to understand what "worship" means. It is reverence paid or expressed. A real careful study will show that the true worshiper always came before God, not for what he could get, but rather for what he could give. Worship involves giving of one's life, reverence, devotion and obedience to God. It is a coming and bowing before him. True worship offered to God eliminates the theatrical and gaudy which appeals to people. I sometimes ask, "How do people entertain God?" The church that has the best program, provides the most entertainment, gives the people the 'most for their money' and sets up a sort of supermarket atmosphere, is where you will find modern Americans.

The early Christians were guided by the word of inspired men as they worshiped. Today we have the inspired book. God has not changed his nature as to what pleases him. The Holy Spirit has not changed his Revelation. The word of God is still the same; and 'til heaven and earth passes, it will stay the same.

The Bible tells us that the church assembled on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7). They were not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25). As an assembled group or a local congregation, they studied, prayed, gave of their material earnings, sang praises to Jehovah and ate the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 2:42).

It is my purpose to harken to the ancient pattern of faith and practice in worshiping God. Those early Christians sang their praises to Jehovah without mechanical music. I really enjoy good instrumental music, and have attended some great concerts at home and abroad; but when I come to worship God, what I might like or dislike is not the criteria. Not having mechanical music in worship seems rather strange to many people. My attitude about the matter stems from a fervent desire to follow the pattern of the early church. Those ancient Christians sang without the use of the mechanical instrument. Paul instructed the church at Ephesus to sing (Eph-

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Of What Denomination Are You A Member?

Continued from Page 2

tution purchased by Jesus the Christ (Acts 20:28). I am part of the *ekklesia*, the 'called-out' body of believers, called out of the world (Romans 6:16-18). I worship God as the Bible instructs, "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24): the Lord's church is to sing and to sing only (Ephesians 5:19); we are to pray unto God (Acts 2:42); we are to partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7) every first day of the week, fifty-two times a year; we are to give of our means to sustain the Lord's cause to teach the

lost (I Corinthians 16:2); and we are to study and teach or preach the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:13-17). I am a Christian, nothing more and nothing less. I am not a hyphenated Christian, but a Christian!

As in the long ago, the ark contained all the saved (I Peter 3:20), so now the saved are in the church of Christ -- not in the playhouses of the Devil! Let us return to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), which teaches that by obeying and following the Bible, and it alone,

salvation is found.

I am not a member of any denomination. I am only a member of the Lord's church, the church of Christ. I am simply a New Testament Christian!

—Box 544, Bav Springs, Mississippi 39422.

My Sermon To The First Methodist Church

Continued From Page 3

sians 5:19). He also told the church in Colosse to sing. We can never be wrong when we follow the Bible. The Bible is always right.

Each congregation of the church is independent of every other congregation. There is no hierarchy nor ecclesiastical head to govern the church; but Christ serves as the supreme head, with each local congregation having its own elders. These elders direct the affairs of the congregation of which they are a part, and are variously called shepherds, bishops, pres-

byters, and overseers (Acts 20:28). Deacons are also a part of the organization of the local congregation and serve under the oversight of the elders. They, like the elders, have special qualifications as set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. As preachers, we have no prescribed set of rules or curriculum of study to which we must conform other than that laid down in the New Testament.

I acknowledge that in this presentation, much more information might need to be

given; but these matters will give you some idea as to what I believe and why. You should be able to see why I am a member of the church of Christ. We will now close and take time for any questions which you might desire to ask. Please feel free to ask me any question which you feel disposed. If I know, I will answer; and if I do not know the answer, I will tell you.

—184 Hillview, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122.

What Jesus Really Said

J. Terry Wheeler

Not all of Jesus' statements in the gospel narratives are quotes verbatim of Jesus' words. If they were, then the quotations recorded by all four biographers would read the same, word-for-word. They do not. Some repetitions are obvious paraphrases to an extent. For instance, consider the defense made for the apostles (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5); the answers given to Satan (Matthew 4:3-10; Luke 4:3-12); his command to those who would follow him (Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23). Consider also the obvious insertions into Jesus' quotes which the writers make: "purifying all foods" (Mark 7:19; compare Matthew 15:17); "which is translated, A stone" (John 1:42); "who is in heaven" (John 3:13); and Acts 1:4. But now notice: None of these conditions changes the truth of Jesus' statements, nor their context. All the Biblical narratives are accurate and trustworthy, for they were all written by the Spirit of Christ (I Peter 1:9-12). It is, and has always been, the communication Jesus intended (John 14:26). And it shall stand forever (Matthew 24:35).

What then is the meaning of "scholars" and "preachers" who are being reported in certain newspapers as saying we must uncover the statements which Jesus really spoke which are recorded in the Bible? They submit, it is reported, that not all Biblical statements attributed to him are his. One must ask how we, some 2,000 years removed, are able to successfully cast doubt on testimony that those who lived in the first century were "assured" of (Luke 1:1-4)? Can these convictions, which are a matter of historical record, be ignored? Some obviously think so.

There is a great difference between admitting that some of Jesus' statements are accurate paraphrases, and (on the other hand) asserting that the record is false as it relates

to Jesus' doctrine. The absence of quotation marks in the early manuscripts do not disprove their authenticity. One need only compare the various texts to be assured that the same message is retained in all of the recorded statements of Christ. As is the case with most reporting, the gospel writer has emphasized various viewpoints from the same statement, according to his purpose. For the whole story, we read all of the accounts.

Some of these purported 'experts' go on to say that, if a recorded statement of Jesus is found in other writings attributed to other persons, that statement cannot be an accurate quote of Jesus. How can people be so blind? To find Jesus' statement attributed to someone else in another literary work does not invalidate either the quote or his originality. In fact, much of Jesus' teaching is a reaffirmation of Old Testament principles (compare Luke 14:7-11 with Proverbs 25:6-7; and Luke 17:3 with Leviticus 19:17). Truth deals with universal concepts. So what if others stumbled onto principles worth relating that are repeated by Jesus? A lawyer did this very thing in the Lord's presence (Luke 10:25-27). But that does not deny Jesus' later quote of the same commandments with the same focus in Mark 12:28-31, or a scribe's restatement and response in Mark 12:32-33.

What do all these reported doubts about Jesus' words mean practically? They are designed to mean that the Bible is not to be taken as authoritative or dependable! And that means Christian faith is worthless! They assert that faith does not stand in historical knowledge to be proven or disproven. Such assertions relegate the Holy Bible to the place of Mother Goose, the Koran, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, Von Daniken's Chariots of the Gods, the Book of Mormon, etc. Let us believe in people who live in shoes and

pumpkins, and in broom-flying witches, and in the gods of Olympus, and in Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God. It makes no difference, if historical accuracy has nothing to do with faith. In such a case, the Bible is a book of false witnesses and testimony, we are without hope, and all of our preaching and disciplined living and suffering are worthless! We surely have then no reason to claim a distinctive religion and church which we hold above all others. Make no mistake about it, beloved brethren!

Let it plainly be declared and believed that those who assault the historicity of God's holy word, the Holy Bible, assault not only the highest concepts man has ever known or can learn, assault not only the testimony of God Almighty concerning his Son Jesus Christ and declare him a liar; but they also assault and insult the blood of countless martyrs who confessed that the Bible, God's eternal and final word of abundant life, does express all of the facts of God's dealings with humanity.

No matter how "well-meaning" the doubters are, their point concerning the scriptures is very clear. Yet they will soon join a vast number who are always defeated by the light of facts honestly considered. The Bible stands, as it is written!

—P.O. Box 728, Duncan, SC 29334.

**Invite
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To Church Sunday**



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 31

Abortion — A Hard Question

A reader asks about abortion when the mother's life is at stake. This is surely a difficult decision as well as a very rare situation. Scripture gives no direct instruction. We can draw some helpful guidelines by carefully analyzing the situation. If the mother will die, carrying the baby -- then both will die. This is fact. So we seek to save the one life that is within our



John Waddey

power, rather than let both die. Legally it is viewed as a matter of self-defense. The action is taken as a life-saving procedure. Imagine an insane person who is threatening to kill a woman. He holds the knife at her throat. The police swat-team marksman shoots the poor irresponsible fellow to save the woman he is threatening. No court views this as murder. So in such cases of abortion; the baby (albeit innocently) will cause the death of the mother unless something is done.

If such a condition develops in later stages of the pregnancy, attempts are made to save both by performing a Caesarian delivery. At the earliest stages the baby cannot survive the ordeal. Conscientious doctors do everything in their power to save both patients. Sometimes they have no options. In such cases "abortion is the indirect and unfortunate consequence of an action undertaken to preserve life" (M. H. Scharlemann).

Dr. Jerome Lejune, world-famous geneticist, made the point that in such cases the doctor's efforts are aimed at life saving; while in abortion for any other reason the purpose is to destroy life for social convenience.

It is noteworthy that less than one percent of all legal abortions are for the following "hardship cases:" threat to the mother's life, rape,

incest, and fetal abnormality -- according to Dr. J. C. Willke, president of the National Right to Life Committee. Extract those abortions done to prevent the death of the mother and you can see a clear picture of how few such cases occur. Many obstetricians tell of having never encountered such a life/death situation.

Christians oppose elective abortion because it is the deliberate killing of unwanted human life. Of the 1,600,000 abortions that will be performed in America this year, the overwhelming majority will be because of illegitimacy and selfishness.

Human life is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:32). Whoever sheds innocent human blood answers to God for the evil

done (Genesis 9:6). The prohibition: "Thou shalt not kill (do no murder)" (Exodus 20:13), clearly applies to the practice of elective abortion of unwanted babies. God hates hands that shed innocent blood (Proverbs 6:19).

Abortion to cover up the sin of fornication is unjustifiable. Abortion to avoid parental responsibility is a shameful cop-out. Abortion to save a lie is a painful choice from which sometimes -- in rare instances -- we cannot escape. If we do nothing, two will die. If we do something, one of the patients can live. May God deliver us from such awful choices; may he give us wisdom when face them we must.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

C. P. Roland Passes

C. P. Roland, a Freed-Hardeman College teacher and administrator for more than 60 years, passed away December 11, 1985. E. Claude Gardner, Max Patterson, John Hall, and Fred Brigance conducted the funeral service Saturday, December 14, at the Henderson Church of Christ. He is survived by one daughter, Josephine Reddick, and four sons, Charles, Paul, and H. C. (Mack). Other survivors include one brother, 19 grandchildren; and 31 great-grandchildren.

Clifford Paul Roland was born in Essary Springs, Tennessee, on July 4, 1893, to the late Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Roland. He attended Freed-Hardeman when it was called National Teachers' Normal and Business College, and received his B.S. from Union University and the M.A. from Vanderbilt University.

Roland was married to the late Grace Paysinger on July 30, 1916. They celebrated their Golden Anniversary in 1966 and their sixtieth

Anniversary in 1976. She died November 23, 1984.

Brother Roland served Freed-Hardeman College as dean, business manager, vice president, and teacher of subjects including chemistry, trigonometry, European history, and Bible. His last position was curator of historical collections and vice president emeritus. He was named "Alumnus of the Year" in 1974 by the F-HC Alumni Association.

Roland also served as an elder in the Henderson Church of Christ for over 40 years. He was a preacher and religious writer in addition to his work with the college.

"He was one of the great men in the long history of Freed-Hardeman College," President E. Claude Gardner said. "He rendered unusual and outstanding service in Christian education."

—News Release From The College.



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**Invite
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E. R. Harper — 1898-1986 Faithful Servant Of God

1898-1986
Garland Elkins

God said to Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead" (Joshua 1:2). He, likewise, could say, "E. R. Harper my servant is dead." Brother Harper, like Barnabas, "was a good man" (Acts 11:23). Like Paul, he "preached the word" (II Timothy 4:2) and "was set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). Like Appolos, he was "an eloquent man" and "mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24). Like John, he was tender and compassionate. He was a good family man: he deeply loved and appreciated his family, and they loved and appreciated him.

When brother Harper lived in Little Rock, he pioneered in preaching the gospel over a powerful radio station. As a result of his great efforts in that field, he became the best-known preacher in Arkansas. He also played a major role in arranging the **Hardeman-Bogard Debate**, which is among the most prominent of any debate in which one of our brethren participated -- and was a resounding victory for truth. Brother Harper was an outstanding debater in his own right, having engaged in numerous such discussions.

He was a master of assemblies. His lessons, whether in the pulpit or on national radio, were eminently scriptural. They were filled with scripture, and were straightforward; yet

were always presented in a loving and kind fashion. His sermon on "The Church The Prophets Saw" was truly a masterpiece. I have never heard it excelled. When brother Thomas B. Warren made the announcement that our 1980 **Spiritual Sword** lectureship theme would be "The Church," brother Harper and I were sitting together. He whispered to me, "Call it 'The Church -- The Beautiful Bride Of Christ.'" We accepted his suggestion, and a large hardback book has within its cover some of the finest material available on "The Church -- The Beautiful Bride of Christ." It was during that lectureship that we had an Appreciation Dinner honoring brother Harper.

Through the years brother Harper was loved and appreciated by multitudes of people for his spirituality, mental ability, moral character, courage, and humility. He encouraged many young preachers; and his love, compassion, and comfort were often extended to those in sorrow. He was successful in leading many souls to Christ. Brother Harper shall truly be missed. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

—1511 Getwell, Memphis, TN 38111.

The Present Danger Of Unbelief

The author of the book of Hebrews urges: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1). The "fear" of which the writer speaks is the "fear" of losing eternal life. Though hope is built on a promise, one might not meet the conditions of the promise.



W. Edwin Kearley

Those to whom the Hebrew letter was written had obeyed the first conditions of the promise. In chapter 6 and verses 1 and 2, they were told: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms . . ." Jesus stated, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). All obedience is built on faith. Faith leads to repentance (Luke 13:3). Faith causes one to confess his faith before men (Romans 10:9-10). Faith prompts one to be buried with his Lord in baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:21). The Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

There were some who had heard the gospel

preached, but it did not have the desired effect: ". . . but the word preached unto them did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2). Hearing the gospel is essential to salvation; but if the hearer does not allow the gospel to produce faith in the message of the gospel, the hearer does not profit.

There is a rest for those who believe: "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I swear in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Hebrews 4:3). The author speaks of the rest in the present tense. The faith that saves is a comprehensive faith; it includes obedience. It is certainly more than mental assent that God is one. James says, "The devils believe and tremble" (James 2:19). This faith is a willingness "to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1).

The Jews as a whole did not believe the gospel of Christ. Our author stated: ". . . and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:6). On the day the gospel was first preached, three thousand responded in obedience. The church grew and multiplied (Acts 5:14; 6:7). On Paul's first missionary journey, there was opposition from the Jews. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

The book of Hebrews was written to Christians of Jewish descent. They were in danger of apostasy from Christ back to Moses.

This condition of apostasy was an immediate danger (2:1), based upon unbelief (3:12), conduct (5:13-14), neglect of public worship (10:25), weakness in prayer (12:12), instability in doctrine (13:9), refusal to teach others (5:12), and neglect of the scriptures (2:1).

Our author called upon them to let their hearts be tender to the message of God: "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:11). We must labor therefore in the vineyard of God. To the Ephesians Paul wrote: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

The phrase "fall after the same example of unbelief" refers to statements in the previous chapter. "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years" (Hebrews 3:7-9). As the children of Israel fell, so Christians can fall. We must strengthen our faith every day. We either go forward, or we go backward in our faith. We do not stand still.

—103 Elena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Gus Nichols — Words Of Truth

Lectureship

September 28 - October 2, 1986

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

To find Bible answers, we must go to the Bible (I Peter 4:11; II Timothy 2:15; I Peter 3:15). It is utter folly to go to the religious philosophies of men (I Corinthians 1:18-31). The doctrines and commandments of men muddy the waters of religious thought (Mark 7:6-13).

Our attitude toward the Holy Bible will determine whether we believe it or not.

Is the Bible a book of myths? is it from the devil? is it a product of purely human origin? is it God's divine message to a lost and sinful world? IF your answer to the last question is YES, then you should have no difficulty in believing its divine message, for all the necessary evidence is therein contained to substantiate its marvelous claims (II Timothy 3:15-17; I Corinthians 2:9-16; II Peter 1:20-21).

Assuming that our readers are Bible believers, we shall answer the question, “What must I do to be saved?” according to its teaching. We shall not deviate even in the slightest manner from Biblical teaching.

(1) If I wish to be saved, I must be taught the truth of God (John 8:30-32; 17:17). Truth is not error -- regardless of how honest and sincere one may be. One can believe a lie (II Thessalonians 2:8-12). Saul, before his conversion, was honest and sincere while he was persecuting Christ and his church or kingdom (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; I Timothy 1:13).

I must be taught the word of God that I may have the faith that saves (Romans 10:17). Faith comes, not by prayer, nor by the direct operation of the Spirit, but by hearing the word of God. This is the reason Jesus ordered his disciples to preach the gospel, the word of God, to every creature (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47).

(2) If I wish to be saved, I must believe. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for,” “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:1, 6). I cannot be saved by “faith only” (James 2:14-26). The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. One is saved by a live, working faith, not by a dead faith (Galatians 5:6; I Thessalonians 1:3; James 2:24-26). A faith that does not work is dead. Obedience may be a bit more than many people desire, but the Lord requires it any way (Matthew 7:21-27; I Peter 1:22-25). Faith only is nothing!

(3) God's command of repentance is another step which he demands of those who wish to be saved (Luke 13:3, 5; II Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31; 2:38). What is repentance? It is not mere reformation of life; but repentance causes the sinner to change his mind and purpose, which involves a turning away from sin . . . doing an about-face . . . a reversal of direction . . . the sincere and earnest espousal of righteousness.

For example, those Jews on Pentecost who were commanded “to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,” even though they had been charged with his murder (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Through genuine repentance one's attitude toward sin (in all of its shapes and forms) is radically changed. Repentance does not



W. A. Holley

permit one to be or remain a friend of sin (James 4:4; Romans 7:4). Those who break their marriage vows to God are doomed to eternal despair unless they truly repent of their sins!

(4) Confession of Jesus' holy name is also required (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10). No person is required by divine authority to confess his feelings. Feelings can be very deceitful. Did not Saul of Tarsus “feel” like he was doing the right thing as he persecuted Christ and his church? (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; I Timothy 1:13). Since pardon takes place in the mind of the Governor, could a prisoner on death-row “feel” the Governor pardon him? Forgiveness of sin takes place in the mind of God . . . on the conditions which God has determined . . . and no man can “feel” God pardon him.

According to the sacred scriptures, “I feel that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins,” is no confession at all. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) made the Bible-authorized confession when he said, “. . . I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” The sincere seeker of truth is urged to resist all errors and to obey all truth (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9). The eunuch confessed the name of Christ -- not his feelings -- before he was baptized that his sins might be washed away (Acts 22:16).

(5) Baptism as a condition of salvation has been a ‘battleground’ for centuries. Why has this been so? It certainly is not the fault of sacred scripture! The teaching concerning baptism is clear and plain (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16;

Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). We challenge you to read these passages with an unprejudiced heart. These passages taken at face value simply teach baptism is a condition of salvation from alien sins. We do not claim that baptism alone saves, any more than “faith only,” saves (Cf. James 2:24-26).

Why do denominationalists fight baptism so desperately? Well, to say the least, it stems from Calvinism. This system asserts that God from all eternity decreed a certain number to be saved and a certain number to be lost. But, the Bible teaches that: “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17; Cf. Matthew 11:28-30). The gospel is to be preached to all nations. A limited atonement is not taught in the Bible (Hebrews 2:9; I John 2:1-2; 4:14).

The Calvinists try to make it appear that sinners are miraculously saved by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the word of truth. They claim that “works” have nothing to do with one's salvation. One cannot be saved by his own works, but one can be saved by working the works of God (John 6:28-29; Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 5:6; II Thessalonians 1:11). We are saved by grace through faith when we believe, repent, confess Jesus' name, and are baptized in keeping with the demands of the Master.

Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Is Jesus wrong?? We think not! In the light of what has been said here, please read Acts 16:30-34.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

“Christ's Body And Personal Work”

One of the most beautiful pictures of the church is that which portrays it as the body of Christ. I Corinthians 12 has an extended discussion of this topic. In view of the fact that the primary work of the church is evangelism, notice how this picture applies to this work.

There is unity in the body. Paul says of our physical body, “. . . the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one . . .” (v. 12). He then applies this principle to Christ and his body. We are one; though we have come from diverse backgrounds, Christ has enabled us to be united. This diversity actually strengthens us in personal work. Though we are different, our common goal is to save the lost. There must be unity of purpose.

There is diversity in the body. Our physical bodies have feet, hands, eyes, ears, etc. (vs. 14-17). We are not the same; we had differing abilities and functions. In reference to doing personal work, some will be more able to teach, some to arrange studies, some

to encourage, some to work with certain kinds of people, some with others. As our physical body combines all of these differences, so must Christ's spiritual body.

There is a need for every member of the body. The eye cannot deny its need of the hand; nor the head, its need of the feet (v. 22). Each of us has a place; and unless we fulfill it, the body will be weakened. In winning the lost, we must remember that there is a place for all. Make sure that you are active in the area where your abilities lie. God, who has placed each member of our physical body in its place (v. 18), has also placed you in the spiritual body to fulfill your task (vs. 28-30). Be sure you are doing your part!

—125 Dory Road South, North Palm Beach, FL 33408.

Short Sermons

Soft words may appease an angry man; bitter words never will.

Snobbery is the pride of those who are not sure of their position.

Anger is a wind which blows out the lamp of the mind.

The excellence of many discourses consists in their brevity.



Dan Jenkins

Restoration Apostates

It would be encouraging if it could be stated that every New Testament Christian had remained faithful throughout life. Bible readers recall that there was a Judas in the Lord's cabinet who betrayed the Master. Some of those converted by the inspired apostle Paul failed to grow into spiritual maturity. Immediately our minds reflect upon Demas' defection (II Timothy 4:10). This article points out a few Restoration leaders who left "their first love."



Dabney Phillips

Sidney Rigdon, a popular orator, embraced "Restorationism" and became a preacher for one of the congregations in Pittsburgh in 1822. Rigdon, on horseback, accompanied Alexander Campbell on the 300-mile ride to Washington, Kentucky, for the McCalla-Campbell debate in 1823. A merger was effected in Pittsburgh between the two congregations where Walter Scott and Sidney Rigdon preached. This union was consummated in 1824.

In 1830 the Mormons won Sidney Rigdon to their cause, and its effect was felt on the Western Reserve. Though a captivating speaker, he was jealous of others, and was intensely ambitious. Rigdon also realized that he was not fully trusted by those of the Restoration persuasion. Thomas Campbell had opposed his community property scheme, which he declared was a part of the ancient gospel. Following his baptism, along with that of his wife, Rigdon spent two months with Joseph Smith in receiving "revelations," and urging the people to accept the new religion. After Joseph Smith died, Sidney Rigdon lost out to Brigham Young as the Mormon leader, as Young was the more competent. Rigdon was expelled from Ohio, and retired to New York, where he lived in comparative obscurity. Although lacking statistics, Sidney Rigdon was able at first to influence defections from the Restoration cause.

A fad known as "Shakerism," a semi-religious socialistic movement from New York, was introduced in Kentucky and made havoc of the faith of many Restoration converts. The "Shakers" were successful in winning Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy to defect to their strange beliefs. This group believed that Anna Lee, their founder, was now the Christ, and claimed new revelations superior to those of the Bible. The "Shakers" taught that marriage was forbidden, and that "Shakers" in this life would never die. Fortunately, Barton W. Stone and others were able to contain the new heresy and to stabilize the remaining Restoration converts in the area. Stone was by nature a gentle person; but when the occasion required he was as courageous as a lion. Speaking of this event in after years, Stone said, "Of the five of us who left the Presbyterians, I, only was left, and they sought my life." Thankfully, God did not desert him, and his influence greatly increased and churches were planted in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio.

Apostasies have been noted in Ohio and in Kentucky. The concluding case to be observed occurred in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1852.

J. B. Ferguson was one of the bright young preachers of his day. Some stated that "Ferguson was smart and he knew it." Shortly after conducting two successful gospel meetings in Nashville, in May of 1846 he moved to the city to preach. Quickly Ferguson became the most popular preacher in Nashville. Tolbert Fanning appointed him to the board of directors of Franklin College. In 1844 Fanning began the Christian Review. Due to his busy schedule, Fanning within four years turned the paper over to young brother Ferguson.

Regrettably, as Ferguson gained in popularity he lost in spirituality. Upon assuming the editorship of Fanning's paper, he changed the size and the name of the paper, to Christian Magazine. It was in the April issue, 1852, of this magazine that a peculiar view of J. B. Ferguson was first observed. He applied I Peter 3:18-20 to giving the lost dead a 'second chance.' Alexander Campbell

immediately took issue with Ferguson in the May, 1852, copy of the Millennial Harbinger. Samuel Church of Pittsburgh stated that "Ferguson has a maggot in his brain." Ferguson left the church, going into spiritualism, taking with him all but approximately fifty members of the church in Nashville. This disappointing brother died in obscurity, and his remains lie buried in the Mount Olivet cemetery at Nashville.

Multiple lessons can be learned from the preceding three discouraging illustrations. First, our faith must be placed in the Lord (Hebrews 12:2), and not in men. Second, preachers may be in error, and thus one must be sure that the Word is the standard (Jude 3), and not a human vessel or instrument. Until earthly time shall cease, there will be apostates; but if our faith is anchored in truth, we will remain loyal to that revealed truth (John 16:13).

—100 Carlton Place, Gadsden, AL 35901.

God's Wisdom And Local Autonomy

Dean Fugett

Among some of the latest departures from the word of God is the effort on the part of some to cast doubt on the position that there is scriptural authority for local autonomy. We wonder why would one want to depart from local autonomy concepts, in the first place? And what attitude must one develop toward the scriptures, in the second place? If indeed, God's wisdom designed local church independence, where would one seek for reason for departure, except in human wisdom and rebellion? "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21).

When in his wisdom, man has attempted to improve on the wisdom of God, he has always been shown for the 'fool' he is. Whenever God has employed any method or device, man should be content to bow to God's wisdom. But, foolish man has never been known for his submission to God, but for his propensity to profane the holy. Witness man's many devices for circumventing God's simple gospel plan for man's salvation. The denominations have long been notorious for casting aside God's will and substituting their own. Many in the Lord's church have chosen now to follow their pernicious ways.

In the matter of church organization, it was God's decision to give the simple New Testament order local autonomy, each congregation, independently organized and functioning. Historically, this has been no disturbing factor to those who respected the word of God as all authority.

Though we would never presume to sit in judgment on God's wisdom, it is an evident mark of that wisdom that the churches be so organized. Should any one, or all, churches in any given area digress, any one or several others, could still remain untouched by their digression. Just because some departed would not demand that others follow suit. When one considers the "Boston Plan," if the mother church goes, the satellites go also. When the serpentine head of the Crossroads movement moved in any direction, similar movement was noted all through the body of that group. With local autonomy, any one congregation of

the Lord's church can remain steadfast and faithful, even if all other congregations in the whole state depart from the faith.

How important is it to follow God's established order? Ask Nadab and Abihu about changing the substance and form of worship (Leviticus 10:1-2). Note carefully the words of verse one: "which he commanded them not . . ." Behold the consequences! Then think of what some are doing today in the worship activities "which HE COMMANDED NOT!" Brethren, men are profaning the holy ground of God's word with great arrogance today. Judgment will be too late to reconsider what we are doing in the name of "liberty."

Ask King Saul, who took unto himself authority that wasn't his, and usurped the priestly function to offer sacrifice (I Samuel 13:8-14). He lost his kingdom! Re-study must be made of WHAT GOD HAS AUTHORIZED BY HIS PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH, and respect for that pattern must be insisted upon "in all the churches" (Hebrews 8:5). If God was concerned to caution Moses that he take care to build according to that shown him, surely we, too, must take care. It is no coincidence that all the New Testament churches were organized and worshiped after the same form! IT IS GOD'S DESIGN. Local autonomy does not allow man to change God's design. What Paul taught as practice in one congregation, he taught in all. What Paul taught, Peter taught -- for there is ONE SPIRIT.

We admonish all to return to a "thus saith the Lord," and before anything is judged as worthy for our participation, it should be found in the text and context of the scriptures. If not found, then reject it! Let's stay with the local autonomy of each congregation in the scriptures, the authority of the elders in the scriptures, the worship approved by and acceptable to God as revealed in the word. This is right; it cannot be wrong! Let's turn a deaf ear to the siren call of "It is something different." Let's give place "no, not for an hour" to those who would gladly cut us loose from the scriptures and set us adrift in a sea of chaotic wanderings!

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Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

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Criticizing The Wrong People

Roger Jackson

I do not know about you, but I grow a little weary sometimes of hearing my brethren who are contending for the faith (Jude 3) who are marking those who cause division (Romans 16:17, 18), and who are insisting on speaking as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11) -- being castigated as a "cult," being criticized for criticizing, and being insulted as some sort of "bishop editors." It is no wonder that the same people have to tell us continually of their "love" for us, when it is difficult to find one negative, discouraging word in their material directed toward a real sectarian, or one false teacher. It is indisputably factual that you cannot warn some brethren about false teachers, no matter how much solid evidence is available; but it doesn't help when a middle-of-the-road "neither-nor"-preacher advocates that opposing them (in the same medium they employ to disseminate their heresy) makes the opposition a "cult" trying to exercise "control" of the brotherhood. Pardon me if I get the impression your tent is pitched in their camp!

The Jews thought of Paul as a "heretic" liberal, and themselves as "sound in the faith." They were wrong; but does this mean there is no such thing as a heretic? and are there no such people as those who are "sound in the faith?" Such a matter must be determined by the Scriptures. And if the Jews had as much evidence (?) against Paul from that source as the so-called "critics" of our day have against "liberals," he would have been! They had no evidence; and Paul was willing to stand in their faces publicly and prove they did not. Now let those weeping sympathy-seekers who are teaching false doctrine stand up and do the same thing in the face of their critics, if they dare!

There is no doubt that good men can be misunderstood and misrepresented. But these cases are extremely rare. Those who are receiving most of the criticism for criticizing have not misrepresented anyone! A man who

is "misunderstood" every time he opens his mouth, or moves his pen, needs either to take a course in "communication," or to leave the effort up to someone else. The fact of the matter is that too many have been influenced by modernism and the real sectarians; and it shows in their speech (and writing). When a man deliberately uses the speech of Ashdod (Nehemiah 13:24), he need not whine when he reaps the harvest of his efforts -- either misunderstanding or criticism. It is possible to speak in a manner so that misunderstanding is held to a minimum. Paul said he used great plainness of speech (II Corinthians 3:12). Too many "liberals" use the "gray approach" because they are already gone; and they use it to evoke sympathy when they are criticized, and to keep a forum; whereas, they would have neither if they used "great plainness of speech." Once they are defended, they get plainer and bolder. Then those who defended them in their less explicit days see their mistake too late. All that wrong needs to thrive is for good men to do nothing.

Paul wrote Timothy of Hymanaeus and Philetus (II Timothy 2:17), accusing them of erring from the truth by saying that the resurrection had passed. I wonder if there were any people then who said, "He read into these brethren's speech something they never said." Do you suppose Paul knew more about what they meant than they did? This is not to say that the words of men cannot be taken out of context and misapplied; but that such is done as often as those who defend false teachers imply, one could easily refute.

There are some declarations that cannot be right in any context. There is no context in which it is right to advocate the use of instrumental music in worship to God to be scriptural; to teach there are Christians in all denominations; or, that elders have no authority in the church -- just to name a few. Those who challenge such false doctrines would receive unjust criticism if it be suggested that they would take Paul's statement out of context and misuse it, as it

appears in II Corinthians 11:8: ["I robbed other churches."] -- because that is not all of the statement. He said, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them . . ." He explained it as soon as he said it! The man who would say, "I robbed other churches." -- with no explanation -- should not cry about being criticized when he is accused of being a "church thief." But if he wanted to avoid it, in a day when there may be a "church thief" under every bush, why would he deliberately say it? Titus was instructed to use "Sound speech that cannot be condemned . . ." (Titus 2:8). If that rule were followed, a lot of misunderstandings which crop up would disappear.

Even when a brother has been proven to be a false teacher, it is fallacious to accuse brethren of demanding a "step-by-step course to follow before they would accept him back into their fellowship." Does the Lord not demand a "step-by-step" course to follow before HE forgives the alien? Then why criticize me for demanding no more nor less of the man? Does the Lord not demand a "step-by-step" course to follow for the Christian who has forfeited his fellowship with him by sin (Acts 8:20-23; James 5:16)? Then why criticize me if I demand the same?

I do not condone the actions of any man who would refuse to forgive a brother who comes stating he is a sinner without being specific in every detail; but the problem does not herein lie with regard to false teachers among us. The problem is that some have not repented at all, and still have men defending them -- while accusing those WHO HAVE PROVEN BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT THEY ARE FALSE TEACHERS of being cultic, critics, and attempting to exercise undue control over the brotherhood.

I really do not know of any editor today who has the influence to mark a man without adequate evidence and have his followers endorse

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Words Of Truth

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— Acts 26:25

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Hezekiah An Encourager

Hezekiah was one of the few good kings of Judah to reign over God's people. Hezekiah "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" because "he trusted in the Lord God of Israel" (II Kings 18:3, 5). So great a king was Hezekiah that the record says that "after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him" (II Kings 18:5). When God refers to a man in such glowing terms we can be sure that the man was truly a great man of God.

There are many characteristics of Hezekiah that made him a good king. He restored the worship of God to the way God had designed it (II Kings 18:3-4). The courage and determination he had to do right flowed from his great trust in God (II Kings 18:5). He stayed near God and would not allow anything to come between him and his God (II Kings 18:6). Also, Hezekiah was diligent to keep the Lord's commandments (II Kings 18:6).

These are wonderful qualities that contributed to Hezekiah's being a great king. But there is one other attitude that contributed as much or more to Hezekiah's greatness: his willingness to encourage the teachers of God's truth. "Hezekiah spake comfortably (encouragingly, NAS, RSV) unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord" (II Chronicles 30:22). Hezekiah knew that his success as a king, that Judah's success as God's people, and the Levites' success



Garry Stanton

Prayer is an address or petition to God in which one gives thanks for blessings received and requests continued support in all endeavors of life, whether seen or unseen.

God hears and answers prayers which meet his conditions. These conditions are clearly set forth in his word (II Timothy 3:16-17). Man has not been authorized to devise his own rules regarding prayer. Men must pray according to his will. Even Jesus, in his prayer, yielded to this rule when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he said: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

What are God's rules for acceptable prayer?? We shall note --

(1) God hears and answers the prayers of his children only. While it is true that God created the whole human race, in a very special sense he is the Father of his children only. How can we know? Well, read I John 3:10: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil . . ." The devil is the Father of his children (John 8:44). Who are the children of God? Those who have heard and obeyed the commands of God (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 1:22-25). Who are the devil's children? They are those who rebel against the Lord's truth and obey the doctrines and commandments of men (Mark 7:6-13).

(2) We must address our prayers to God Almighty (Matthew 6:9-13; Romans 10:1). According to the Holy Bible, no one ever prayed to the Holy Spirit, nor to the Virgin Mary, nor to other so-called saints. Be careful not to waste your efforts in praying to the wrong person!!

(3) It is essential to pray in Jesus' name, or by the authority of the Son of God. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the

as priests, depended on the word of God. As the prophet Hosea recorded: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hosea 4:6). Hezekiah not only relied on God's word himself, but he encouraged all the people to do the same. He was grateful to the faithful guardians of the word and encouraged them to "keep on, keeping on."

Hezekiah not only supported those who spoke God's truth, but he commanded the people to do likewise: "Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord" (II Chronicles 31:4). These men had devoted their lives to the law of God and were entitled to be supported both morally and with the necessities of life.

How do we measure up to these great characteristics of Hezekiah? Can it be said of us that we "speak comfortably" to those who

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How To Pray So As To Be Heard

name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

Prayer in the name of Moses, or in the name of Abraham, or in the name of the Pope, can avail nothing. Jesus possesses all authority now; we, therefore, must pray in his name (Matthew 28:18-20).

(4) God never answers prayer contrary to his will. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). Those who refuse to believe and obey God, but who in times of calamity or trouble, wish to resort to prayer, will find that God will not hear them. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye set at naught my counsel, and you would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me" (Proverbs 1:24-28).

God has his own law of pardon (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:21). Those who insist that God save them in answer to prayer, can never have their prayers answered! In the New Testament no person was ever saved in answer to prayer alone.

(5) We must pray with a spirit of thanksgiving and humility in our hearts. No arrogance, no pretentiousness, no vanity should ever characterize one's prayer. We suggest that Luke 18:9-14 be read with great care. Here we have two men who went to the temple to pray: one was a proud, boastful man; the other was very humble. One's prayer was rejected, the other accepted. Read this story again and take warning. Man in his weakness and infirmity is in no position to command God Almighty to do anything, although some Pentecostal preachers have been heard demanding God to perform miracles. Who can believe that God would pay any attention to such rank foolishness??

(6) When we pray, we must try to answer our own prayers. Prayer is the greatest force that we can wield. There is power in prayer; it can change things (Matthew 24:20).

When we pray, the Lord expects us to do our part. For example, at the resurrection of Lazarus, others could roll the stone away; but only Jesus could raise the dead (John 11:40-46).

What is the principle involved here? God will not do for us, what we can do for ourselves!

The principle applied: If we pray for the sick, we should provide care, medicine, and the like (Luke 5:31-32). If we pray for the naked and the hungry, we must supply them with food and clothing (Matthew 25:34-46). If we pray for widows and orphans, we must provide for them (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10; II Corinthians 9:13; Acts 11:27-30). If we pray for sinners to be saved from their sins, we must preach the gospel to them (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38).

Dear Christians, when you pray, make sure that you cooperate with your prayers. God never does for us what we can do for ourselves.

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Unity In Christ

All about us we see the result of sin: chaos, confusion and division. In response to that, God planned to unite all men in his church, abolishing all division and separation. Only in Christ will true unity be realized. In Ephesians 4:1-6 Paul gives us the necessary ingredients for unity.



John Waddey

To have unity you need a **Certain Kind of People**. They must "Walk worthily of the

calling wherewith (they) were called" (4:1). They strive to live up to the standard set by Jesus, walking in the light as he is in the light (I John 1:7). When we enter an organization we accept the obligations to live by the required standards of that group. To do otherwise is to embarrass and hinder the body.

Paul says we must walk with **lowliness or humility** if we would promote unity (4:2). Lowliness is the opposite of pride and ambition. The ancient Greeks viewed humility as a servile, cowardly thing; but Christ made it a virtue. Humility results from three ingredients: (1) We are made humble when we realize our own unworthiness. We need to daily examine and prove ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5). (2) When we compare our lives with that of Christ and the law of God we are forced to see how we sin and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). (3) When we think about our total dependence upon God, we see his great power and our "creatureliness" (Acts 17:25, 28). Without lowliness there will be no unity.

Meekness or gentleness is a prerequisite to unity. Aristotle described meekness as "the mean between being too angry and not angry enough." A meek soul is angry at the right time but never at the wrong time. He like Jesus, will be angry at the wrongs others suffer, but not at those imposed upon him. He will have every instinct, passion and word under control. He will not allow anger to cause him to sin (Ephesians 4:26). Meekness is strength under control. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Longsuffering or patience is a prerequisite to unity. Longsuffering is the spirit which does not give in. The Romans of Paul's day knew this concept. Their persistence would never accept peace under defeat. They might lose a battle but not a war. We must have that same determination to maintain unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Patience will bear with insult and injury without bitterness or complaint. It will tolerate foolish and unpleasant folks without frustration. Without patience a group will never have unity. Satan will see to that.

Love is an essential ingredient of unity. Roman society knew of erotic love and family love; but a new level of love was needed. Christ taught men to love their neighbors as themselves (Matthew 22:39); to treat them as they wished to be treated (Matthew 7:12); to do good to all men (Galatians 6:10); to feed a hungry enemy (Romans 12:20). With this attitude of goodwill flowing from each heart, unity will be ours. When we speak the truth in love the church will be built up in love (Ephesians 4:15-16).

We are admonished to maintain unity (4:3). We must do so with "diligence." Diligence is effort so concentrated as to bring forth perspiration such as is seen on the brow of a surgeon in the midst of a long and tedious operation.

"Maintaining" unity suggests that we do not create or originate it. The church as founded by Christ was "essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one." He has but one church (Ephesians 1:22; 4:4). When one disciple wins another they are together in their faith and loyalty. Our task is to maintain and conserve that sacred oneness.

It will help us to do our job if we are often reminded of God's will in this matter. Paul wrote "Now I beseech you brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you . . ." (I Corinthians 1:10). God hates and counts abominable one that "soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:17-19). Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that we all be one as are he and the Father (John 17:20-21). To successfully maintain peace, selfishness must be obliterated. Selfishness and peace are mortal enemies. Observation and experience suggests that 90 percent of our conflicts, whether congregational or church-wide, are personality centered. When the proud-dominate personality is removed, the conflict vanishes.

The Nature of the Unity God Expects (4:3) is "Unity of the Spirit." It originated with the Holy Spirit. It results from the fact that by one Spirit we all are baptized into one body and all drink of one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12-13). Such being the case, we should remain in fellowship with one another. This unity is bound together in peace. Thus Jesus blesses the peacemakers as the true children of God (Matthew 5:9). That implies that the agitator and church splitter has a different father from hellish realms. This unity originates in the heart of the individual Christian and modifies every attitude, action and relationship in a way that makes for peace.

The Basis For Unity is presented: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father . . ." (4:4-5). It is interesting to note that this unity is based on the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Father. Since each believer was baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19-20), we should all strive to stay on cordial terms with each other.

Inasmuch as there is only one body, which is the church (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22), it is only reasonable that we all be on brotherly terms. One hope of heaven awaits all. Since we all serve the Lord Jesus, believe the one faith (or doctrine) of Christ (Jude 3) and have received the one baptism, it is to be expected that we serve the Lord in harmony. That one God and Father who rules over, in and through all, also demands that all his children live together in loving peace. Since God has but one family, there cannot be a half dozen different kinds of churches of Christ, each alienated against the other -- and all still properly related to the Father!

Christian Leaders Must Guide the Church Toward that Unity. "He gave . . . apostles . . . prophets . . . evangelists . . . and teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints . . . till we all attain the unity of the faith . . ." (4:11-13). **Nothing is more important than the quest for**

unity. Sadly, such ranks low in priority with too many preachers and elders in our day. A wounded, divided church is the unfortunate result.

Unity is not uniformity. While we must be united in the fundamentals of the faith, there are hundreds of lesser matters where great diversity is allowed. When we commune, God has designated that we use bread and fruit of the vine to commemorate his death (I Corinthians 11:23-27); but how we will dispense the emblems, and their place in the worship hour, is ours to decide. So with Thomas Campbell we practice unity in matters of faith, liberty in matters of opinions, and in all things charity. True unity grows from a Christ-like attitude, while uniformity is imposed from without. William Barclay wisely notes: "The church will only realize her unity, when she realizes that she does not exist to propagate the point of view of any one (man, JW), or body of men, but to give a home and a dwelling-place where the Spirit of Christ can dwell, and where all men who love Christ can meet in the Spirit." Such also is the thought of Paul in Ephesians 2:19-22. When each living stone is fitly framed together, we grow into a holy temple, a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Let us all give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

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Criticizing The Wrong People

Continued from page 1

it without question. There may be young preachers, mostly, who will line up in such a fashion, and some older ones who may want to stay in the "clique" who will; but I would like to know who he is. It is easy to let someone else do your thinking for you, and easy to get into habits without realizing it. Blind allegiance is cultic; and if that is what we are fighting, let us all go to it! I line up behind the truth, based on the evidence, and am no more lining up behind the man in front of me who got there first than he is lining up behind the man who was there before him. All of us combined are no more cultic than the faithful of any other generation.

I am a little leary of these "fuzzy" shots in the dark that beat around the bush and don't tell you what they are talking about. It sounds like they have something on their chest that they are fearful of disclosing. I tell you we might be really surprised to hear what the critic who is criticizing critical people considers to be doctrine unworthy of criticism? who the editor chief is? and who is it he is marking? Even more interesting would be a list of the membership of the cult, or those who have been misquoted. If I am on one of these lists, I would surely like to know it; wouldn't you?

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The Abundant Life Is A Separated Life

Separation is both positive and negative. We read, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)" (Romans 1:1-2). This is a positive separation. Paul was "separated unto the gospel of God." A negative separation is to "come out from" anything contrary to the perfect will of God (II Corinthians 6:17).



W. Edwin Kearley

To be separated means to be "sanctified" (set apart) for salvation and service. The word of God has the power to separate the believer from sin (John 17:17). The Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalms 119:11). God, through his word, has the power to separate till death, or unto the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

God has the power to separate the believer unto righteousness, "not having spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:24-27). Through the gospel, God the Holy Spirit has the power to separate the believer unto salvation and service. Paul said, "... because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel..." (II Thessalonians 2:13-14).

Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The abundant life cannot be enjoyed until one separates from sin. This is made possible by the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Paul says of Jesus, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

The abundant life is a Spirit-filled life. The Holy Spirit dwells in every baptized believer. Hear the conditions and promise from Peter: "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 Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Paul taught, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The Christian "filled with the Spirit" may have joy by (1) singing and making melody in his heart and giving thanks to God in Jesus' name (Ephesians 5:19-20). (2) By giving one's self in service. As seven men were chosen to serve the benevolent needs of the neglected Grecian widows in Jerusalem, Christians can so serve today (Acts 6:3). (3) As the apostles were witnesses of Christ, we must tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love (Acts 1:8). (4) The Christian will be able to face the hour of persecution as Stephen did (Acts 7:54-60). (5) He is able to "walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). This means he will conduct his life in keeping with the Spirit of God as taught in the word of God. (6) The child of God will be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14). He is led by the teaching of the Spirit in the word of God. The Christian is to be studious. His study must be in the word of God (Romans

10:17).

The abundant life is a mature life. Peter wrote, "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." (II Peter 3:18). There is no substitute for the study of God's word.

May we ever remember the words of Paul;

"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (II Corinthians 6:17-18).

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What's In A Name

"What's in a name?"

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." This is often quoted as alleged proof that names do not matter in religion. This quote is 'good' Shakespeare; but it is 'bad' Bible. Even a casual reader of the Bible is aware of the great stress placed on names. If there is nothing in a name, why should God change Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel? The last named had descendants always called Israelites, not Jacobites.

When we come to consider John, we find that God has again determined to give emphasis to a name. When time came to name this God-promised son of their old age, there was no doubt in the minds of Zacharias and Elizabeth about his name. They both insisted "His name is John" (John 1:63). The objection came from friends and relatives: "None of your kin is called by this name." Why John?

The answer is simple. This is the name God had selected. Zacharias had been struck dumb because of his lack of faith in the power of God. But he had no difficulty in carrying out the order for a name for his son. Even though he had to write it, he wrote, "His name is John." No human name was important to Zacharias. He valued more a name God had named than one man might give. This trait is one of the many that caused Zacharias to be described as "righteous" and "blameless." It is obvious his son's name was not John the Baptizer, or John the Immerser. His name was merely John. When he became ready for his work as the forerunner of Christ, his preparatory work included immersing those who believed in the coming Messiah, and repented of their sins. John refused to immerse those who did not "bring forth fruit worthy of repentance." But because of his work he came to be called "the immerser" to describe his work.

"Immerser" or "baptizer" was no part of his name. No one thinks of the words "Jake the blacksmith" as being Jake's name. His name is merely "Jake;" but since he is a blacksmith, he is called "Jake the blacksmith." So, it is clear that "His name is John."

An added truth found in his title is that he was not "a" baptist, but he was John "the" baptist. And, he was to "decrease" by his own inspired prophecy. As one person said: "Only one baptist, and he was to decrease; That does not leave even baptist seed."

When a person says, 'there is nothing in a name,' and tries to apply this to religious



Thomas Weaver

names, he has said more than he meant to say. Just how many names does he propose to include in his statement? Does he mean there is nothing in the name of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit? Surely no one would mean this. But the statement "nothing in a name" would include any and every name.

God gave Christ "a name above every name" (Philippians 2:9-11). If there is nothing in a name, this was no honor God bestowed on Christ. It would rather have been an insult. It would have to be interpreted: "God gave him a nothing above every nothing." That makes very little sense.

God still places emphasis on names, especially in religion. The prophet Isaiah was guided by the Holy Spirit to speak of a name for God's people. He wrote, "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name" (Isaiah 62:2). Is there nothing in a name that God gives? There is no way to stress too much the importance of a name given by the "mouth of the Lord." Zacharias respected such a name, and nothing could change him from writing: "His name is John."

When we come to Acts 11:26, we learn of the "new" name which "the mouth of the Lord shall name." The message is clear in this passage: "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." The original language shows "were called" means "by the mouth of the Lord," and it is very apparent that "Christian" is the "new name." It is no surprise to read in I Peter 4:16, "but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name" (A.S.V.).

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Hezekiah An Encourager

Continued From Page 2

are true to the word, and who teach the truth without compromise, and without fear or favor? It is heartbreaking to hear of situations where an "upholder" of the truth is "let go" ("fired") because he defended the truth, the whole truth. It seems that many speak condemnably rather than "comfortably" to those who teach the truth. There are more and more preachers who are willing to speak "smooth things" to gain the praise of men, rather than to speak "true things" to please God.

We would do well to learn from Hezekiah as one who did right in the sight of God. Let us lift up and encourage those who have the courage to speak the truth of God's word.

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Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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There Is But One God

Paul said, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 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 8:5-6).



Kyle McWhorter

Paganism flourished in the days of the apostles. When Paul came to the city of Athens he found the city wholly given to idolatry (Acts 17:16). There were so many gods that were worshiped in this city that they had erected an altar to "the unknown God" (Acts 17:23). Paul used this as a basis for a sermon on the one true and living God (Acts 17:23-31).

Idolatry was prevalent in the city of Corinth when Paul established the church there through the preaching of the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:1-11; I Corinthians 3:4-11; 8:1-6). Some of the brethren had written Paul concerning the propriety of eating meat that had been offered in sacrifice to heathen gods (I Corinthians 8:1). Paul instructed them that an idol is nothing, and that they were at liberty to eat such meat if they desired. However, he also pointed out that if in eating such meat they caused a weak brother to stumble, love would demand that the Christian refrain from eating this meat (I Corinthians 8:8-13). Paul also pointed out that all Christians must recognize that there is nothing to the idols made by the hands of men -- that there is really but one God.

THREE PERSONS

It has been difficult for many to accept the fact that there is only one God, yet this one God be manifested in three persons. However, I see no real difficulty in this grand truth. One can understand that the husband and wife

are two persons, yet they are said to be one (Genesis 2:21-24). There is, then, no real difficulty when it comes to the truth of the one God revealed in three persons.

The Bible does set forth the fact of the triune God. God said, "Let US make man in OUR own image . . ." (Genesis 1:26). Again, God said, after the fall of man: "Behold the man is become as one of US, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Genesis 3:22-23). The use of plural pronouns "US" and "OUR" in these passages is significant. Man was not the one conferred with; for in the first passage noted above, man had not yet been created. These passages indicate that God, the Father, was conversing with the other two persons in the godhead.

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river, all three persons in the godhead can be clearly seen: Jesus was coming up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, and God the Father spoke from heaven (Matthew 3:13-17). In giving the Great Commission, Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize in the name of the sacred three (Matthew 28:18-20). Paul writes of the fact that there is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit in his letter to the church at Ephesus (Ephesians 4:1-6).

I do not see how anyone can miss the importance of the Bible teaching on this great truth. It is clearly stated that there is only one God: and yet this one God is revealed in three persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All three -- God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit -- are referred to as "God." The apostle John said that the Word (Christ) was God (John 1:1-4). Paul said that Jesus, before he was born of the virgin Mary, was equal with God (Philippians 2:5-11). The Holy Spirit also was referred to by Peter as God (Acts 5:1-4). Furthermore, he is said by the Hebrew writer to be "eternal" (Hebrews 9:14). Thus, it can be clearly seen that the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the Father, are said to be

"God." These three compose what the Bible refers to as the "godhead" (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9; Acts 17:29).


All three of the divine persons played a part in the creation of the universe. The Father planned it (Genesis 1:1, 26; Hebrews 1:1-4). But, the world was created by God through the instrumentality of the Son. The apostle John said that all things were made by the second person in the godhead (John 1:1-4). Paul said that by Christ were all things created, and that all things were made by him (Colossians 1:15-17). The Hebrew writer said that God made the worlds "by" his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Paul again said that God created all things "by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:8-9). Although God the Father planned the universe, and the Son brought it all into existence, the Holy Spirit organized, beautified, and gave it its laws of procreation (Genesis 1:1-3; Job 26:13; Psalms 104:30). Thus, each person in the godhead played an important role in the creation of this universe which is the habitation of man.

WHO IS THE ONE GOD?

The one God is not the "god" of the Deist. Deism advocates the view that man can know God by reason alone. However, it should be noted that there is no way man can know God apart from revelation. It is true that nature declares God's existence (Psalms 19:1-3; Romans 1:20). Yet, man could never have known of the goodness, love, mercy, and grace of God apart from revelation. It is in the Bible alone that such traits are revealed. Thus, man by his reason alone, unaided by revelation, can never come to know the one true and living God.

Deism also insists that the God who created the world now sits back and has never interfered with the natural laws of the universe. However, such is really not true; on numerous occasions God has intervened in nature, and has set aside for a time his natural laws. God destroyed the world by the flood (Genesis 6:1-7, 24; II Peter 3:1-7). The waters of the Red Sea were divided for the Israelites to cross (Exodus 14:1-31). Jesus was born of a

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Words Of Truth

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There Is But One God

Continued from page 1

virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18, 23; Galatians 4:4). The great miracles were performed by the Lord (John 20:30-31). Christ arose from the dead (Luke 24:1, 13, 21; Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 15:1-4). Other instances could be noted where God set aside his natural laws in the performance of great miracles. However, this is more than enough to show that God has not wound this old world up and now sits back and has never intervened to suspend the laws of nature. Truly, the living God is not the god of Deism.

The one God is not the god of Pantheism. Pantheism is the view that the world is "god," and "god" is the world. However, the Bible teaches that God is a living being, apart from nature, or the world; and that he is the world's Creator (Genesis 1:1-3).

The one God, as has been noted above, is the uncaused Cause of all things -- the Creator of the universe. He is the Almighty God (Genesis 17:1). He is said to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Luke 20:34-38). He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 17:1-5; John 3:16-17). He is the Father of every one who by faith has obeyed the gospel of the Lord (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 8:14-17; I John 3:1-2), or every one has been "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:1-8). The one God is the one who one day will judge the whole world by his Son (Acts 17:30-31). Yes, this is the one true God before whom all must bow in humble reverence and submission (Psalms 89:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Hebrews 12:28).

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Gus Nichols — Words Of Truth

Lectureship

September 28 - October 2, 1986

Illicit Sex And Its Consequences

God Almighty has never tolerated casual sex. From the beginning God has ordained one man for one woman. Adam was not made for "Steve," nor was Eve made for "Eva!" (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9).

All forms of homosexuality and lesbianism have been, from the beginning, condemned. Never has it been pleasing to the great Creator for his creation to engage in such beastly conduct. We suggest that the following Bible passages be read: Leviticus 18:22-30; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Romans 1:26-32; I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Sodomy is expressly condemned by the Holy Scriptures (Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Revelation 22:15). Hence, the toleration of a sodomite was expressly forbidden, and the pay received by a sodomite was not to be put into the Lord's treasury. "The price of a dog" is a figurative expression used to denote the gains received and indicating the dog-like manner by which the sodomites debased themselves.

Almighty God has an eternal law which demands that we must reap as we sow (Galatians 6:7-9). The abuse and misuse of sex results in some of the greatest curses known to man. Indiscriminate sex is the cause behind many of man's more serious health problems. What is desperately needed is a return a greater appreciation of Bible values (III John 2).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases, or "STD's," are growing at a staggering rate. "According to the Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC), the nation is in the grip of an epidemic that infects an average of 33,000 people a day. That figures to 12 million cases a year, up from 4 million in 1980. At this rate, 1 in 4 Americans between ages 15 and 55 eventually will acquire an STD. Millions will suffer from a painful infection that even doctors until recent years had never heard of -- chlamydia, with its risk of infertility and botched pregnancies. Others will be pestered for life by herpes lesions. Thousands will be stricken and -- unless a cure is found -- will die from acquired-immune-deficiency syndrome, or AIDS." (U.S. News & World Report, June 2, 1986).

What a dark picture! AIDS cases are soaring! Los Angeles (AP) -- "New AIDS cases in Los Angeles County, which numbered about 60 per month last year, have averaged more than 100 in March, April, and May. San Francisco recorded 90 new cases in April. An average of 239 new cases were reported monthly in New York City the first three months this year, up from 214 cases a month in the last six months of 1985" (The Birmingham News, June 20, 1986).

What about Alabama? We quote: "Montgomery (AP)-- State health officials said records show the number of AIDS cases in Alabama has risen from two in 1983 to 50 now, and Health Officer Earl Fox predicts the number will grow to 2,000 by 1990. If that



W. A. Holley

projection proves accurate, about 1,200 of the cases would be fatal, based on the current fatality rate in Alabama, which is just under 60 percent" (The Birmingham News, June 18, 1986).

Promiscuity in sex is extremely dangerous. What is the projection of STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) in 1986? We shall quote: "AIDS, 15,000; syphilis, 90,000; genital herpes, 500,000; venereal warts, 1,000,000; gonorrhea, 1,800,000; trichomoniasis, 3,000,000; chlamydia, 3,000,000; and other STD's, 2,450,000." (U.S. News & World Report, June 2, 1986).

Is it not tragic that otherwise sensible people would destroy themselves, and in a sense, commit suicide just for a little sex? As an example, "AIDS is quite different from any other disease," notes Allan Brandt of Harvard, assistant professor of medical history; "it strikes down people in their very early years, very, very quickly, and kills them." Hence, these sexually transmitted diseases are beginning to affect the way people think about sexuality and the way people act sexually. We think it is long overdue!!

In the ancient past God permitted sexual impurity to destroy the Canaanites lest they exert a baneful influence and spread a deadly contagion among the people of God (Numbers 25:1-9; I Corinthians 10:1-12). Thus the Canaanites actually destroyed themselves through their sinful practices. The law of sowing and reaping is always in force (Genesis 1:12; Job 4:8; Hosea 8:7; Galatians 6:7-9).

We do not decry the efforts of doctors and their medicines to try to help those who now suffer from sexually transmitted diseases (in fact, we wish them God-speed!) but something more is needed! The sole deterrent is, **PREVENTION**.

The Homosexuals and lesbians try to excuse their abhorrent and repugnant acts as their "life-style;" but be it understood that it is not their proclivities that infect them or others; rather, it is their **PRACTICE!**

It is high time we (as citizens of the world) return to the oldest and best standards of sexual activity ever presented to the human race: that law of marriage as instituted by God Almighty! (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9). What is true marriage? "Marriage is an institution ordained of God for the honor and happiness of mankind, in which one man and one woman enter into a bodily and spiritual union, pledging each to the other mutual love, honor, fidelity, sympathy, forbearance, and comradeship, such as should assure an unbroken continuance of their wedlock so long as both shall live" (H. Leo Boles).

Promiscuous sex in all of its shapes and forms is a sin before God (Galatians 5:19-21). Casual sex is leading our nation to wreck and ruin (Revelation 21:8).

Before becoming involved in illicit sex, all people (whether young or old) should ask themselves this question: Is it worth the pain, suffering, heartache, uncertainty, and dangers . . . both here and hereafter?

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Gus Nichols — Words Of Truth

Lectureship

September 28 - October 2, 1986

The Biblical Way To Deal With Public Error

(No. 2)

In our first article we made reference to an article in the *Firm Foundation*, February 12, 1980 (p. 3) advocating that any error should be dealt with in light of the teaching of Matthew 18:15-17. Our comments showed that this is not the Biblical way to deal with public error. With private error, yes; with public error, no.

A statement made in the article in the *Firm Foundation* provides us with the context for our second installment. The statement made in the article is this: "There is also no indication that Paul and Barnabas sent letters throughout the Christian world of that day exposing false teachers." We suppose it would at least be correct to make such a statement about Barnabas, since he did not write any of the New Testament. But to make such a statement about Paul is to speak falsely. The obvious intent of the statement is to say "Let's not deal in personalities, since Paul didn't." Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. Wayne Jackson, writing in the *Christian Courier*, June, 1970, (p. 4), reminds us:

"LET'S NOT DEAL IN PERSONALITIES" -- We hear the foregoing admonition repeated frequently these days. Is it Biblical? When one is demonstrated (by proof, not hearsay) to be a false teacher, he should be 'noted' (II Thessalonians 3:14). 'Put a tag on that man' (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*). The brotherhood must be warned; the offender should be named. Hymenaeus and Alexander made shipwreck of the faith (I Timothy 1:20). Phygelus and Hermogenes turned away from Paul (II Timothy 1:15). Hymenaeus and Philetus taught the resurrection was past (II Timothy 2:17, 18). Demas forsook Paul for the world (II Timothy 4:10), and Alexander the coppersmith did the apostle much evil (II Timothy 4:14). Diotrophes was rebuked for his love of pre-eminence and his rejection of certain brethren (III John 9). Is this dealing in personalities? YES! Because false teachers are false persons! Because false teachers are false persons! This is the Bible way and to deliberately ignore it is wickedness."

Brother Jackson has reminded us of that which we should already know. Paul called names in regard to public error. And so the obvious question arises: "Whose example are we going to follow in dealing with error? Paul's, John's, and Christ's? Or the example of those who would teach false doctrine publicly and then retreat into a false exegetical "hocus-pocus" (eisegesis) of Matthew 18:15-17? As Brother Jackson reminds us in an article entitled "Trends" in the *Christian Courier* (July, 1978), p 2:

"Oh, I know when someone speaks out in this fashion the customary response from a score of sources is: 'Who appointed



Bert Thompson

you to be the brotherhood watchdog?' It is considered neither scholarly nor dignified to publicly level a good blast at some heretic (yet what some of those 'gentlemen' preachers talk about in private would burn asbestos). Well, frankly, I have no desire to act as a church deputy; but listen, if we all roll over and play dead, where will the next generation find the church? This preacher does not condone muckraking as a career. Some appear to thrive on such and make a fair living at it. Abuses, however, do not negate the need for valid opposition to error."

The distinguished former editor of the brotherhood journal, *Words of Truth*, Bobby Duncan, penned an excellent editorial in that journal on July 14, 1978, entitled "Negative People." We quote from that article:

"There can be no doubting that one of the problems faced by the church in any generation is the problem of negativism -- stubborn and unfounded resistance and opposition to good works. There are some who have a disposition to be negative toward everything except those programs which they themselves have started or in which they have a big part to play. This negative tendency may, in some cases, result from ignorance, from an inferiority complex, from jealousy, or from some other in-admirable trait. Having so said, we would now emphasize the fact that one is not necessarily negative in disposition just because he is discerning enough to recognize sin and error, and just because he is courageous enough to oppose it with all his might. Jesus our Lord stood in staunch opposition to all kinds of sin, speaking out plainly. The same could be said of the inspired apostles of our Lord. But who would accuse Jesus or his apostles of having negative dispositions? . . . There are those today who are referred to as 'negative people,' and who are blamed for all the problems in the church. But in many cases these so-called 'negative people' are modern day Micaiah, who are dedicated to the faithful proclamation of truth, even though truth is not popular; and they will not be intimidated by epithets hurled at them by those who, like Ahab of old, are determined to pursue a certain course despite the will of God to the contrary. Furthermore, we do not share the view that those who cry out against sin are the ones who impede the progress of the church. Was it Micaiah who was an impediment to Israel; or was it Ahab and his prophets?" (p. 2).

Charles Whitmire, in an article in the *Firm Foundation*, February 19, 1974, entitled "Public Error Calls for Public Correction," does us a real favor when he calls the following facts to our attention in this regard:

"Again, some brethren have been castigated rather severely because they have warned against certain ones who have both taught and written error. The charge is that one has no right, in fact does wrong, in mentioning that which he has not heard by being present himself. And this, even though the error preached has been taped and is available to be

heard, or was heard by other reliable witnesses. Paul had not heard the Corinthian brethren saying, decisively, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas . . .' but he nevertheless charged them with such upon the word of 'them which are of the house of Chloe.' Again, he said of them: 'It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you . . .' A pretty serious charge. Had Paul first gone to the man guilty of this well-known public sin? Everyone had become involved due to the public knowledge of the matter, and public rebuke was necessary. Paul delivered that rebuke on the basis of the information 'reported commonly.' . . . The truth is more important than any man, and the body is more precious than any member. And, 'them that sin, rebuke them before all, that others may fear' (I Timothy 5:20)" [emphasis in original text].

Hollis Miller has so well observed in an article in the *Gospel Advocate*, June 21, 1979, entitled, "Kindness Can Oppose Error":

"All Christians should closely study the attitude Jesus and the New Testament writers assumed when in the presence of error. If unkindness is inherent in one's opposition to error, then the Lord himself cannot claim sinlessness. There are few passages in all literature more 'unkind' than the Lord's severe denunciation of the scribes and the Pharisees (Matthew 23). Paul's instructions to Titus concerning what to do with teachers who would lead others into error is another example of 'unkind' action made necessary for truth's sake (Titus 1:10-16). It is not difficult to imagine a few individuals at Crete who might have concluded that Paul should have been a little more understanding toward the feelings of the false teachers and a little less punitive in his suggested action against them. . . . Scripture perversion and traditions of men are still live options today. Because false teaching is always with us, it is still necessary for Christians to 'examine the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so' (Acts 17:11)" [pp 388-389].

The Christian is not given the liberty of deciding when to oppose error. The faithful Christian is to defend all truth! The faithful Christian is duty-bound to oppose all error! Philippians 1:7, 16-17 and Jude 3 make this abundantly clear. The favorable time and the proper time is NOW, without hesitation, without delay. As with a malignant cancer, error should be dealt with in its early stages. If error is dealt with when it is first presented, it can be more easily defeated and exposed. The "wait and see" or "wait for a more convenient season" attitude only gives error free reign to spread, to grow, and to lead more souls away from the truth. Error then becomes firmly entrenched with a broad base of supporters who become hardened in sin, but who might otherwise have been rescued at the outset.

James Boyd, writing in the *First Century Christian*, April, 1976, under the heading of "To Expose Or Not To Expose, That Is The Question," made the following very pertinent and much-needed comments:

Continued on page 4

Observations On Divorce And Remarriage

Jesus teaches that God grants each person one marriage that is to last for a life-time (Matthew 19:3-9). An exception is allowed for innocent victims who divorce their mates for the cause of fornication. Those who divorce and remarry for any other cause, enter into an adulterous relationship contrary to God's will. Those dying in an adulterous state cannot "inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:11).



John Waddey

Experience has taught that preventive medicine is better than punitive treatment of those who have transgressed God's marriage law. Few souls can be persuaded to abandon unlawful unions. A large number of divorces stem from hasty, youthful marriage. The church could make no better investment than in providing on-going, intensive teaching and training in the broad field of preparation for marriage and the care and nurturing of the same. God's principles and prohibitions must be stamped on the heart of every saint from his earliest days (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). We are the product of our teaching and training.

We need a steady flow of practical, simple Bible teaching on this issue in all pulpits, classrooms, gospel papers, and homes. Elders would do well to provide booklets and tracts to all members. We even need to share sound teaching materials with fellow preachers and elders.

In teaching on marriage and divorce, and in dealing with those who have broken marriages, we must not confuse our current American customs, legal codes, rules of evidence, etc., with the intent of God's law. The intent of God's rules on marriage was to preserve the sanctity of the home and family (Mark 10:6-9). He did not intend for co-habitation in marriage to be a threat to a person's physical, mental, or spiritual well-being. Even without fornication, a Christian could separate from an impossible mate. This, however, did not allow for remarriage to another (I Corinthians 7:11, 15).

We should remind ourselves of the simplicity of ancient Jewish marriage customs and divorce proceedings. Those wishing to read of them should consult Alfred Edersheim's *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*. Such is important when we are confronted with expensive lawyers, filing dates, rules of evidence, court customs, division of property, and other encumbrances that might make it difficult for an innocent victim to win a divorce ruling specifically for adultery. For example, in some states the prevailing custom is that no divorces are issued for adultery. What then is the status of the person who is clearly justified before God in divorcing his/her mate but can only get a decree for incompatibility or mental cruelty? Obviously we should honor the intent of God's law.

We must also resist the temptation to restrict and penalize those who are lawfully divorced and remarried. This may be a fairly common practice among those who rightly oppose UNLAWFUL marriages. If GOD grants a brother the freedom to divorce and

remarry according to his guidelines, is it not presumptuous for ME to deny him full rights of citizenship in the kingdom? On what solid scriptural grounds would we deny such a brother the right to take a public role in the church's work and worship?

Another area akin to this is our treatment of those who are divorced but not remarried. While we would not justify a past mistake, if one is living a pure life for Jesus, surely we should treat him/her with brotherly kindness and respect (Galatians 6:10). Unfortunately, some Christian divorcees find themselves virtually unwelcomed in our midst. Such should not be. Surely if the Lord could extend a welcome to publicans and harlots, we can extend fellowship to the devout divorcee (Matthew 21:31).

We must be as strict as God is in our teaching and dealing with marriage and divorce; --but we have no right to be more strict than he is. No man has the right to form additional laws and regulations and bind them on others. For example, some would not allow a scriptural divorce for any cause, ignoring the Savior's words in Matthew 19:9. Others, while giving lip service to the exception, will not concede that anyone could be an "innocent" party free to exercise that right. Legalistic interpretations of the Lord's words can actually void the intent of his teaching (Matthew 15:6). This was the ancient sin of the Pharisees. It yet lingers among us. While you may choose to restrict YOURSELF beyond what God has done, you sin when you seek to so limit ANOTHER (James 4:11-12).

Our primary job is to be teachers of God's will (Titus 2:15). Preachers are not law-enforcers nor private investigators! Abuses have occurred while this fact was ignored.

When conflicting views arise on any question, it is honorable and commendable for brethren to come together to consider the issue and present their case (Isaiah 1:18). Such does not have to be a hostile confrontation. One is not compromising in so doing. As Hedge's *Rules of Logic* require, we should consider each other sincere and with honest intent. A man does not suddenly cease to be a brother because he holds a different point of view. If such were the case, there could be no fellowship with anyone -- unless he would surrender his will to me and accept my every pronouncement. Who seriously wants such a case?

In our zeal to maintain the PURITY of the body of Christ, we must not neglect the UNITY of the body (Ephesians 4:1-6). Both concepts are of equal value. So serious is division, and so drastic are the consequences to the church splitter, one dare not call for division in a light or hasty way (Proverbs 6:16-19). All agree that there are some serious questions about which we may disagree without disintegration. Working with diligence to maintain unity is yet an honorable, respectable pursuit for gospel preachers! Don't be shamed from such a pursuit.

Unfortunately, truth on marriage and divorce is sometimes presented in such complicated ways that honest souls, who hunger for truth, cannot perceive it. While on the other hand, error is set forth in a much simpler format, and thus sways many to its erroneous conclusion. The common folks are pleading, "Tell us plainly" (John 10:24)! Likewise, some deliver truth in such a gruff, harsh way that many sympathize with the spokesman who speaks his false way with love

and compassion. Let us preach this and all other truth in love, and a much better response will follow (Ephesians 4:15).

If one demands an absolute and final decision from a brother, a congregation, or from the brotherhood, before adequate teaching and study has been done, such will polarize our ranks and drive many who are yet undecided toward the more tolerant, patient proponents of error. Few men like to be pressured into a position before they have been fully assured in their own minds (Romans 14:15).

Let no one interpret these thoughts as an effort to down-play the seriousness of the question, nor to compromise truth. Rather, it is an appeal to brethren of good will to follow a course that will root out error, strengthen weak brethren, and preserve the unity of the precious body of Jesus Christ. May it be so received.

--6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Dealing With Public Error

Continued from page 3

"It is not very good thinking to think the only effort that can be made to keep your house clean is to sweep out the grit and mud already there. Another effort is to make the mud-trackers take off their shoes with mud on them before they start running through the house. We must know who such people are, what they are, what they are saying and doing, and give them no place or platform. . . . Do not we have any love for brethren in other places, even distant places, when they are plagued with false doctrines by false teachers? Why should we act like we do not care what others are saying and doing? Christ cares. God cares. The Spirit cares. We do also. While using our own broom at home when necessary, and doing what we can to keep error out, can we not at least send our brethren a broom, or help them get one?" (p. 5).

The Christian, we repeat, is not given the liberty to simply oppose error if he "feels like" it, or if it is "convenient." Jesus opposed error in the prominent religious leaders of his day (Matthew 21:23-46). John the Baptist rebuked a king (Mark 6:18). Peter and John opposed error when it was found in the very council before whom they stood on trial (Acts 4:5-31). Stephen opposed error while a howling mob rushed upon him demanding silence (Acts 7). Paul opposed error when another apostle was involved (Galatians 2:11, 12), and when his co-worker and traveling companion was involved (II Timothy 4:10). There must be no loyalty -- whether it is family, friend, employment, institution, or even personal safety -- that is greater than the loyalty of the Christian to God, to Christ, and to the Bible. Else, we fall into the category of those who love the praises of men more than the praises of God.

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Words of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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Gambling: The Elusive Dream

Gambling is for suckers who shovel their money into slot machines thinking that, somehow, they will strike it rich.

Who are the people who gamble? The answer: the old, the young, grandmothers and grandfathers, the very poor-- these are the people who throw away their money, hoping -- somehow -- to strike it rich. Yes, there are a few winners; but many, many, many -- by the



W. A. Holley

thousands -- losers. The losers never learn: they will be back just as soon as they have more money to throw away!

One authority says: "What is particularly unfortunate about it in Atlantic City is that the deluge of greenbacks is not coming from high rollers, or even from middle-class families willing to lose a set amount . . . ; it is coming from the poor and from lower-middle-class senior citizens who can ill afford to lose any money." Surely, it makes as much sense for gamblers to throw their money into the Atlantic Ocean as it does for them to cram their money into gambling machines!

Gambling is a game of fantasy vs. the harsh reality of the house's favorable odds; but there is another side to this story, hidden from view, that involves greed and political corruption and organized crime and murder. According to newspaper accounts, in the last six years, there have been nearly 40 mob-murders in the Atlantic City area, as the various crime families in New York and Philadelphia fight for the spoils generated by the gambling bonanza. Gambling can not im-

prove the social life, the political atmosphere, or the economic condition, of any city or state or nation!

Gambling is a parasitic enterprise that thrives on the weaknesses of people. It leaves in its wake corruption, debasement, despair, and subversion of moral authority. Here, indeed, is the bottom line that cities, states and the nation, should assess before plunging into the maelstrom created by the gambling craze.

The late J. Edgar Hoover said: "Gambling is a vicious evil. It corrupts our youth and blights the lives of adults. It becomes the spring-board for other crimes -- embezzlement, robbery, even murder."

Gambling never, never, never, pays its own way. In Atlantic City, "Nine hotel-casinos were doing land-office business, reporting gross annual revenues of \$1.8 billion (1983). Two years later, with 11 hotel-casinos . . . total earnings were \$2.2 billion . . ."

Does all this revenue solve the problems of Atlantic City? Not at all! "The people who danced in the streets the night gambling was legalized were soon bemoaning their fate, as property taxes, and water, sewer and utility bills soared along with street crimes, prostitution and drug abuse." "Throughout Atlantic City, homeless men and women wander about the casinos . . . searching for food in trash containers, huddle in doorways to keep warm in winter, or sleep in public places and abandoned buildings" (Quoted from Parade Magazine, May 11, 1986).

What is gambling? Legally, gambling is, "Gaming or playing for money; the betting on the results of a game for money; the playing of a game of chance or skill for stakes." Parimutuel betting is defined as "a betting pool in which those who bet on the winners of the first three places in the total amount bet minus a percentage for the management" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 8th

Ed.). In reality, gambling is an attempt to get something for nothing without rendering service or exchange for goods received. Gambling involves taking unnecessary risks in order to obtain something for nothing.

Is gambling wrong and therefore sinful before God Almighty? We strongly affirm that it is!

Some assert that gambling cannot be sinful because the Bible does not mention or use the word from Genesis to Revelation. Well, where does the Bible use the words "rape," "larceny," "embezzlement," "prostitution," "bootlegging," or "narcotic addiction?" Yes, the Bible strongly condemns these aforementioned sins, though they are not specifically mentioned (Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Revelation 21:8).

Acts 1:23-26 does not justify gambling in any sense. Here the apostles prayed for God to direct their choice. There is a vast difference between this act, and the sin of gambling. The apostles were not creating a risk, nor were they venturing a little in hope of gaining a lot.

Gambling is sinful because it affords a vehicle by which one can take what does not rightfully belong to him. Gambling does not thrive on honest labor or services rendered, but rather on trying to take by trickery that which does not rightfully belong to the gambler (Cf. Luke 8:15; Acts 6:3; Romans 12:17; 13:13; II Corinthians 8:21; Philippians 4:8).

Gambling is sinful because it tempts God Almighty. In Matthew 4:5-7 Satan wanted Jesus to take an unnecessary risk by jumping from the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus replied: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." If (?) God helps some gamblers to win, he also must help some gamblers to lose! What a God!! Yet "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34-35).

Gambling is sinful because it seeks to turn a

Continued on page 3



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Gambling: The Elusive Dream

Continued from page 1

vice into a virtue (Isaiah 5:20-23; Proverbs 17:15; 24:24). Hence, gambling sails under false colors. The greatest men and women who ever lived spurned gambling. Men and women of the Bible were producers . . . constructive workers . . . not sluggards who wanted something for nothing. For example: Paul was a tentmaker, Jesus was a carpenter, Peter was a fisherman, Elisha was a farmer, Samuel was a judge, Moses was a shepherd, et al.

No person can put the kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33), while pursuing the elusive dream . . . Gambling. Hard work and frugality represents God's ways for men and women (Ephesians 4:28; II Thessalonians 3:10-15). Gambling is diametrically opposed to the letter and spirit of Christianity -- that we must seek the good of others. When one gambler goes home with his pockets full, many others goes home with empty pockets. Something is terribly sinful! The golden rule does not operate where gamblers are concerned (Matthew 7:12). Gambling under all of its names (bingo, lotteries, parimutuel betting, matching for coffee, and the like) should never be legalized. All Christians must stand firmly against all forms of gambling.
—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Gus Nichols

— Words Of Truth

Lectureship

September 28 - October 2, 1986

Shall We "Overlook" Instrumental Music For The Sake Of Unity?

Editor's note: Because of the general interest in, and concern regarding, brotherhood efforts toward unity, I give my personal endorsement, and editorial space this week, to the following article. I wish for it the widest possible circulation and acceptance.]

Shall We "Overlook" Instrumental Music For The Sake Of Unity?

Alan E. Highers

Since August of 1984 there have been several "Restoration Forums" or "Summits" conducted between a group of men from churches of Christ and a group from the Independent Christian Churches. Some of us have been concerned about the "fruits" of these meetings. Others have criticized our concern and have suggested that we ought always to be ready to discuss our differences for the sake of unity.

To set the record straight, we would point out the following:

1. We are not opposed to meeting with those with whom we disagree for the purpose of discussing our differences. We would be unwilling to meet, however, unless we were allowed the freedom to teach the truth and to speak frankly about our differences. We desire to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15); but we cannot violate our own consciences.

2. We do not allege that all who have attended these meetings have been guilty of compromise, yet it is clear that some compromising statements have come as a result of these meetings.

3. We believe in unity (Psalm 133:1), and we would dearly love to see all brethren in Christ united as Jesus prayed (John 17:20-21).

4. We do not believe that compromise is the means to scriptural unity. We must abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9), in the one faith (Ephesians 4:4-6), and in the authority of Christ (Colossians 3:17).

5. We do not believe in ignoring our differences for the sake of fellowship. Some are contending, in effect, that "our differences do not make any difference." The use of instrumental music is NOT a mere difference of OPINION among brethren. It affects the public assembly of the saints, corrupts the worship, and violates the authority of Christ (Matthew 15:9; II John 9). Furthermore, it

has caused division in the body of Christ (Romans 16:17).

One of those who has criticized our concern about these meetings is Bill J. Humble of Abilene Christian University. Brother Humble has said, "It is distressing to me that some brethren have been very critical of these meetings. Earlier generations in the restoration movement were always ready for dialogue and discussion" (One Body, Spring 1986). As we have pointed out, it is not "dialogue and discussion" which we oppose; what we oppose is the spirit of compromise and error. But brother Humble states that the purpose of these "unity meetings" is not "compromise on the music question." How we wish that were the case! In nearly every issue of the magazine, One Body, there are articles defending the use of instrumental music in worship -- and alongside are articles by brethren such as brother Humble urging that we have at least a "degree" of fellowship with those in the Independent Christian Churches.

The latest "unity meeting" was conducted in April 1986 at Milligan College in East Tennessee. One of those who attended was Jim Howard, minister of the White Station Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. In giving his reflections on the meeting in Image Magazine under date of August 1, 1986, brother Howard says: "The question here becomes the grading or cataloging of sins. Is it legitimate to make instrumental music the one great sin that cannot be overlooked in our quest for unity?" Now, brother Humble tells us that the purpose of these meetings is not "compromise on the music question;" but brother Howard, writing his reflections of one such meeting, actually suggests that we should "overlook" the sin of instrumental music in our quest for unity!

Many of us will simply ask to be excused from the kind of "unity" that is being proposed by some of those who are participating in these "unity meetings." We will continue to believe that fellowship is conditioned upon walking "in the light" (I John 1:7), and that we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11).

—P.O. Box 263, Henderson, TN 38340.

"In Unsettled Times"

We live in a world of change. James' words, ". . . ye know not what shall be on the morrow," emphasize that almost every hour of every day brings something new to our lives. In view of our rapidly changing world, we would be well advised to remember what God has provided for our help.

Our unchanging God can help us remain steadfast. The ship that has its anchor firmly attached, can withstand the strongest storm. On every hand we can see change; but with our souls anchored to an eternal God, the storms cannot sway us. David describes the



Dan Jenkins

blessed man as one whose "heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord" (Psalm 112:7). The result of trusting in the Lord is that while others lose their moorings, the child of God remains unmoved. The God of our youth is the same God we have in old age -- he has not changed; and such can give stability in every age.

The unchanging word can help us (Psalms 19:7-11). The promises of God are eternal, and a life built on these promises will be one characterized by steadfastness. The principles that allowed Job to endure great trial, that helped David come through such adversity, that sustained Paul in the midst of great tribulation, are the principles that must undergird our lives. They are as trustworthy as God himself for they are a written manifestation of his nature. Trust them; live by them; build your lives on them; for they are eternal, and will sustain you -- just as they did holy men of old.

—125 Dory Road South, North Palm Beach, FL 33408.

Living Comfortably

The work of preaching was given by God Almighty. And in His sight the work and worker are precious. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:13-15). Knowing that God looks upon preaching so highly causes this writer much anguish of heart to hear that another preacher has left the field.



Victor M. Eskew

The excuses which men use to justify their decision to quit preaching are legion. One of the most frequently used, however, is: "I want to be able to live comfortably." In some cases, the man who makes this statement has been treated poorly by the brethren with whom he has worked. His salary may have been low, benefits minimal, and he has lived by "scraping the bottom of the bucket." His bad experience or experiences may have led him to believe that the only way to "get by" was to involve himself in secular work.

Others, though, have used this excuse, when, in actuality, they were not living uncomfortably while preaching. What they really mean is that they want the finer things of this life. A large home, a luxury automobile, designer clothes, and a fat retirement check are involved in their idea of "comfortable living." To these we kindly address the following comments.

First, if you do not desire the work of an evangelist, please just say so. It is discouraging to others who may be thinking about entering the field of preaching when they hear you say you want to live comfortably. The inference they draw from you is that while you were preaching you were living uncomfortably. In actuality, though, you had a home provided, the electric bills were paid, and you had a salary that would feed the family and pay your bills. Were you really living uncomfortably?

Second, we warn you to be careful about your choice. If the treasure which you are seeking is upon this earth, your heart will also be upon this earth. Jesus cautioned of this in his sermon on the mount: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Third, it might do much good to reflect upon contentment. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed

both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11-12). Will this comfortable lifestyle which you so desire help you to learn contentment? Does it reflect obedience to Paul's words: "And having food and raiment let us therewith be content." (I Timothy 6:8)

Fourth, we urge you to beware of the dangers of riches. "And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:23-25). And again: "But they that will be rich fall into

temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:9, 10).

Preacher friends, a man does not have to preach to be a faithful Christian. Nor does a man have to be poor to be a good servant of Christ Jesus. But if you are thinking about quitting your work of preaching on the excuse that you want to live comfortably, please consider the things we have written before making your decision.

—P.O. Box 126, Belmont, MS 38827.

Freedom

The whole world cries for freedom. But do men really have the true concept of freedom? Many people often confuse freedom with license to conduct their lives in any way they choose. What about the rights of children, born and unborn? Can women enslave themselves in their glamor for equality?



W. Edwin Kearley

Paul taught, "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). When one defies the nature of God, and his own nature, he is the loser. The Christian is set free from sin. He is told to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in bondage" (Galatians 5:1). It is like warning one freed from prison not to get in prison again. Christians must not allow passions, lusts, and appetites of the flesh to rule their lives. The fleshly appetites involve men in bitterness, wrath, and strife.

There are those who say love is the only law. Others say, "If it feels good, do it." But what is love? Love fulfills the law. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self" (Romans 13:8-9). For example: Committing adultery manifests a lack of love for self as well as a lack of love for the sexual partner. Both sin against God, themselves, and one another. They condemn themselves (Galatians 5:19-21).

Freedom is not a means to cover up evil. The Christian citizen is taught, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your

LIBERTY for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God" (I Peter 2:13-16). The only limit God gives to the above responsibility is when man's law conflicts with God's higher spiritual law. When the Jerusalem court commanded the apostles not to preach Jesus, they refused to obey. They said, "... We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The conduct of nations determines the kind of rulers they will have. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was driven from men to dwell with beasts "... until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. And giveth it to whomsoever he will," and "setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17, 32). Therefore nations choose their leaders by the way they live, as much as they do by their voices on election day.

The greatest way to have freedom is to live according to God's divine pattern for our lives. Any other life is to live out of our habitat. As the fish cannot live outside of water, man who lives contrary to God's plan does not have a satisfactory life here on earth, and will die eternally in a devil's hell.

We now have the power of choice. How will you choose? (II Corinthians 6:2).

—103 Elena Court, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

"I Want My TV"

Keith Fussell

Hungary has unusual Monday nights: the streets teem with people; the movie houses are packed. Monday is the big night for theater, art exhibits, and concerts. It is also the night for socializing, for long after-dinner conversations. This is because, by government decree, Monday is the night television goes dark in Hungary ("Les Brown in Channels").

I think the government in Hungary is pretty wise! A night without television would be traumatic at first, but beneficial in the long run. I have accomplished something new. Because of my wife's pregnancy and consequent sickness I've been spending many more evenings at home. I know the TV schedule inside out again-- after several years of tele-

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Satan Came To Our House

Mrs. Glenn (Cindy Holder) Colley

One day last week the postman brought a package to our house for our preschool son, Caleb. It was the first in a series of "educational" books distributed by Weekly Reader Books. We had agreed to accept it as a free introductory gift, agreeing also to buy the remainder of the series, pending satisfaction. The book was entitled *Dinosaurs and Other First Animals*. It was written in very factual terms. The words "perhaps," "possibly," or "men believe" were not found in the book. Here are some excerpts from *Dinosaurs and Other First Animals*: "When the earth began, there was nothing but hot gases. Slowly the gases cooled and became rock. Rain fell. Water mixed with salts from the rocks. The first life grew in this mixture" (Page 4).

"The first life was in the sea. Tiny plants formed. For millions of years, the plants slowly grew and changed" (Page 5).

"At first there were no living things on land. But that changed after a while. Plants, worms, and other small animals began to live on land" (Page 12).

"After millions of years, a new kind of animal appeared on earth. These were the first reptiles" (Page 16).

"The first horse was the size of a small dog. It had four toes on its front feet and three on its back feet" (Page 29).

"The first people like us lived during the

"I Want My TV"

Continued from page 3

vision ignorance. I know when our favorite shows are on, and even when those shows are on that we don't like that well, but watch anyway. Of course, there are traumatic times in our TV life. Like on Tuesdays when *Hunter* and *Moonlighting* are on at the same time. That gives me three options. I can bow to my wife's wishes and watch *Hunter* with her, or I can go to the bedroom and watch *Moonlighting* on "black and white," or I can record *Moonlighting* and watch it later. (You'll notice that in all three options the good TV stays on my wife's choice.) This is obviously an exaggerated example, but it goes to show how much of our family times goes into the tub e

Families need time to talk. They need time to participate in activities together. A family needs to study God's word, and pray together.

Television can be a nice means of entertainment. But when the TV starts to rule us, entertainment has taken over our lives. Remember the words of Joshua: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). A lot of the time we waste on television can better be spent strengthening our families and serving the Lord!

—Sunset Church of Christ, 8445 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143.

last ice age" (Page 33).

As a Christian and a mother, I had several initial responses to this material. Here are a few of them:

1. I was insulted. After all, those who sent this material into my home expected me to be gullible and ignorant enough to accept these unproven and unscientific theories as "fact." They expected me to find this material so informative and educational that I would buy several more books based on the quality of this material. That is insulting! "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Psalms 14:1).

2. I was outraged. The devil is described as "a roaring lion" who "walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Never before had I pictured the devil as one who would devour even the smallest child . . . my child. How angry I became as I read the lies he intended for my son -- and yours -- to believe!

3. I was saddened. It is indeed a sad state of affairs when our society has become so degraded that a book such as this can be used as a selling tool for a large company. This godless deception is actually an advertisement; and, apparently, people are buying. These are the sad words of the Psalmist just after he described the atheist as being a "fool:" "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalms 14:2, 3).

Just how close are we to this state of de-

pravity?

4. I was afraid . . . afraid of the dangers of rearing a child during these last years of the twentieth century. I fear the temptations he will face; and I realize that he will not develop into a God-fearing adult by accident. Many fervent prayers must be offered and diligent training must be given him now to prepare for the difficult days ahead! "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

5. I was, and am determined . . . determined to never allow anyone to make my child feel small because he believes in Almighty God. I am determined to instill within my son a faith in the God who could and did "make from nothing" the complete world and its inhabitants in less than a week. I know that if I miss this mark, I will have left him open for any darts Satan and the world may hurl at him. I am determined that as he comes in contact with forces outside our home, that I, too, will come in contact with those forces . . . that I will be aware of the material he is being taught at school . . . that I will be conscious of those who may be molding his attitudes . . . that I will be available and open whenever he needs direction in his young life.

Yes, Satan came into our home one day last week. He came in a pretty bright blue book in a neat little package that the mailman brought for our toddler. This "educational" material will not be added to little Caleb's library. But it has been very educational just the same. Perhaps it has helped open our eyes to the devices of Satan, and has made us keenly aware of our awesome responsibility as parents in a world whose people "call not upon the Lord" (Psalms 14:4).

—544 East Madison, Pulaski, TN 38478.

"They Would Never Obey"

One of the reasons we often fail in our attempt to reach the world with the gospel is our tendency to decide those who will and those who will not obey the Lord. How foolish we are to think that we know the hearts of men and what response they would make to the truth.

To show the folly of such, consider the following question: In your opinion, what person in the first century would have been the least likely to become a Christian? Using human judgment we would not miss the mark far by suggesting that Saul of Tarsus would be this person. The response of Ananias is typical of many Christians in our own day. When



Dan Jenkins

commanded to go to teach Saul, he said: "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done . . ." What opportunity was almost lost! Suppose Paul had not been converted; suppose Ananias had been like many today and decided that "he would never obey the gospel!"

Brethren, how can we know the hearts of men? God alone has this power. Let us recognize our responsibility is to sow the seed, to tell others of Christ; but let us leave the increase to God (I Corinthians 3:6).

—125 Dory Road South, North Palm Beach, FL 33408.

Gus Nichols — Words Of Truth

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Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

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A Brief Review Of The New Century Version

Bruce R. Curd

From the presses of Sweet Publishing Company, Fort Worth, comes "The Word, New Century Version" of the New Testament. This 1984 publication is a product of the World Bible Translation Center, Inc., of Arlington, Texas, an independent, non-profit organization whose goal is to produce easy-to-understand versions for people around the world. This same organization developed the base text of the *International Children's Version* (Sweet, 1983), and *The New Testament: An New Easy-to-Read Version* (Baker, 1978). The latter two named volumes were prepared with the child and teen-ager in mind, while the former is adult oriented. However, a casual comparison reveals little difference, if any, in the translation of many passages.

The Preface of *The Word, New Century Version*, (hereafter NCV) states, "The intent of WBTC . . . is to state koine Greek in English as clearly and precisely as possible. The result of eleven years of their labor and the final editorial work supervised by the publisher has been reviewed by trustworthy Greek scholars from various religious backgrounds." On the dust jacket of this book, the following names appear: Virtus E. Gideon, Ph.D., Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Harold W. Hoehner, Ph.D., Dallas Theological Seminary, Stanley M. Horton, Th.D., Assemblies of God Graduate School, and Neil R. Lightfoot, Ph.D., Abilene Christian University. These men are referred to as "a cross-section of trustworthy New Testament Greek scholars."

The Preface continues, "The review process was designed to insure that the *New Century Version* avoided denominational bias and loose paraphrasing" (keep this statement in mind as this article continues, BRC). "To assure dignified, understandable English sentence construction and word choice, recognized stylists and proofers were used to refine

the English text."

The Old Testament of NCV is slated to be released in 1986, completing the entire project after some thirteen years of translation.

Under the supervision of the publisher, the translation Center makes several claims for the NCV in its preface. They are:

1. The NCV is clearly translated for our times.
2. It claims to be guided by the necessity of accuracy.
3. The committee claims to have worked toward a translation that communicates the same thing to modern readers that koine Greek communicated to its first century readers; and
4. That there is no intent to provide a commentary on the Bible, as in the case with some paraphrases.

This volume has been highly acclaimed by such men as Paul Faulkner of Abilene Christian University and Jim Mankin, minister of the Madison Church of Christ, Madison, Tennessee.

Without any claims to scholarship or to any extraordinary abilities of discernment, this scribe humbly, but forthrightly, will show that the claims of the translators and publisher as outlined above have not been established, nor can they be established. When carefully compared with the Greek New Testament, and with the tested and tried English translations available, I have found, even after a hurried examination, that the NCV leaves a lot to be desired and does not live up to the claims of its producers.

Following are some examples of a free and awkward approach by the translators of this book. Often untrue and unnecessary changes are made in NCV, ostensibly for the purpose of clarity and modernity. But none of these changes improve upon the older translations.

Matthew 5:18 NCV has Jesus saying, "I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone." If this

does not say that the law will remain as long as time prevails, it says absolutely nothing. But this contradicts many another passage (Cf. Ephesians 2; II Corinthians 3; and Hebrews 10:9). The American Standard Version renders Matthew 5:18: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished." Here Jesus was stating that the law must be fulfilled, and when it was to terminate; but that it was just as possible for heaven and earth to pass away as it was for the law to pass until it had served its purpose. NCV makes no improvement whatsoever for the modern reader.

NCV uses the word "followers" instead of "disciples." This is a very weak and awkward change in many passages. While although a disciple is a follower, yet not all followers are disciples. The Pharisees followed John and Jesus on many occasions (Matthew 3:7), but they did not become disciples of either John or Jesus. "A disciple was not only a follower, a pupil, but also an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher. John 8:31-32; 15:8" (Vine, p. 318).

John 3:5-6 is rendered in NCV: "But Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth. Unless one is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter God's kingdom. A person's body is born from his human parents. But a person's spiritual life is born from the Spirit.'" Several words are added to the text, notably, the expression "human parents." NCV dispenses with the Greek words "sarkos" and "sarz" (translated "flesh") which do appear in the passage. Neither does the word "person's," (used twice in NCV) have a Greek counterpart. Too, the word "person" hints at feminizing the passage. Here is a clear example of adding to the word of God, to say nothing

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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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Heaven - The Eternal City Of The Faithful

Hebrews chapter 11 contains many characters of old who had the kind of faith that is pleasing to God. Noah "moved with fear" in the preparation of an ark (verse 7); Abraham, "when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed" (verse 8); "the harlot Rahab" who "perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (verse 31). All of these "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (verse 13).

Those were men and women who desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly" (verse 16) country "whose builder and maker is God" (verse 10). Today we must understand that we, too, are strangers and pilgrims upon this earth. We are to "love not the world neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2:15). Let us remember that we, too, are looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

The eternal city of heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. The Hebrew writer speaks concerning the faithful of chapter 11 that "God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16). To be prepared for the land of glory one must have the faith that is pleasing to God. "But without faith it is impossible



Howell Bigham

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George Franklin Farris

1906 - 1986

Gilbert Behel

G. Frank Farris, a faithful gospel preacher for approximately thirty-six years passed away March 24, 1986. The funeral service was conducted by Curtis Posey and Gary White Wednesday, March 26, at the Eldridge Church of Christ. He is survived by his wife, Emma Jane Norris Farris, and eight children -- five boys and three girls.

George Franklin Farris was born near Crossroads in Winston County, Alabama, on October 11, 1906, to the late M. W. (Mack) and Leona Farris. He was the oldest of fourteen children, six boys and eight girls. He attended school at Crossroads, and Lynn, Alabama. Farris was married to Emma Jane Norris on August 3, 1924, and for the next sixty two years -- until the day of his death -- they shared their lives together, and truly exemplified the meaning of Matthew 19:5 and Ephesians 5:22-33.

Frank became a Christian in 1927 and his wife in 1928. Even though they were young Christians, their interest in learning more was of such magnitude that during the 30's after a hard day's work at the sawmill, he and his wife would take a flat-bed truck, gather up a load of people, and go to gospel meetings to hear great preachers such as Gus Nichols, G. A. Dunn, C. P. Roland and others. Brother Farris taught Bible classes for many years following his conversion and filled in as preacher for different congregations,



especially in Walker County. He attended the Gus Nichols' Training Class in Jasper, Alabama, from its beginning to the last class taught by Brother Nichols. He took with him to these classes Brother Gary White, who was at the time a very young man, and is now preaching in Tennessee. Brother Farris has one son and one son-in-law who are gospel preachers also.

G. Frank Farris preached for a number of congregations over the years, including, Eldridge (where he also served as elder for about 15 years) and Crossroads (in Winston County). For several years he preached for the Kansas congregation (in Walker County) and at Goldmine in Marion County at the same time, preaching three sermons each Sunday, and teaching two Bible classes each week.

Brother Farris's preaching life wasn't always easy. He earned his livelihood through the years by sawmilling. He would work all week at the mill, study until late at night, and preach on Sundays. In 1972 he sold his sawmill and retired, giving himself to working with the church in anyway he was needed.

His kindness, patience, thoughtfulness, and courtesy toward all people were of such magnitude that it won him favor among those within the congregations where he worked as well as the community in which he lived. He conducted and helped with more funerals than any other preacher in the west end of Walker County. His concern for the lost was always expressed in the prayers which he prayed. One of his greatest desires was that his children be faithful Christians; and he gave them a good example as a Christian husband, father, and citizen.

Truly, Brother George Franklin Farris is missed by all who knew him, and will be for years to come. The following poem is a tribute in his memory by a member of the Eldridge church.

Tribute To A Very Real Person

G. Frank Farris
By: Rosemary Waldrop

I believe there are two kinds of people,
And he was the kind I'd like to be.
He was so joyful and giving;
For virtue, he had the key.
He expressed his life by what he did,
And that won friends for him.
He lived a sermon every day--
His spirit never grew dim.
He wasn't cheap and shallow,
But his course ran deep and pure.
Not many in life you find like him:
His goal was heaven, he was sure.
His little acts of kindness
That he thought nothing of--
These little things were big things
'Cause he did them out of love.
He had a big smile for each person
He happened to meet on his way.
No matter the race or the color.

He had always a kind word to say.
He was always there to uplift one,
If ever he should stumble or fall--
Although he was little in stature,
In my eyes, he was ten feet tall!
He bore all his heartaches in silence,
Of his burdens he never complained.
His voice he used for just one thing:
The gospel to proclaim.
There're not enough words to describe him,
Like giving, and careing, and fair.
I knew no other quite like him!
When needed, he was always there.
Yes, I believe in a man they call Frank.
I believe he was honest and true.
I know he was a living example
For someone like me and you.

Christ And The Church

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32). Our readers are respectfully advised to read the full context: Ephesians 5:22-33.



W. A. Holley

The Holy Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus Christ established his church (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:36-38, 41, 47; 11:14-15). The church of Christ antedates the Catholic church by more than 500 years, and denominational churches by 1500 years. This fact accounts for the non-mention in the Bible of man-made churches.

Jesus is the head of his church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24). Jesus adds the saved to his church (Acts 2:41, 47). No one joined the church of one's choice in apostolic times. (Scripture, please)!

In the gospel according to Matthew the church is spoken of no less than thirty-six times as "the kingdom of God." The Lord's church was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41, 47; 11:14-15).

There are certain essentials which determine whether a church is a true church or a false church. We shall note--

(1) To be the true church, the church must meet the Lord's standard of measurement. The Bible is replete with special examples of various measures demanded of God.

When God commanded Noah to construct the ark, he gave a definite set of instructions which he (Noah) was required to observe (Genesis 6:14-16). The material to be used, and the arrangement of construction bound upon Noah, are also clearly set forth.

Later, the Lord's tabernacle (of Moses' day) was to be built according to specific dimensions (Exodus 25:1-40). The reader will note that all things pertaining to the tabernacle were to be according to the "pattern." The people were not allowed to proceed according to their own will.

In the course of time, the temple was to be built (I Chronicles 28:9-21). If one reads the text closely, he will find that the Lord had a special plan (pattern) which was to be followed. Again, these people could not build accord to their choice (Cf. Ezekiel 43:7-12).

(2) The church and all things that pertain to it must be according to the New Testament pattern (Hebrews 8:5-13). No one is permitted to alter the Lord's pattern. To do so is to add to, or to take away from, the express will of God (Revelation 22:18-19).

When King David prepared to build the temple, he used only the finest material (I Chronicles 22:5, 14; 29:1-19). David refused to offer unto God that which cost him nothing (II Samuel 24:24).

The church of the Lord is composed of those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb (I Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5; 7:13-14; I John 1:6-7).

Here we find the finest and the best of earth's people. We know that a few sour apples may be found, but for the most part there are those who put the kingdom of God first, use

their talents to the best of their ability, and spend their time and money sacrificially (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 2:1-5; Colossians 3:1-8; James 1:27). Surely, Christians do not want to give only crumbs to the Lord God!

(3) The Lord's church is a spiritual house (I Peter 2:5, 9). The Lord's church is not made of wood or brick. "Now ye (the Corinthian Christians) are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 1:1-2; 12:27). Those who have heard, believed, and have been baptized are Christians (Acts 18:8).

One becomes a child of God through the new birth (John 3:3, 5, 8; I Peter 1:22-25). The New Birth equals salvation or remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:28). Thus, whatever is required to be saved, or to obtain remission of sins, is what is required to be BORN AGAIN. Each Christian is referred to as a "lively stone" in the Lord's temple (I Peter 2:5). Each "stone" must bear its own part of the load if the Lord's church is to accomplish its objectives.

(4) What is the church? "The church is (a) a

body (b) of baptized believers (c) called out from the world (d) over which Christ reigns as head (e) directed by the Holy Spirit through the word of truth" (Guy N. Woods, *Questions And Answers-Open Forum*, p. 204). This church cannot be a non-essential institution. It is not a church of man's choice; it is the church of Christ's choice!

It is a wonderful privilege to be a member of that church established by the Lord Jesus Christ! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (I John 3:1). The church is never a place, but always people; never a sacred building, but always a believing assembly. The church is you who pray, not where you pray. A structure of brick or marble can no more be a church than your clothes can be you. Christian conduct is always important. Never, through vile speech, nor immoral actions, bring shame upon that grand institution for which Christ died.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

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Continued from page 1

of paraphrase and commentary. Remember, in the preface of the NCV, its translators promised that their work would NOT be one of paraphrase and interpretation. Alas, they have repudiated their claims already. But there will be more. Moreover, NCV is not nearly as clear and readable as is our recognized texts in this marvelous passage.

Mark 16:15-18. NCV leaves the reader to think that Jesus is saying that all who are baptized will receive miraculous gifts and thus be able to perform the miracles there listed. No effort is made to distinguish between the personal pronouns Jesus used and thus the reader cannot know to whom our Lord is speaking. All Pentecostals and claimants to miraculous powers will surely like this version, and when they use it they will turn it against its own producers. Moreover, the word "followers" in verse 15 is, indeed, a weak choice of words, as we have seen already.

Acts 2:38-39. The word "promise" in this passage has received many and varied interpretations over the years. NCV presumes to tell us exactly what it is when it says: "this promise is for you . . ." "This" of course referring back immediately to the sentence which preceded it, ("And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"). Again, the NCV becomes a commentary instead of a translation. The short, choppy sentences that are found throughout the entire work, as well as in this immediate text, are not helpful. The KJV and ASV are vastly superior here.

Acts 3:19-21. NCV garbles these verses and cuts the text to ribbons with many short and difficult-to-read sentences. Verse 20 has God "giving Jesus" to the Jews now, rather than "sending him" later. Verse 21 shows this to be at our Lord's second coming. God gave Jesus to the world at his Son's first coming (John 3:16; 1:11-12). The Father will send the Son at the end of time. Once again NCV muddies the crystal-clear waters of the Greek and our best English texts by its paraphrase and interpretation. Shades

of Robert Bratcher!

Romans 6:3-4. NCV has the expression "shared his death" appearing twice in this passage. Nothing remotely akin to this is found in the Greek. Thus the passage is made more difficult to understand. Why the repetition? Talk about commentary and paraphrase!

Romans 8. NCV uses the statement "sinful selves" no less than eleven times in as many verses. To the serious student this smacks of NIV's slavish use of "sinful nature" which appears as many times in that infamous travesty. Neither of these statements can be found in the original, and they should not be so rendered in translation. Admittedly, NIV is the worse of the two; but neither amounts to a careful and accurate translation of Scripture. Moreover, the repetition is boring, childish, glaring to the eyes, and grating to the ears of Bible students. The KJV is preeminently superior in this text.

I Corinthians 15:29. All students of Holy Writ know the difficulty of this passage. Many interpretations have been advanced (McClinton and Strong's Cyclopaedia lists a half dozen or more, Vol. I, Baptism, p. 652). The NCV makes the task of understanding this verse even more difficult.

Romans 16:16. NCV translates one of the precious designations of the church completely out of the Bible by rendering it, "All of Christ's churches send greeting." This version will please the religious world because it lends credence to the denominational concept that our Lord has more than one church. The rendering is weak and patronizing.

Galatians 3:26-27. NCV inverts and thus reverses the order of these blessed verses, an unfortunate translational blunder. The passage is muddled and mutilated almost beyond recognition. The translators should apologize to Robert Bratcher and Ken Taylor!

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A Brief Review Of The New Century Version

Continued from page 3

NCV has paraphrased with a vengeance a precious portion of Scripture. There is no rhyme or reason for so discussing sacred texts. Neither the United Bible Society's Greek New Testament (from which they claim to have translated) nor Berry's Greek-English Interlinear, so abuse these verses. Such high-handed freedom with Holy Scripture would allow any other passage to be so rearranged, and, as a result, made to teach anything under the sun.

Ephesians 5:19. NCV has "Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord." This is precisely how NIV has translated the verse. "Music" from the Greek "sumphonia" does not appear in the passage. Here is a glaring example of adding to the word of God. No Greek New Testament known to this writer uses the word "music," not even the one the translators of NCV claimed to have used. [Could it be that the influence of one William (Bill) New, owner of Sweet Publishing Company of Fort Worth, prompted the translators to insert the word "music" into the text? This writer has been informed by good authority that New, also an elder of the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth, would not object to instrumental music in the worship of the church. Or could it be that Baptists Gideon, and Hoehner, or Assembly of God scholar Horton (all of whom were on the translation committee of NCV along with Neil Lightfoot of Abilene Christian University) cooperated in this unholy addition? It is to be regretted that Lightfoot worked with these sectarian scholars (?) on the NCV]. The lamented and erudite H. Leo Boles of a generation ago, refused an invitation to cooperate with denominational scholars in producing the questionable Revised Standard Version which was published in 1952.

Colossians 2:14-15. This passage has been made dismally confusing by NCV. What is the "debt"? The translators never tell us. The uninitiated can never know from this version. Yet the NCV is a "good" and readable" text -- true to the original koine Greek and seeks to state English "as clearly and precisely as possible" (See Preface)! For shame!

I Timothy 3:1. Here NCV has "elder" instead of "bishop" or "overseer" (from the Greek "presbuteros") when the original is "episcopas." In Titus 1:5, NCV readers "presbuteros" as "elders," which is as it should be. All Bible students know that these several words may be applied to the same men of God, but that is not the point. What does the original say? These men have not translated. They have written a commentary. That is the point, exactly. O, consistency! Brother Guy N. Woods says of these terms:

Presbuteros (Greek) elder (Anglo-Saxon) designates maturity.

Episcopos (Greek) bishop (Latin) overseer (Anglo-Saxon), oversight.

Poimen (Greek) pastor (Latin) shepherd (Anglo-Saxon) tending, feeding.

Occasionally, these words are used interchangeably (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7).

(Open Forum — Questions and Answers, p. 242.)

Acts 20:28. NCV has the word "church" (Greek, "ekklesian") occurring twice in this great passage. The Greek New Testament has it only once. This is interpretation, not translation.

I Peter 4:16. NCV has the name "Christian" appearing two times in this passage, the

second time in brackets. This same thing appears throughout the volume (Cf. I Peter 4:5; 5:4; I Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 2:11-12). Again, this is commentary.

I Peter 5:1. NCV renders the first part of this verse, "Now I appeal to the church elders among you . . ." The word "church" is not in the original in this text. Brethren, this is a blatant addition to God's word. And why the expression "church elders"? Isn't that the only kind of elders the apostle Peter would be talking about in such a context? Dear reader, all such is irresponsible translating and interpretation. No reputable scholar would so mishandle the word of God.

As in all translations of the Bible, there are certainly some good renderings set forth. But, tragically, the bad translation overshadows

the good in the NCV. Even a casual examination of the NCV New Testament demonstrates that the book does not meet the claims of its producers. It is, indeed, a paraphrase, a commentary, an interpretation, and an amplified text, sent forth as a true and faithful translation "for our times." [Almost the identical claim was made for the New Testament International Version by its publishers, Zondervan Bible Company (See Preface, p. VII)]. Careful Bible students know the claims of the latter have been proven false. We think that the same has been shown for the former, the claims of its translating committee and publisher, notwithstanding.

—223 E. Jefferson St., Quincy, FL 32351

Heaven - The Eternal City Of The Faithful

Continued from page 2

to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). However, faith alone cannot save. James wrote: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). The type of faith that is pleasing to God is the kind that Noah, Abraham, Rahab, and others, had -- an obedient faith. Therefore, to please God today, one must have faith that will allow him to go forward and obey the gospel of Christ. He said: "He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

When one obeys the gospel he becomes a member of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47), the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16). If he remains faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10), he is a prepared person for the prepared place -- called "heaven," the eternal city.

—1412 Parsons Avenue, Sheffield, AL 35660.

Porno Report Reaction

Bryant Evans

Is it any surprise that the recent release of the U.S. Attorney General's report on Pornography caused such an uproar among some segments of the American society? An old slogan says that the "hit dog howls." How true! Publishers of skin magazines like "Playboy" and "Penthouse" immediately threw up a smokescreen cry of "censorship!" Anything and everything would be done to destroy the credibility of the report. Why? Because the porno publishers were already feeling the pinch of fewer dollars. Many stores have removed these publications from their shelves as Christians and other morally-good people make their feelings known.

God placed the sex drive within each of us. There is nothing wrong or dirty with it. But God has also given us very specific rules and responsibilities concerning sex. It is tragic that many people in America consider pre-marital sex acceptable. One recent survey showed that only 39 percent of Americans believe sex before marriage is wrong. (Emerging Trends, May '85) But the Bible sounds loud and clear on the subject, passages in both the old and New Testament make it clear: sex outside of the marriage bond is sinful. It always has been and always will be wrong! (Genesis 39:9; Leviticus 20:10; Matthew 19:9; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5). In addition, it is wrong to even look upon a woman with lustful intentions

Matthew 5:28).

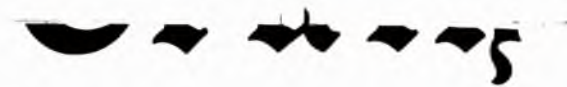
But do sexually-explicit pictures and movies have any impact on our young people? Yes! In addition to the Attorney General's report, it is clear that viewing such materials as "Playboy" and "Penthouse" causes teens to view pre-marital and extra-marital sex as acceptable. Recently, in a Wednesday night Bible study, a young man said that obviously, people who regularly read smut tend to think of little more than sex. He said they usually viewed girls not as intelligent beings, but as sex objects to be used whenever possible.

What can we do? First, be thankful for the courage of people in high places who are willing to stand toe-to-toe against immorality, and fight it. Secondly, we must continue to use the economic power of the consumer to support those stores which refuse to sell such materials. Thirdly, parents must exercise the required control and guidance over their homes and children to prevent such materials, via either print or the electronic media, from coming into their homes. And, fourthly, and by far most importantly, we must continue to pray that God will help us fight sin and evil wherever it is found! Let us pray that as the "salt of the earth," we will never lose our savor (Matthew 5:13)!
—Box 57 Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, TN 38340.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

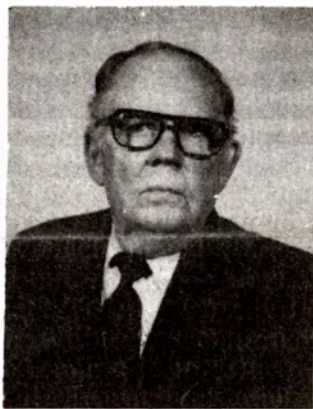
VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 36

How The Holy Spirit Operates In Conversion

There are two views regarding the operation of the Holy Spirit: (1) the Spirit operates separate and apart from the word of God; (2) the Holy Spirit, in converting sinners, operates through the word of God. Thus, the Holy Spirit does not work a miracle in the heart of sinners to convert them. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35), if he wrought a miracle to save one sinner, he would be obligated to save all sinners miraculously. We would then have universal salvation, which the Bible expressly denies (Matthew 7:13-14).



W. A. Holley

It is not a question of whether the Holy Spirit operates in converting sinners -- but the question is: **HOW** does he operate? -- directly or indirectly? Are you willing to honestly examine the holy scriptures in an effort to learn how the Spirit operates in saving sinners?

The sacred scriptures teach clearly that the Holy Spirit gave us the word of God. When an honest soul reads Nehemiah 9:20, 30, he will see that God "instructed" and "testified" against false teachers through his words as preached by the prophets. Acts 7:51-52 shows that rebels "resist" the Holy Spirit when they resist his word.

It may be that thousands have never understood that the Holy Spirit spake the holy scriptures (II Samuel 23:2 with Acts 1:15-16). Acts 28:25-27 contains a quotation which is attributed to the Holy Spirit. Where did the Holy Spirit speak these words? Isaiah 6:9-11; read, please). The Hebrew writer (Hebrews 3:7-11) says that the words spoken were spoken by the Holy Spirit; but where can we find what the Spirit said? We have but to read Psalms 95:7-11 to learn what the Spirit's

words were. The Hebrew writer states: "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before . . ." Notice, the Holy Spirit uses words of truth to communicate with men. We have but to turn to Jeremiah 31:31-34 to hear Jeremiah the prophet foretelling the coming of a new covenant and a completely new order of things. Hence, we are told exactly what the Spirit said! The Holy Spirit, through his word, talks to sinners through inspired men, such as the apostles and other such inspired men. On the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, the apostles spake "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). The apostle Peter wrote of "them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven . . ." (I Peter 1:12). Of inspired men, Jesus said: "But when they deliver you up, 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; Cf. Mark 13:9-11; Luke 21:14-15). These verses explain how the apostles and other inspired men could preach such wonderful sermons, under the most trying circumstance, without any prior thought or preparation. Today, we have no such living inspired men; rather, we must study to know the truth of God (II Timothy 2:15).

The scriptures teach that God's revelation can be read and understood (II Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 3:1-3; 5:17). Thus, the Spirit speaks in words that can be understood.

The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles to enable them to convert sinners through the preached word. In John 14:26; 16:7-13, Jesus promised the apostles the Spirit for these reasons: (1) To teach them all things; (2) to bring lessons Jesus had taught them to their remembrance, (3) to guide them into all truth, (4) to show them things to come. The coming of the Holy Spirit was not to convert the apostles, since they were already clean (John 15:3). As strange as it may seem to some, the Holy Spirit did not come upon the 120, nor upon the multitude. On Pentecost only the apostles were baptized with the Holy


Spirit (Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 6, 8, 14, 37, 42, 43). On this memorable occasion the word was preached to the multitude, and about 3,000 souls were saved and added to the Lord's church or kingdom (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47).

What the Holy Spirit does in conversion is done through the word of truth or the gospel of Christ. The Spirit never works directly, separate and apart from the word of God, in converting sinners. There are no miraculous conversions in the New Testament. In all cases of conversion in apostolic times, the preacher was always present, the word was always preached, and those who responded to the Lord's demands were always baptized (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47).

We shall now give several examples which will show how the Spirit's word converts sinners: (1) It is the word of God that quickens the sinner's heart (Psalms 119:50); (2) it is the law of God that converts the soul (Psalms 19:7); (3) the Spirit convicts and reproves sinners of sin through his word (Romans 3:20; 7:7; 8:2); (4) the Spirit cuts or pricks the sinner's heart through his word (Acts 2:36); (5) it is through the word that sinners are begotten (James 1:18; I Corinthians 4:15); (6) it is the word that brings faith (Romans 10:17); (7) repentance is produced by the word (Romans 2:4; Matthew 12:41); (8) one is lead to be baptized through the instruction of the word (I Corinthians 12:3, 13) --It is by the teaching or instruction of the Spirit's word, not direct operation, separate and apart from the word that one is lead to obey -- (9) the Holy Spirit influences the sinner to salvation through his word (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16; I Peter 1:11-12).

In summary, sinners are begotten when they believe the Spirit's word or the gospel of Christ, and the spiritual birth is completed when they have been baptized in water (James 1:18; I Corinthians 4:15-16; John 3:3, 5). Therefore, the Holy Spirit's means of communication is through his words. If one wishes to know what the Holy Spirit says, let him read what the Spirit has said, as recorded in Sacred Scriptures (Revelation 2:11; Ephesians 6:17).

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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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Building Walls For God

After the seventy years of captivity of the Jews subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Nehemiah returned with divine orders to rebuild the walls of the city (Nehemiah 2:1-20). The walls of spiritual Zion, which is the church (Isaiah 2:2-4), often need rebuilding, or repairing, after the attacks of atheism and liberalism. The walls of God's Zion must



Roger Jackson

remain intact in order to repel the attacks of that which would destroy it otherwise. There must always be a clear distinction between the forces of evil and false doctrine, versus the church for which Christ died, which is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). However, liberals tell us that we need to build bridges, and not walls. If they mean bridges of truth by which we can unite, we agree (Ephesians 4:1-6). If they mean bridges of compromise, we could not **DISAGREE** more.

However, it is the case that some bridges do need to be built. We need to build a bridge over our opinions that divide us (Romans 14:15). Care needs to be taken that the matter is actually a matter of opinion, and not faith. When strife arises and those involved in it have too much pride to reconcile, their differences, a bridge of love needs to be built (James 4:1). When we distrust each other, and suspicion causes us to believe the worst of each other on the most flimsy evidence, a bridge of reason needs to be built (Isaiah 1:18). When our traditions get in the way of truth and we adhere to a ritual that be-

Continued On Page 3

"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

(Romans 13:9)

Where there is no faith in God, life is cheap. God, who revealed the Bible, places great premium on the life of man. The one thing that has raised man from brutality to respect the life and person of man, is the faith produced by the Bible. The law of Moses commanded, "For it [the blood] is the life of all flesh: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh:



W. Edwin Kearley

for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off" (Leviticus 17:14). In the Jerusalem conference concerning the right of Gentiles to become Christians, they agreed the Holy Spirit revealed the Gentiles were to receive the gospel. However, these converts of the Gentiles were to be taught "that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from BLOOD, AND FROM THINGS STRANGLERED . . ." (Acts 15:29). These commands concerning blood, fostered and promoted respect for life.

The first murder was committed by a man against his own brother. God had told Cain and Abel to offer an animal sacrifice in worship to him. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground for his sacrifice. God respected Abel's offering but he had not respect for Cain's offering. ". . . And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell . . . And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him" (Genesis 4:3-8). God said to Cain, ". . . What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand . . . a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth" (Genesis 4:10-12).

The ten commandments which God placed on stone and gave to Moses, contain the command: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). The penalty depended on the circumstances. A wilful taking of another's life demanded the taking of the killer's life (Exodus 21:12-15).

Jesus condemned not only the overt act, but also the thought of murder. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment . . ." (Matthew 5:21-22).

Paul taught, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if

he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21). Doing good for evil often has the effect of causing the conscience of the evil doer to cause the body heat to produce perspiring.

Of the civil government Paul said, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4). Capital punishment is still for the murderer. May we elevate in our thinking the worth of human life.

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The Task Of The Prophets

Tony Lawrence

The prophets of the Old Testament were an essential part of God's plan to save his people. He told the people through Jeremiah: "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day. I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them" (Jeremiah 7:25). From the time of the giving of the Law forward until the coming of the new covenant, the people needed to be admonished by the prophets of God. But, what exactly was their task? Their task was to call the people back into harmony with the covenant which they lived under.

In Jeremiah 11:1-8, God instructed Jeremiah to remind the people to hear the covenant. He was to tell them that they would be cursed if they did not listen to it. Then again the familiar statement that he had sent his prophets. "Rising up early . . ." The prophet Malachi had a similar goal when he spoke for God saying, "Remember ye the law of Moses . . ." (Malachi 4:4). All of this emphasizes the task of the prophet. He was to call the people back into a right relationship to the law under which they lived. When one reads through the prophets he can find application of the principles revealed in the Law. This is the sum and substance of the prophets.

What usefulness might this have for those living under the new covenant? Christ revealed the new law unto his apostles: ". . . all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). After it was sealed with the blood of Christ, it could not be altered (Galatians 3:15). Realizing this, the new testament writers' primary obligation was to make application of the principles revealed by Christ in his law. Today it is important for preachers and teachers of the gospel message to realize that we are not originators of any new doctrine, but we are to help point men back into harmony with the new covenant.

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Building Wall For God

Continued From Page 2

comes law, we need to build a bridge of faithfulness to the truth (Mark 7:6-8). But that which is revealed in the Bible is NOT tradition. For instance, meeting upon the first day of the week and partaking of the Lord's supper is not tradition (Acts 20:7).

When the departures of men fall into the category of departures from that which the Bible commands and specifies, the walls of Zion are being torn down. In restoring the church to the right ways of the Lord, we are building walls for God. The Wise man admonished. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . a time to break down and a time to build up" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 3). Jesus gave the parable of the builders in Matthew 7:24-25 and required that we build upon the rock instead of the sand. The same admonition is included in Jude's exhortation to "Earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3).

The first thing we must do in building walls for God is to ascertain that God wants a wall built. We would not allow a builder to enter our property and begin building a wall without our approval for the thing. In Nehemiah 1:5-11 God gave Nehemiah the authority to construct a wall. Every stone that Nehemiah laid was laid by faith (II Corinthians 5:7). Since faith comes by hearing what God says (Romans 10:17), Nehemiah acted on faith when he built. His faith was not faith only, which builds nothing (James 2:24-26). The wall was not built as a means of meriting God's favor. It was not "wall salvation." He did not build something God did not say not to build. He acted on authority, not silence. He had authority to build only one wall, and that is what he built. He used cooperation in building the wall. He organized a labor force: the job was too big for one man, so the brethren cooperated, pooled their strength, and built. There may have been some anti-cooperation Jews who insisted the command to build was individual exclusively; but Nehemiah ignored them (if there were any), and built the wall (Nehemiah 4:6).

The second thing we must do if we are going to build walls for God is to follow the pattern. If a builder shows up on your land announcing that he is going to build the wall you authorized, he still is not "home free." Where should he build the wall, how high and how wide should it be? what kind of material do you want in the wall? and how long should it be? Would you turn a builder loose on your property to build a wall if he said he did not believe in a pattern? If he said he did not believe in "authorized wall building," would you object? Of course you would! But we seem to allow just any kind of old wall builder to construct the walls of Zion. One comes along advocating, "There is no such thing as 'authorized acts of worship.'" Another says he objects to, "Pattern theology." Still others make fun of "authority" in general, or advocate unity in diversity, which accepts every opinion as authority. The Bible requires that local congregations be ordered after the pattern of the New Testament (Hebrews 8:5; Acts 2:42). Walls (i.e., congregations) built without authority are daubed with untempered mortar (Ezekiel 13:10).

The task of building walls for God is not over once the wall is joined. Even during its construction we must be on guard for attempts at mischief (Nehemiah 6:1-3). If the devil cannot corrupt the wall, he will stop its con-

struction. The devil's favorite ploy today seems to be that he is perfectly willing to let the wall go up, so long as the gate will always be open to him. He is careful to disguise such subtility. For instance, he is willing to allow the instrument to be rejected as long as those who build the wall let him in with it and come over and visit behind his wall now and then. All of those stalwart wall builders in the past who closed and locked the gate on him (II John 9-11) were just sectarian -- crude, abusive, knuckleheads who did not understand the issues anyway! The camel has more than his foot in the tent -- I mean behind the wall.

God's people must not rest until the job has been completed. God needs strong soldiers on

the wall (II Timothy 4:6-8). Too many want the tool of "work" in both hands, instead of the tool in one, and the sword in the other (Ephesians 6:10ff). The church in many places is getting weak as water. The "irenic" spirit is eroding the walls as surely as those of ancient Babylon. The biggest problem of the church today is not indifference, as I once thought; but it is the aversion to controversy. We want peace at any price. We want bridges where we need walls. We need men who have a backbone the size of a saw log. And when those who have it are dead and gone, may we raise up another generation to take their place, who have a tool of work in one hand and a sword in the other, building walls for God.

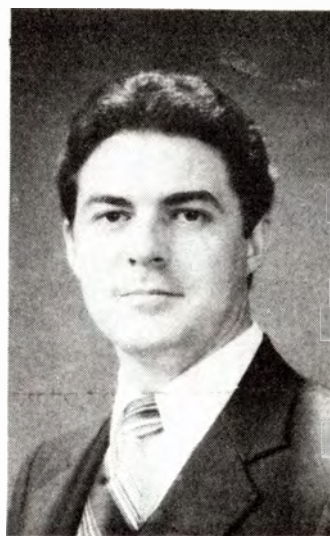
—940 Old Wood Rd., Oxford, AL 36203.

"Put Away That Wicked Person"

Recent events in Collinsville, Oklahoma, have focused attention on the subject of fellowship and discipline. Sadly, many are not informed on the subject since: they have not taken the time to search the scriptures; some preachers have not preached it; and some teachers have not taught this Bible doctrine. Caught unaware and ill-informed, some say, "I don't believe we ought to practice church discipline."

There are some ALTERNATIVES to putting away from among the faithful that wicked person (I Corinthians 5:13). One is that if all lived in PERFECTION, without sin, such actions certainly would not be needed. Such is not the case; and it can not be the case that one might live a sinlessly perfect life (Romans 3:23). Another alternative, but not a scriptural one, is PERVERSION of God's word (Galatians 1:6-9). The scriptures might be twisted in an attempt to show such purging actions are not taught; but such is done in vain. The only scriptural alternative is PENITENCE on the part of the wicked and their seeking forgiveness in accordance with God's will. Only then can fellowship with the faithful in Christ be maintained. Those are God's conditions (I John 1:7-10).

ATTITUDE is of utmost importance. One might follow a certain Bible-directed action, yet still be lost because of a wrong and sinful attitude. Those walking by faith will have an attitude of CONCERN. Servants of God cannot avoid responsibility concerning a brother, as Cain sought to do in the long ago (Genesis 4:9). If that brother's house were on fire, salvation from the flames would be sought for him. When his soul is in danger of everlasting fire, can any right-thinking man be unconcerned? There must also be an attitude of CORRECTION (Galatians 6:1). Not by taking vengeance in malice, hatred, or spite; but by restoring "such an one in the spirit of meekness," do the faithful seek to correct the wayward brother. The attitude



Bobby Liddell

of the redeemed must be one of CONVICTION. If every jury and judge in the land ruled against truth on this matter (or any other), blood-bought brethren must have the conviction to obey God rather than men regardless of the consequences (Acts 5:29).

The AIM of discipline is clearly revealed. First, the aim is to SAVE THE LOST BROTHER. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5). Second, to SAVE THE CHURCH, the old leaven must be purged (I Corinthians 5:6, 7), that the church might be pure and holy (Ephesians 5:27). Third, to SAVE A LOST WORLD, it must be shown that the church of the Lord does not support, promote, condone, uphold, nor overlook sin (I Corinthians 5:9-13). If the distinction between the church and the world cannot be shown, who would heed the call to leave the fellowship of sin in the world, only to enter the fellowship of sin in those claiming to be the church??

AGREEMENT must be had for church discipline to be as God would have it. Brethren must agree in FOLLOWING God's plan by the authority of Christ with any final actions being done publicly (I Corinthians 5:4). There must be agreement in FACING the problem in the light of God's word, and in dealing with it in the spirit of obedience. Likewise, agreement must be had in FELLOWSHIPING the righteous and withholding fellowship from the impenitent (I Corinthians 5:9-11). Only then will discipline be effective in its efforts to save the lost.

GOD COMMANDS (Romans 16:17; II Thessalonians 3:6); GOVERNMENT CONDEMNNS (Acts 5:29); and GODLY MEN COMPLY, not with the dictates of unrighteous men, but with the will of the Living God of all the universe (I John 5:3). When children of God are in agreement with God's word, understanding the proper aim, and with the proper attitude, there is no alternative (of which God approves) to the practice of this Bible doctrine, but penitence on the part of the wicked in his returning to a faithful walk in the Son. Such a return should be sought patiently, plainly, prayerfully, pleadingly, properly, and promptly.

May we all determine to know God's will and do it (Luke 6:46).

—P.O. Box 118. Parrish, AL 35580.

The Christian's Responsibility To "The Faith"

Mike Winkler

In Paul's epistles to Timothy, the inspired apostle warns the young evangelists of the presence of false teachers and the tragedy of Christians' becoming disloyal to "the faith."

It will be our purpose in this brief article, to set forth and discuss the Christian's responsibility to "the faith," and identify some responses of man (Christian and non-Christian) to "the faith" as outlined in I and II Timothy.

I. DEFINITION OF "THE FAITH"

The term "faith" is employed in the New Testament to convey four basic ideas. First, the term "faith" is used subjectively to denote the act of believing in something or someone (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:1, 6). Secondly, the term "faith" is used objectively to denote that which is believed in; specifically, the system of faith, or, the gospel (Colossians 1:23; I Timothy 4:1; II Timothy 4:7; Jude 3). Thirdly, the term "faith" is used comprehensively to denote, the obedience of all items or all acts necessary for salvation (John 3:16; Acts 2:44; 16:31). Finally, the term "faith" is used devotionally to denote the idea of being faithful (I Timothy 3:11; Revelation 2:10).

Contextually, in regard to Paul's charge to Timothy (I Timothy 6:20, 21; II Timothy 1:14), the phrase "the faith" is used objectively and therefore, refers to the entire gospel of Christ or the sum of all Christian truth.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO "THE FAITH"

(1) — The Christian's first responsibility is to "hold to the mystery of the faith" (I Timothy 3:9; 1:19; II Timothy 1:13). The term "hold" is from echo meaning, to steadfastly adhere to, or obey. The term "mystery" [Greek: *musterion*] suggests something revealed, which previously has been concealed. Therefore, the Christian's responsibility is to adhere to or obey that which heaven has revealed, specifically, the Gospel. It should be remembered that Jesus, in concluding the Sermon on the Mount, stressed the responsibility of every individual to do, or obey, the Father's will (Matthew 7:21). Too, James, the Lord's brother, encouraged his readers not only to hear but, also to do (or obey) the word of God (James 1:19, 22).

The apostle Paul, in encouraging Timothy to adhere to or obey the gospel, stated that such obedience was to be done "in a pure conscience." The term "pure" is from *katharos* which means, to be free from an impure admixture. Today, as Christians in the 20th century we must diligently strive to insure our spiritual purity by obeying and stressing the gospel plan of salvation, the New Testament pattern for worship, the name, organization, and singular nature of the church, etc.

(2) — The Christian's second responsibility is to be "nurtured in the faith" (I Timothy 4:6). The term "nurtured" is from *entrepho*, meaning to train or to nurture. The emphasis behind this admonition is that Timothy (and all other Christians) are to grow or mature spiritually (I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15). The apostle Paul, in writing the young evangelist, identifies the source or the manual for our training and growth as "the words of faith" (Cf: II Timothy 3:15). Similarly, the apostle Peter, in his first epistle, encouraged his readers as newborn babes to "desire the sincere milk of the word" in order that they might grow or mature (I Peter 2:2). The Christian must always remember that when there is no spirit-

ual progress, there can only be spiritual regression (Hebrews 5:12-6:8).

(3) — Finally, the Christian is to, "fight the good fight of the faith" (I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 4:7). The term "fight" is from *agon* implying a struggle or contest; and was used to portray an athletic contest. The Christian may oftentimes wonder: "How can I, or how am I to fight or contest for the gospel?" And the answer is: "Simply as the apostle Paul did." The apostle Paul fought for, or defended, the Gospel (a) by warning others, Acts 20:27, 29, 30; (b) by proclaiming the simple gospel in its entirety, Galatians 1:6-9; (c) by striving for unity based upon truth (with no compromise), I Corinthians 1:10; (d) by encouraging others to participate in the conflict, Titus 1:9; (e) by correcting any misconception concerning the truth, I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and (f) through personal encounters with those opposing the gospel, Philippians 1:7, 17.

According to the apostle Paul, the reward for the faithful combatant is: (a) a crown of life — II Timothy 4:8 and; (b) an eternal life — I Timothy 6:12.

III. THE RESPONSE TO "THE FAITH" BY MANKIND (CHRISTIAN AND NON-CHRISTIAN)

(1) Today, men may respond to "the faith" by "making it shipwreck" (I Timothy 1:19). Contextually, "the faith" is made shipwreck by simply putting it away or rejecting it. Syntactically, the phrase "putting it away" is in the aorist tense, and thereby affirms the reality of some men rejecting (and therefore making shipwreck of) "the faith."

Today, how many times have men and women outside the church, heard "the faith" proclaimed, agreed to its truth -- yet still refused to submit to it? Too, how many times have we seen those within the church hear "the faith" heralded, agree to its truth, --yet still refuse to obey it? In each situation, the results are the same: that is, "the faith is made shipwreck!"

(2) Secondly, men may respond to "the faith" by "departing from it" (I Timothy 4:1). The reason given by the apostle Paul for departing from "the faith" is that men give heed to "seducing spirits" and false doctrines. Today, how many have "departed from the faith" and left the church because of the seduction of denominational doctrines, peer pressures, pleasures, the seduction of the modern media, etc.

(3) Thirdly, men may respond to "the faith" by "denying it" (I Timothy 5:8; II Timothy 3:5). The term "deny" is from *arneomai*, meaning to forsake or renounce a thing. Contextually, "the faith" is renounced or forsaken by virtue of the Christian's actions. Today, the Christian can deny "the faith" by his treatment of others, his worship habits, his business practices, his mode of recreation, his language, his humor, his dress, etc.

(4) Finally, men may respond to "the faith" by "erring from it" (I Timothy 6:10). The term "erred" is from *apoplanao*, meaning to wander away from, or to be lead astray. The reason given by Paul for erring or being lead astray is their love of money. Jesus, during his personal ministry, often warned (and still warns) his followers to "beware of covetousness" (Luke 12:15).

How many today refuse to submit to Christ because of an improper affection for material things (Matthew 19:16-26)? Too, how many in the church have erred either literally (they no longer attend) or pragmatically (they

are undependable and uninvolved) because of their "love" for things? The Christian must always remember the admonition of Jesus to "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

The frightening thing concerning man's response to "the faith" is that, some can actually deny "the faith," err from it, and make it shipwreck, yet be found in attendance every time the doors are opened. This one fact should provoke every Christian to seriously contemplate and evaluate his life in light of "the faith."

CONCLUSION

In Paul's two letters to the young evangelist Timothy, the proclamation and protection of the gospel message are paramount. Therefore, in applying Paul's message to the contemporary Christian, it is imperative that we: (1) obey the pure and simple gospel (I Timothy 3:9), (2) grow and mature, by studying the word (I Timothy 4:6), and (3) defend the gospel message (I Timothy 6:12).

—P.O. Box 1106, Bay Minette, AL 36507.

Throwing Mud

At Others Soils Self

Edsel Burleson

Someone has said, "The greatest fault of all faults is the fault of fault-finding." One has to be miserable who was born in the objective case and lives in the kind-a-tive mood. Did you ever notice that a knocker is always **OUTSIDE** the door?

It is well to remember that mansions in the sky cannot be built out of mud thrown at others. In fact, throwing-mud at a good man only soils one's hands. Tennyson said, "Soiling another will never make one's self clean."

Most are prone to look for enemies among those of whom one is not very fond. But, the worst enemy a man has is **HIMSELF**. He digs his own pitfalls. He makes his own bed hard to lie in. He makes his own conscience hard to live with.

When a finger of accusation is pointed toward another, there are three fingers pointing back at us. Never can one better his own position at the expense of another.

The critic is a person who has you write it, sing it, play it, paint it, or carve as he would -- if **HE** could. If someone belittles you, he is only trying to cut you down to his own size! Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could see the sunshine instead of the shadows. Many refuse to enjoy the pleasantness of spring because they are dreading the hotness of summer.

The person who always sweeps before his neighbor's door has never seriously examined his own doorstep. Jesus warned, "Consider the beam in your own eye" (Matthew 7:2-5).

"It is not what in life might come to us, but what in life we might **become**, and how in life we might **overcome**, that will decide our life's **outcome!**"

How wonderful if we would analyze ourselves first before we criticized another.

Someone has said, "Criticism is the disapproval of people, not for having faults, but for having faults different from your own." Before we criticize a man for letting the grass grow under his feet, we should try to find out if his lawn mower is broken.

Let us resolve to think of our own faults the first part of the night when we are awake and of the faults of others the latter part of the night when we are asleep.

—420 7th Street S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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Word

forth the

Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1986

NUMBER 37

Man's Greatest Need

Man's greatest need is to know God and himself. Here is the way to enjoy the more abundant life (John 10:9-10).

It is utter folly for man to have more knowledge than understanding; more power than love; to know more about the earth than the people who live in it; to invent quick means of travel into space when he cannot grope his way through his own heart (Proverbs 23:7).

To illustrate: A father who wanted an hour of quiet, tore a map of the world from a newspaper, cut it into a number of odd-shaped pieces, gave them to his little 5-year-old daughter, urging her to take them into the next room and "put the world together again." Five minutes later, the little girl was back, announcing that the map of the world was laid out on the floor. "How did you get the world together so quickly?" "That was easy," exulted the little girl! "I turned the pieces over and on the other side, I saw the picture of a man. I just put the man together right; and when the MAN was together right, the **WORLD** was right."

There are some things man does not necessarily need: Jesus has shown that greater physical coercion need not a part of man's persuasive powers. Riches and fame, popularity and acclaim, as demonstrated by Solomon, fail (I Kings 11:1-11). As a rule, military might creates problems, rather than solves them, as shown by Napoleon and Hitler. All too often such things choke human beings to death (Luke 8:4-15). Even higher education



W. A. Holley

can be a millstone about one's neck unless it is properly used (James 3:13-18; I Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:16; Proverbs 3:7). Doctors and lawyers do not necessarily know the holy scriptures!!

But there are some things which man desperately needs. We shall note a few of them---

(1) Man needs a sense of responsibility -- he needs to know that he is a creature of choice; and in making his choice, he also chooses its consequences as well (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19; Joshua 24:15; John 6:66-68). Parents, do you not feel any responsibility for your conduct (speech, drinking, et al), before your children? (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4). It is easy to dodge one's responsibilities, but one cannot dodge the consequences of dodging one's responsibilities. One little girl who had been given some money which she was to use to aid missionary work, decided to spend it for ice-cream. When she was asked for an explanation, she said: "I thought I'd give the money to the ice-cream man and let him give it to the missionary!"

(2) We need a world filled with people who are honest, moral, truthful, whose word is their bond. Grover Cleveland, as a candidate for President of the United States, was faced with the evidence of an escapade in his younger days that threw a shadow over his character. His political advisers were concerned. "Tell the truth" he ordered. The facts were less ugly than the rumors had been. Mr. Cleveland's campaign slogan, "Tell the Truth," won a great victory (Proverbs 12:17; 14:5).

Instead of having our minds filled to overflowing with thoughts of casual sex (homosexual, lesbian, pornography, et al), let our minds be filled with good, clean wholesome thoughts designed to raise us up above the gutter and garbage of common deviates (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17; Genesis 19:5; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-11).

(3) It should be obvious to all that scien-

tific advancement has not contributed (although it has helped in some areas) to our security and peace. In spite of all scientific achievement, our world is in far more danger than ever! Technical progress now furnishes the means of destruction of man's hard-won fruits of toil, and of life itself! Think of the conflict now raging between the great nations of earth! Efforts to achieve arms control is a never-ending struggle. Verily, in the midst of scientific progress, we now have more crime, more drug addicts, more divorces, more drunkenness, more pornography, more delinquent parents and children, and more poverty (spiritual and physical) world-wide (Matthew 19:3-9; Galatians 5:19-21; John 17:20-23; I Peter 4:12-16).

(4) Man desperately needs to be born again, "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3-5; I Peter 1:22-25). When is one "born again?" The Bible answer is simple: it is when one hears, believes and obeys the truth of God Almighty (John 6:44-45; Hebrews 11:1, 6; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4). One cannot devise a plan by which one can save himself (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; John 14:1-6). The idea that man is his own saviour is ridiculous in the extreme!!

Having become a "new creature" in Christ, a man needs to have his mind filled with the highest **ASPIRATIONS**. "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). One who does not **WANT** to climb higher, never will. In addition, man must have **DETERMINATION** to fight for truth and righteousness (Daniel 1:8). Daniel resolved to keep himself clean and pure in the sight of God. It can be done if one is determined to so do (Ephesians 5:11-16).

Moreover, the Christian must be one whose **CONCENTRATION** is centered upon the highest goals and their achievement. For ex-

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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 Vision Of Dry Bones

Howell Bigham

The Bible contains many chapters that possesses great lessons to be learned. One such chapter is Ezekiel 37. Let us study the lessons that can be gleaned from that chapter of eternal truth.

In 597 B.C. Israel was carried away into Babylonian captivity. One of the exiles was the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 37:1-14 gives the vision of dry bones. This great chapter has Ezekiel sitting in a lonely valley that was left strewn with the sun-bleached bones of past warriors. Therefore, a picture of death was spread before the eyes of the prophet. As Ezekiel stood amid dry bones, he was questioned by God. "Son of man, can these bones live?" He answered: "O Lord God, thou knowest" (verse 3). This man of God was commanded to prophesy over the bones (verse 4) and then unto the four winds (verse 9) that the dry, dead bones might live. Ezekiel did just that, and breath did enter the bones "and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (verse 10).

What exactly did this vision mean to Ezekiel? The Bible reveals that it represented the lifeless condition of "the whole house of Israel" (verse 11). The nation was in such a terrible state of affairs because of its disregard for God's word and worship (Deuteronomy 28:15, 33; Jeremiah 20:4; 21:4-10).

It was Ezekiel's task to call them to repentance -- to teach them that renewed life and vigor could come only by God's power. The Bible reveals that indeed Israel did repent, and therefore God returned them to their homeland (Ezra 2:1; Nehemiah 2:5-8). Furthermore, Babylon, the nation that carried Israel into exile, was overthrown (Daniel 5:30-31).

But how does this chapter benefit us today? It helps us in that it teaches several lessons from which we can profit (Romans 15:4).

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A Significant Court Case And Some Pertinent Observations

GUEST EDITORIAL — BY: WILLIAM WOODSON

A copy of a 1959 Indiana Supreme Court decision involving certain problems in Christian Churches has been obtained. The material is found in the 149 North Eastern Reporter, 2nd Series, pp. 683-692. The case is entitled Stansberry v. McCarty and was heard in the Supreme Court of Indiana April 28, 1958. A rehearing was denied June 4, 1958.

The case is significant within itself, but is more significant when the issues posed and decided are related to the capture of church property by Christian Churches prior to 1906 and when the principles and positions in dispute are related to certain proposals now being heard urging churches of Christ to recognize Independent Christian Churches as in fellowship with themselves and to cease objecting to instrumental music in worship as a barrier to unity and fellowship.

The Case In Summary

The Brookville Church of Christ (Christian Church) secured its property, by deed, in 1886. Later (1915), the trustees of the "Brookville Christian Church" secured the property which later came into dispute in 1948. Great care was taken to avoid confusion with "the Churches of Christ, a denominational religious sect which broke away from this group in 1906 on two major differences which forbade the use of instrumental music in services and the support of organized missionary activities" (p. 684).

According to trial findings, the church participated in missionary society activities until 1930. A preacher, named in the suit, began preaching "against such practice," claiming "that said teaching and practice was schismatic and contrary to the established usage (sic.), customs, practice, and beliefs" of the group (p. 687). The efforts of the preacher resulted in two groups, one (the minority) favoring the continued support of the missionary society, the other (the majority) not favoring such support. In time, those not in favor of supporting the missionary societies resisted the efforts of the minority to promote such support.

By October 3, 1948, the matters in dispute became so serious that a stormy "annual church meeting" was conducted. The preacher was not permitted to preside at the meeting, though he sat near the presiding officer and advised him during the proceedings. Nominations were refused from the floor and ballots were not fairly distributed. The climax came when "during the argument and confusion the pipe organ was played so loudly it was impossible to conduct the meeting and many members left" (p. 685).

The result of such meetings and controversies was the court case which preceded the Supreme Court decision. The minority claimed that the majority had "departed from the essential tenets and doctrines of the Brookville Christian Church" and had become "a separate and distinct religious sect which has usurped, taken over, intruded into and appropriated unto their own use and purposes, the real estate of the plaintiffs, (the minority, W. W.) . . . and are now using the same for the purpose of inculcating, preaching, teaching and promulgating doctrines and beliefs which are foreign to, and in contravention of those held by the plaintiffs' said church"

(p. 685). The minority sought to secure control of the property, to "perpetually" enjoin the preacher from serving, and to enjoin the rest of the members "from intruding into the church property or using it in any way" (p. 686). When the case came to trial in a lower court, the lower court decided in favor of the minority (p. 691). The majority then appealed the case, gained a reversal of the lower court decision and received the grant of a new trial.

THE DECISION OF THE COURT

The Indiana Supreme Court, indicating that it was concerned only with the issue of personal liberty, property rights, and contractual relationships, concluded that relief would be granted when church property had been taken over by a group in such a way as to manifest "a fundamental departure from the original doctrines and faith of the church." This would constitute a "substantial departure from the fundamental tenets of the church" and would result in "a perversion of the property" (p. 683).

The court found that no such fundamental departure had taken place in the action of the majority in refusing to support the missionary society. The reason for this was, the majority contended, that "the only essential or requirements for admission to fellowship was (1) belief in Christ, (2) Repentance, (3) Confession, (4) Baptism by immersion and (5) Acceptance of the Holy Spirit" (p. 688). These five "essentials" were followed by the statement that "we are not permitted to add any others including 'co-operation' as an essential or fundamental doctrine" (p. 688). Because, the majority contended, "co-operation" was not included in the "essentials," their refusal to assist the societies was not a violation of "the original doctrines and faith of the church" and, consequently, was not a perversion of the original position of the group. Accordingly, the majority claimed the right to decide by majority vote the question of support or non-support of the missionary society and asked the right to the control of the property. The Supreme Court concurred in this view and granted a retrial to establish ownership of the property.

SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS ON THE CASE

A. The importance of "a fundamental departure from the original doctrines and faith of the church." The basic question turned on whether one group had or had not departed from the original position. The minority, pleading for support of the missionary society, charged that the majority had so departed; the majority claimed that it had not.

Regardless of the judicial decision as to the minority or majority position, both sides contended that the original doctrine and belief of the church must not be forsaken and that the property must not be "diverted to a different use from that for which it was dedicated." If such took place, the group which held the original position, whether minority or majority, should legally have control of the property.

One familiar with the history of the Restoration Movement, particularly during

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A Significant Court Case And Some Pertinent Observations

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the latter part of the past century and the early years of the present century, cannot but observe the significance of this premise on which both sides of the controversy based their contentions. The parallel to the instrument of music in worship is readily apparent. Those who introduced and maintain the instrument could not by any means contend that this was/is in harmony with the original doctrine, belief, and practice in the restoration movement. When, however, the instrument was being introduced, the advocates thereof claimed the control of the buildings and required those who objected to its use -- whether minority or majority -- to either worship with the instrument against the principles of the Bible, against their conscience, against the faith and practice of the restoration movement, or to leave the premises in the control of the users. In this way hundreds of buildings were captured by Christian Churches by 1906. Those who pleaded for the original ground of purity in worship and practice were called legalists, backward, poorly educated, uncultured -- or worse! Yet NOW the descendants of those who, without warrant, captured church buildings all over America, contend for a principle which -- had their ancestors at the turn of the century followed it -- would have preserved and protected the church property erected and purchased by those who held the original ground. Thus, prior to 1906 the plea by Christian Churches was that those who held the original ground should leave, give up the property to the innovators, and start all over elsewhere. Now, in 1958 and beyond, --when the issue involves Disciples of Christ vs. Independent Christian Churches-- the plea is that those who occupy the original ground of faith and practice should have the control of the property. The inconsistency is

obvious!

B. It is of interest also that [in this court case] the missionary society is not opposed on the basis that it is sinful. Rather, it was maintained that the majority could decide to support, or not to support, the missionary society, as it chose to do. This means then, that missionary societies were and are part and parcel of the Christian Church scheme of things, and may be supported as each Christian Church chooses to do. One is thereby made to wonder at the candor of those among churches of Christ who, since the Joplin "summit," have pretended that missionary societies do not exist among Christian Churches, and that their inter-church organizations are nothing more than college lectureships. The majority in the Brookville, Indiana, Christian Church certainly was objecting to more than a college lectureship! Pity that some among us do not see the reality of the use of the missionary societies by Christian Churches.

C. It would be most appropriate for the Christian Church advocates of unity with churches of Christ, to first show the purported adequacy and effectiveness of their proposals by achieving unity with those among the Disciples of Christ, who, having believed and obeyed Ephesians 4:1-6, still support missionary societies and other related matters. As per the oft-heard proposal, at the least, they should be in what was once termed "upper level" fellowship with the Disciples of Christ which have obeyed Ephesians 4:1-6, but they would not be obliged necessarily to have what was termed "lower level" fellowship on these matters in disagreement. It is only appropriate, however, to caution the reader not to hold his breath until Christian Churches attempt and achieve

unity with Disciples of Christ on the same basis as they are now seeking to have unity with churches of Christ.

Other court cases of similar nature may be noted (in such states as Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, and elsewhere) in which Christian Churches make it clear that they will uphold their own interests, regardless of their statements at other times concerning love and peace and desire for unity. Let this never be forgotten! Churches of Christ can expect the same treatment from the Christian Churches now as they accorded our brethren generations ago! To think otherwise is folly.

—Dean, Graduate Bible Studies, David Lipscomb College, Nashville, TN 37203.

Man's Greatest Need

Continued From Page 1

ample, listen to Paul the apostle: "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14, ASV). One who does not have his priorities in order, can never meet the Lord's demands (Matthew 6:33).

Again, Christian PERSEVERANCE is in order. Have you counted the cost? (Luke 14:25-33). It is not enough to merely lay the foundation . . . the building must be completed. "On again; off again; gone again" seems to be the way of many. It takes much time to overcome one's faults, to master oneself, and make a real contribution to the Lord's church (Matthew 25:1-46). Read this entire chapter and apply its principles to your own life.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Vision Of Dry Bones

Continued From Page 2

One such lesson to be gleaned from this chapter is that just as physical Israel of old became dead, it is also possible for a congregation of spiritual Israel (the church, Galatians 6:16) to become spiritually dead (Revelation 3:1). When indifference, complacency and worldliness enter the Lord's body, and take their deathly hold, the strength of the congregation is sapped. However, when the word is preached, and when the erring repent, the same "dead" congregation can become alive once again (Revelation 2:4-5), and can become a mighty army in the sight of God (Acts 4:32; 8:4; II Timothy 2:4). We must realize that the WORD must be preached because it is the Word that brings life (John 6:63; I Peter 1:23).

The vision of dry bones also presents a lesson concerning the alien sinner. Those who have never obeyed the Gospel (Romans 1:16) are lost in their sins (Romans 6:23), and are thus spiritually "dead" (Ephesians 2:1). However, these lost souls can be raised from death in sin to life in righteousness if only they will obey the Gospel of Christ (John 5:24). As the bones scattered before the eyes of Ezekiel brought a picture of hopelessness, those who are lost in sin also have no hope without Christ (Ephesians 2:12). Therefore, the Bible must be preached that the lost may obey that which will set them free from their sins (John 8:32).

There are many other great lessons to be learned from the vision of dry bones. Some are: (1) the power of God is to be exerted through human instrumentality (II Corinthians 4:7; Isaiah 55:10-11). Just as Ezekiel preached the word to the scattered bones in the valley, preachers today are to preach the word (II Timothy 4:2) to men today; (2) the vision pictures the resurrection of the dead on the last day. The valley of dry bones may represent the world. Those who have obeyed the word will be raised to eternal life, while the disobedient will be raised to eternal death (John 5:28-29); (3) the word of God is sure. Isaiah prophesied 100 years earlier that Israel would be overthrown by Babylon. He also named Cyrus (yet unborn) as the ruler who would authorize Israel's return to Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28). Just as the word of God was sure in relation to these things, it will also be sure in relation to judgment (II Corinthians 5:10), salvation (Mark 16:16; Revelation 2:10), and to heaven (Hebrews 11:16).

Friend, as the vision of dry bones brought hope to Israel of old, the word of God brings hope to man today. May all men study, take heed, and obey the word of God that we may receive the "gift of God" which "is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

—1412 Parsons Avenue, Sheffield, AL 35660.

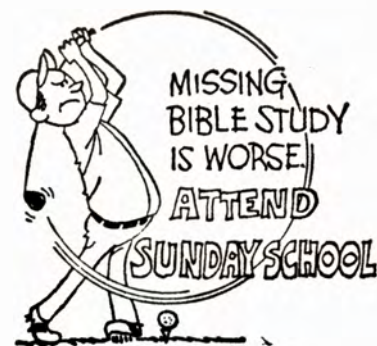
He lives in true repose who bridles his passions.

Honor your parents and your children will honor you.

It's true that we have free speech in our country, but most of it isn't worth any more than that.

A ladder is of no value unless you climb it.

How you use today determines how tomorrow will use you.



Getwell Church of Christ presents
The Eleventh Annual

"SPIRITUAL SWORD" LECTURESHIP

"The Book of Colossians"

Oct. 19-23, 1986

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SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19
 9:30 J. MOFFITT Introduction To Colossians
 10:20 T. WARREN Outline And Basic Message Of Colossians
 7:00 F. SMITH Salvation (1:1-2)
 8:00 C. CATES Thanksgiving (1:3-8)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20
 9:00 B. SMITH Prayer (1:9-12)
 10:00 D. SZTANYO God (1:12-13)
 11:00 J. STEARSMAN Christ (1:13-23)
 1:00 G. ELKINS Paul's Work (1:24-2:3)
 2:00 C. LAVENDER General Warning And Exhortation (2:4-7)
 3:00 G. MUSIC Fulness Of The Godhead In Christ (2:9)
 7:00 J. GILMORE Men Are Made Free In Christ (2:10-12)
 8:00 B. JACKSON Warnings Against False Teachers (2:13-15)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21
 9:00 H. BYNUM Refuse To Bow To Ceremonial Prohibitions (2:16-17)
 10:00 W. WINKLER Refuse To Worship Inferior Beings (2:18-19)
 11:00 T. VARNER Refuse To Submit To Ascetic Regulations (2:20-21)
 1:00 D. BROWN Reasons For This Refusal (2:22-23)
 2:00 F. STARLING What Is Truly Of Value In Spiritual Growth (3:1-4)
 3:00 N. MERIDETH The Beauty Of Holiness And Spirit Of Praise (3:5-17)
 7:00 W. CLARK Application To Specific Classes (3:18-4:1)
 8:00 B. DOBBS Counsel In Regard To Outsiders (4:2-6)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22
 9:00 R. SHARP Some Personal Messages And Greetings (4:7-18)
 10:00 T. WARREN Principles Of Interpretation In Colossians
 11:00 P. DAVIS Excursus On The Doctrine Of God In Colossians
 1:00 F. NICHOLS Excursus On The Person Of Christ In Colossians
 2:00 W. CLAIBORNE Excursus On The Work Of Christ In Colossians
 3:00 D. McCLISH Excursus On The Power Of Darkness In Colossians
 7:00 R. DEEVER Excursus On A Cappella Singing In Colossians
 8:00 J. RAMSEY Excursus On Salvation (From Allen Sins) In Colossians

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23
 9:00 H. KIRK Excursus On Christian Living In Colossians
 10:00 T. HIGHTOWER Excursus On Mere Human (False) Doctrine In Colossians
 11:00 W. WILDER Excursus On The Cross In Colossians
 1:00 W. COATS Excursus On The Church In Colossians
 2:00 R. TAYLOR Excursus On Being Good Soldiers In Colossians
 3:00 M. DEEVER Excursus On Knowledge And Faith In Colossians
 7:00 A. CONNALLY Excursus On The Family In Colossians
 8:00 A. HIGHERS Excursus On The Doctrine Of Authority In Colossians



David Brown



Houston Bynum



Wayne Coats



Bill Jackson



Billy Smith



Andrew Connally



Hoyt Kirk



Foy Smith



Phil Davis



Clarence Lavender



Frank Starling



Mac Deaver



Dub McClish



Jackie Stearsman



Roy Deaver



Noel Merideth



Dick Szanyo



Buster Dobbs



Jerry Moffitt



Robert Taylor



Garland Elkins



Goebel Music



Terry Varner



Joe Gilmore



Flavil Nichols



Thomas Warren



Alan Highers



Johnny Ramsey



William Wilder



Terry Hightower



Roy Sharp



Wendell Winkler



Curtis Cates



Winford Claiborne

Winford Clark



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1986

NUMBER 38

The Church That Jesus Built

The church that Jesus built is unique. It is unlike Protestant Denominationalism, and Roman Catholicism. The Lord's church antedates these churches by hundreds of years. The Catholic church was fully organized by about 606 A.D. Protestantism came into being in the early part of the 16th century. The Lord's church was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41, 47; 11:14-15).



W. A. Holley

Human churches are destined to be rooted up (Psalms 127:1; Matthew 15:13); but the church established by the Lord Jesus Christ will stand forever (Daniel 2:44; Hebrews 12:28; Luke 1:32-33).

What are the characteristics of the New Testament church that make it unique? We shall note some of them--

(1) The Bible and the Bible, alone is our divine book of guidance (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Galatians 1:6-10; II Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-19). We never follow the doctrines and commandments of men (Mark 7:6-13). Such human creeds as manuals, books of discipline, confessions of faith, catechisms, are totally rejected. We stand upon the word of God!!!

(2) The church that Jesus built insists on wearing those God-given names or designations as recorded upon the pages of Holy Writ (I Corinthians 1:1-2; Hebrews 12:23; Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). The Lord's children are members of the Lord's church, having been born again, "born of water and of the Spirit," they are "new creatures" in Christ (John 3:3-5, 8; II Corinthians 5:17). Denominational names

divide the people and thus make the unity for which Jesus Christ prayed more difficult to achieve (John 17:20-23).

(3) The church of Christ preaches and practices that God-given plan of salvation as revealed in the sacred scriptures: namely, faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and baptism for the remission of sins (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38, 47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). Hence, no altar calls, no praying through, no getting of religion, no direct operation of the Spirit separate and apart from the gospel or word of truth (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17). Only what the Lord has commanded is what we urge upon the people.

(4) The church that the Lord built is unique in that one cannot join it. This scriptural concept may seem strange indeed to some; but it is true, nevertheless (Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47). In apostolic times those who heard and obeyed were added by the Lord to his church; they did not join it! To urge one to "join the church of one's choice," is a very popular doctrine; but it also is an unscriptural one. The Lord's church is the Lord's house or family (I Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:5-6). To become a member of the Lord's family, one must be born into it (John 3:3, 5; Mark 16:16)-- this is accomplished when one believes and obeys the truth (I Peter 1:22-25; Hebrews 5:8-9).

(5) Worship as characterizes the church of Christ is unique indeed. The worship as practiced in the Lord's church is very different from what is found in Protestant and Catholic churches. Among churches of Christ there is no effort to entertain, no appeal to pageantry, no attempt at popularity --where worship is concerned. We do strive sincerely and honestly to worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Such items of worship as are revealed in the New Testament (and only these items) are included (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15). The first day of the week (not Saturday) is the Lord's day (Acts 20:7; I Co-

rinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10).

(6) The entire membership of the churches of Christ are urged to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts," and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). If there are some who miss the mark, it is not because we encourage them to do so. Rather, such erring members are taught that if they wish to be saved eternally, they must repent of their transgressions and return to the right way of the Lord (Acts 8:22; I John 1:6-10; James 5:16). The possibility of apostasy is clearly set forth in Sacred Scripture (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 6:4-6; II Peter 2:20-22).

(7) The Lord's church actively tries to fulfill its responsibility to both God and man. (1) We try to preach the gospel to every creature throughout the world (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20). (2) We try to help the unfortunate -- the widows and the orphans -- both in, and out of, the church (Galatians 6:10; II Corinthians 9:13; Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-27; II Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9). (3) We also seek to edify the entire membership (Ephesians 4:12-15). The word edify means to urge spiritual growth and maturity in things pertaining to Christian activity.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.


Guess how I know my mother-in-law lives a stones throw away from us.
* * * *

The man who invented the eraser had the human race pretty well sized up.
* * * *

When money talks these days it is probably asking: "What happened."
* * * *

The world is moving so fast these days that the man who says it can't be done is usually interrupted by someone doing it.
* * * *

It isn't difficult to make a mountain out of a molehill -- just add a little dirt.



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
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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"The Greatness Of His Power"

We sometimes lose sight of the great help that is ours in leading men to our God. When we see a lost world and, when we are aware of our inadequacies, how often we become disheartened! Such discouragement is foolish when we consider God's power that is available to us.

God uses his providential power in our lives. The study of the Bible leads one to the firmest conviction of God's presence with men of old. Can we not see his working in the lives of Abraham, Joseph, David, Gideon, etc.? Have we not been thrilled with the story of David and Goliath or moved as we read of Gideon's army of 300? The concept, "Go, and I will be with thee," abounded in the lives of these men.

Brethren, are we not aware that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Gideon is **OUR** God? Let us not think that because God no longer uses his miraculous power that he no longer uses his power! God is alive; He is with us and is faithful to his promises not to forsake us (1 Peter 3:12; Hebrews 13:5, 6).

God has provided His powerful word for us to use in leading men to him (Romans 1:16). The gospel is his power (the Greek word for power is our word for "dynamite") to save men. It is this word, this power, that has been given to us. The task of saving others is great; but we are well equipped. The word is living and active, sharper than a sword (Hebrews 4:12). Let us take this sword and march forth one man to lead others to our Master.

—125 Dairy Road South, North Palm Beach, FL 33408.



Dan Jenkins

Many have expressed an interest in a biography of Gus Nichols. Inquiries have come from a wide area, and suggestions have been made for the writing of such a history. One of his granddaughters, with an English major, is willing to attempt the writing; but she needs help. Hardeman's daughter, Mrs. Beth Ballard (4430 Taos, Dallas, Texas 75209) is a school teacher, and excels in composition. Here is how readers of Words of Truth can assist: Send her any and every bit of information you have about her grandfather. But as specific as you can, naming dates, places, and people (where possible). But send in what-



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS

Pick Out A Stranger And Say "Hello"

Solomon said, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24). The business world has emphasized this principle for a long time. They insist that their employees be neat, clean, friendly, and helpful: They know that increased profit will be the reward. Indeed, courtesy and friendliness pay.

How wonderful if churches would learn this same lesson. Strangers are often permitted to come to our services, sometimes more than once, without so much as a smile or a handshake. Too frequently, they will be pushed aside in our haste to get to someone we haven't seen in a few hours.

The story is told of a man who entered the church building and sat down near the front with his hat on. Noting the man, one of the ushers spoke to him, asking him if he knew he forgot to remove his hat. "Yes," the man replied, "I realize I have my hat on; but I've been coming to this church for two months, and you are the first person who has spoken to me!"

That reminds me of the preacher who preached to the congregation one Sunday morning on the interesting theme, "Recog-

ever you can recall. Whether the event was sad, humorous, ordinary, or unusual; --whether it relates to him as a mere acquaintance, as a close friend, or as a stranger; --whether it involved his work as a preacher, debater, writer, counselor, or other activities; --even if it is only an anecdote which you heard him tell, or something about a sermon he preached --send it in! Items may be submitted via cassette tapes, or in writing.

Please do not 'suppose' that somebody else will submit that item --for even if there are duplicates, no harm is done by the duplication. Rather, look at this as a challenge for YOU to report whatever you recall -- for the only other time I requested anything like this was regarding brother C. A. Wheeler (who converted my father) --and in response, NOT ONE item was received. So, please yield to the impulse to send all, or as many, interesting bits of information regarding him; and do it now! Thanks!

dition of our Friends in Heaven." The following week he received a note: "Dear Sir: I would like for you to speak to your congregation on the subject, 'Recognition of Friends on Earth.' I have been coming to your services for several weeks now, and no one has spoken to me yet."

The admonition to the Hebrews is most appropriate: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2).

This anonymous poem, penned by a new member, should challenge us.

I see you at the services but you never say hello.

You're busy all the time with people you already know.

I sit among the members, still I'm a lonely guy;

The new ones sit there with me, while you quickly pass us by.

But you people have asked us in, and have talked of fellowship;

You could just step across the room, but you've never made the trip.

Why can't you nod, or say "Hello," or stop and shake my hand,

Then go and join your other friends -- now, that I'd understand.

I'll be at the next service too, on that you can depend!

So won't you introduce yourself? I want to be your friend.

—420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.



Edsel Burleson

"Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery"

Down through the centuries the sin of adultery has been in the world. It has raised its ugly head to cause heartache in many a husband or wife. It has caused many a child to grow up without a father or mother. Adultery has brought in many a stranger as a step-father or step-mother.

Instead of working to make a good home, far too many have allowed the selfishness of momentary pleasure to destroy their homes. Many attribute the prosperity of our modern society as causing the break-down of so many homes. The desire to have THINGS may nurture a selfish heart. However one is what he has been taught. Without Biblical teaching, there is no spirituality. There is no basis upon which to build a stable home. So long as the only rule is fleshly desire of the moment, family destruction will continue to be the result.

This sordid condition has been fed by the idea it is all right for people to engage in sex before marriage. Paul wrote, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers . . ." (I Corinthians 6:9). The two words "fornication" and "adultery" also are distinguished in Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:21. **FORNICATION** applies to all illicit sex. Therefore it is sinful to engage in premarital sex.

What is God's plan for marriage? In the beginning God saw the loneliness of the man he had created: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Man needed companionship, but he needed a helper suited to his needs. The husband-and-wife relationship is to be closer than the relationship between parents and children. Hence God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus restated this principle and added: ". . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." When a man and a woman stand before a minister, family, and friends, they promise to be faithful and true companions so long as both shall live. Beside companionship, another purpose for marriage was for Adam and Eve to bring children into the world (Genesis 1:28). This is the only arrangement God has endorsed to procreate mankind.

Selfishness in many matters contributes to the demise of the home today. In spite of the fact that God condemns adultery, that sin is a large factor in the destruction of homes. Paul states, "For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" (Romans 7:2). Jesus says, ". . . Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another,



W. Edwin Kearley

she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11-12).

Repentance is a necessary requirement to remedy this, or any other, sin (Luke 13:3, 5). After Paul had listed a number of sins, including adultery, he said: "And such WERE SOME OF YOU: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the

Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). They had changed their state and had become Christians.

May we plead with you: If you are in sin, do not wait too long to comply with God's will!

—103 Elena Court, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Preacher For Sale: Cheap

God puts a great premium on personal integrity. Righteous Job told his accusers, "Till I die, I will not put away mine integrity from me" (Job 27:5). Of all men, preachers must be men of integrity. Truth and honesty are the stock and trade of their profession. Hence they must "buy the truth and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). Like Paul, faithful ministers will speak the truth and lie not (I Timothy 2:7). Not only will they preach truth; they will be examples "to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12).

Satan often tempts preachers to compromise their integrity for the sake of money. Most ministers are not tempted to steal; and the adversary knows that. But he also knows that the "love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith . . ." (I Timothy 6:10).

A missionary to Asia tells of an Adventist preacher who approached him wanting a job as a minister with the Lord's church. The missionary reminded him of the vast doctrinal differences between the two groups and asked him could he make such adjustments. To this the job-seeker replied, "I can preach it any way you want it."

We smile at this rather bizarre example of a man selling his soul, yet this same **TYPE** of conduct is sometimes seen in our society.

Some preachers desire to be rich in the material things of this life. Paul warned that "they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Timothy 6:9). This ambition for the fatter salary drives them from congregation to congregation looking for the bigger paycheck. The good that can be done or the harm done to a church by a premature departure is of little concern. "What do they pay?" is the central question. Such brethren soon learn that they can gather more gold in the business world and so most of them will eventually become "former ministers."

Those of this category do not serve God out of love, loyalty, and conviction, but for material reward. Jesus called such men "hirelings." Like hireling shepherds who abandon their sheep when the wolf comes, hireling preachers depart God's flock when a larger paycheck is flashed before them because they care "not for the sheep" (John 10:11-14). Hirelings have put a price-tag on their souls: "For Sale to the Highest Bidder."



John Waddey

There is yet another way in which Satan tempts gospel preachers to sell themselves. There will occasionally be situations where sin has sprung up and faithfulness demands that a class (or sermon) be devoted to dealing with the error. When a minister contemplates doing his duty, he is reminded that people of power and influence in the congregation don't want to hear such a lesson. Should he proceed, he may well lose his job. Suddenly the preacher is torn between his duty to God versus his financial security. A man of integrity will "preach the word!" He will "be urgent in season, out of season." He will "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" (I Timothy 4:2). He trusts God to protect and provide for his family. The Holy Spirit tells him, "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as you have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). When faced with such temptations to compromise, God's man responds, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Hebrews 13:6).

This same type of temptation may confront a man when he is interviewing for a job that he very much wants. When asked about his convictions on controversial issues, he may be tempted to tell the questioners what they want to hear, rather than what God wants him to say.

When such temptations come, we must "resist the devil and he will flee from" us (James 4:7).

When Racon John Smith, a pioneer gospel preacher, broke with the Baptists, his friends urged him to reconsider. They warned that he would have no income, that he might well lose his Kentucky farm. To which that noble man of God replied:

Conscience is an article that I have not brought into the market, but if I should offer it for sale, Montgomery County with all its lands and houses would not be enough to buy it, much less that farm of 100 acres.

In Mark chapter 8, Jesus asks two of the most heart-piercing questions any man must face:

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37, KJV).

Every gospel preacher should have these words engraved upon his conscience. What would we be profited if we gain wealth and fame, honor and power from men, but lose our souls because we sold them to the highest bidder? If we were paid \$100,000 per year to preach a man-pleasing message (Galatians 1:10) it would be a paltry pittance when compared to our eternal loss.

To preachers (as to all others), Jesus says: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). What earthly reward could possible compare with this glorious reward?

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

"SOME CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH"

SEVENTH ANNUAL

GUS NICHOLS—

WORDS OF TRUTH LECTURESHIP

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 2, 1986

SIXTH AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1501 SIXTH AVENUE

JASPER, ALABAMA 35501

PHONES (205) 384-6446 or 387-1670

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1986

7:00-7:25 Congregational Singing
7:30-8:30 The Challenge Of Indifference
A. J. Kerr, White's Chapel, Rt. 1, Eldridge, AL

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1986

9:30-10:20 .. The Challenge To Properly Handle
Church Problems
Jerrie Barber, Central Church, Dalton, GA
10:30-11:20 The Challenge To Study
Words Carefully
Hugo McCord, Midwest City, OK

11:30 - 1:30 Lunch Break

1:30-2:15 The Challenge Of
Congregational Development
Joe Van Dyke, Jr., Chisholm Hills Church,
Florence, AL

—LADIES The Challenge To Be Pure In
Heart And Life
Lois Ann Duncan, Adamsville, AL

2:20 - 3:10 Some Challenges Facing
The Home
Winfred Clark, Athens, AL

—LADIES The Challenge To Teach The
Younger Women
Lois McCord, Midwest City, OK.

3:20-4:00 The Challenge To Evangelize
The World
Billy Nicks, E.T.S.O.P.&M., Knoxville, TN

4:00 - 6:30 Dinner Break

6:30 - 6:55 Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 Some Challenges Of
Church Discipline
Jerry Jenkins, Roebuck Parkway Church,
Birmingham, AL

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1986

9:30 - 10:20 . The Challenge To Properly Handle
Church Problems - II
Jerrie Barber, Central Church, Dalton, GA
10:30-11:20 The Challenge To Study
Words Carefully - II
Hugo McCord, Midwest City, OK

11:30 - 1:30 Lunch Break

1:30 - 2:15 ... The Challenge Of Congregational
Development - II
Joe Van Dyke, Jr., Chisholm Hills Church,
Florence, AL

—LADIES The Challenge To Be Pure In
Heart And Life - II
Lois Ann Duncan, Adamsville, AL

2:20-3:10 Some Challenges Facing The
Home - II
Winfred Clark, Athens, AL

— LADIES The Challenge To Teach The
Younger Women - II
Lois McCord, Midwest City OK

3:20 - 4:00 The Challenge To Evangelize
The World - II

Billy Nicks, E.T.S.O.P. & M., Knoxville, TN

4:00 - 6:30 Dinner Break

6:30 - 6:55 Congregational Singing
7:00 - 8:00 The Challenge To Be Subject
To The Higher Powers
J. Noel Merideth, Lawrenceburg, TN

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1986

9:30 - 10:20 . The Challenge To Properly Handle
Church Problems - III
Jerrie Barber, Central Church, Dalton, GA

10:30 - 11:20 The Challenge To Study
Words Carefully - III
Hugo McCord, Midwest City, OK

11:30 - 2:00 Dutch Lunch At Whiteway
Honoring The Henry Hyche Family

2:20 - 3:10 Some Challenges Facing
The Home - III
Winfred Clark, Athens, AL

—LADIES The Challenge To Teach The
Younger Women - III
Lois McCord, Midwest City, OK.

3:20-4:00 The Challenge To Evangelize
The World - III

Billy Nicks, E.T.S.O.P. & M., Knoxville, TN

4:00 - 6:30 Dinner Break

6:30 - 6:55 Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 The Challenge To
Promote Unity
Samuel Jones, Magnolia Bible College,
Kosciusko, MS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1986

9:30-10:20 The Challenge To Properly Handle
Church Problems - IV
Jerrie Barber, Central Church, Dalton, GA
10:30-11:20 The Challenge To Study
Words Carefully - IV
Hugo McCord, Midwest City, OK

11:30 - 1:30 Lunch Break

1:30 - 2:15 Some Challenges Facing The
Eldership
David Underwood, Chisholm Hills Church,
Florence, AL

— LADIES The Challenge To Be Pure In
Heart And Life - III
Lois Ann Duncan, Adamsville, AL

2:20 - 3:10 Some Challenges Facing
The Home - IV
Winfred Clark, Athens, AL

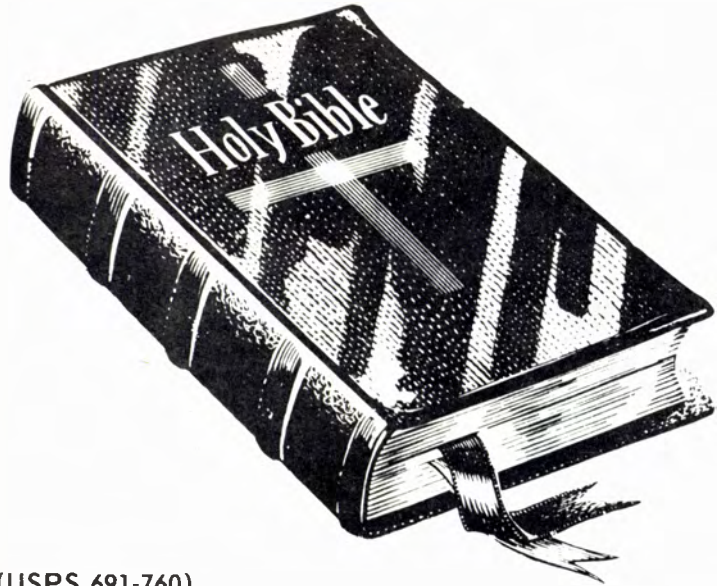
—LADIES The Challenge To Teach The
Younger Women - IV
Lois McCord, Midwest City, OK

3:20 - 4:00 .. The Challenge To Evangelize The
World - IV

Billy Nicks, E.T.S.O.P. & M., Knoxville, TN

4:00 - 6:30 Dinner Break

6:30 - 6:55 Congregational Singing
7:00-8:00 The Challenge To Preach The
Pure Gospel
George W. DeHoff, DeHoff Publications,
Murfreesboro, TN



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 22

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1986

NUMBER 39

Men Of Whom The World Was Not Worthy

Wise men are always keen observers of human conduct. We can profit greatly from the lives of those who have gone before us. In this lesson we will note some positive examples of great men of faith whose actions are commendable for us.



John Waddey

ABEL worshipped God as God directed. It was "by faith" that he offered a more acceptable sacrifice (Hebrews 11:4). But faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Therefore, he heard and obeyed God in offering the firstlings of his flock (Genesis 4:4). God blest him for his faithful obedience. Christ expects us today to do the will of the Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21). In addition we must not go beyond the things written in God's book (I Corinthians 4:6). To do so will cost us the fellowship and approval of God and his Son (II John 9-11).

ENOCH spent his life walking with God (Genesis 5:24). It was "by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Hebrews 11:5). Without that same kind of loving, trusting, obeying faith we cannot be well-pleasing unto God. "For he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6). To walk with God means to live one's life in harmony with his revealed will. "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 his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:6-7). If we walk with God all of our days, he will take us home to glory as well (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). **NOAH** reared his family for God and saved

them from the judgment of the wicked (Genesis 6:9-10; 7:23). His was surely the vilest generation of all time; yet he was successful in his family. In a generation that knows no end to corruption and vice, we desperately need godly fathers who will nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). No man is a failure if he, like Noah, can save his own family. No man is a success if he loses his loved ones -- no matter how far he may excel in other areas.

NOAH obeyed God even when the task assigned seemed insurmountable. No doubt his worldly neighbors laughed him to shame when they viewed this project or heard his preaching. Yet being "moved with godly fear, (he) prepared an ark to the saving of his house . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). This is saving faith!

JOSEPH resisted temptation when his master's wife sought to seduce him (Genesis 39:7-12). Even though he suffered painful consequences from that slighted woman, he never regretted his decision. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" It is still the best to "flee fornication" (I Corinthians 6:18). Lust is powerful and the flesh is weak. It is difficult to talk over the question of adultery and end up on God's side.

JOSEPH forgave those who sinned against him. We wonder at the great forgiving spirit he manifested toward those who ruthlessly sold him into slavery (Genesis 45:4-5). Paul urges us to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). What a happy world it would be if such loving forgiveness grew in every heart.

NATHAN had the courage to correct a king who had done wrong. When king David sinned in taking Uriah's wife and causing his death, Nathan stood before him and courageously said, "Thou art the man" (II Samuel 12:1-8). In those days kings had absolute power -- even life-and-death power -- over their subjects. Nathan knew that his king could speak the word and imprisonment or death would befall him. Yet he did what had to be done.

A true prophet of God must speak the truth and lie not (Ephesians 4:25). Truth must be spoken whether the occasion is convenient or not (II Timothy 4:2). Like Paul we must be prepared to declare the whole counsel of God and hold back nothing profitable from those who need it (Acts 20:20, 27).

JOSIAH served the Lord in his youth. "While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David" (II Chronicles 34:3). This young man not only served God himself: he led his nation in a great religious reformation. He purged the pagan element from his land and taught the people to worship Jehovah correctly (II Kings 2:3). His noble example reminds youth of every age to remember their creator in the days of youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

EZRA loved God's word and diligently studied it. This man of God helped to restore the Hebrew nation to their homeland after the Babylonian exile. He also was instrumental in beginning the reconstruction of God's temple (Ezra 1:2). Perhaps his greatest contribution was in writing Scripture. Jewish tradition credits him with authoring the great 119th Psalm, and with formulating the canon of their sacred books. "Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances" (Ezra 7:10). Every teacher of God's word should follow Ezra's example to first learn and practice oneself, before attempting to teach others. "Great peace have they that love thy law" (Psalms 119:165).

BARNABAS knew how to encourage brethren to do the right thing. "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith . . ." (Acts 11:24). His brethren called him "the son of exhortation." He took the part of Saul to gain his acceptance with the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-27). He helped the church in Antioch grow to maturity. He salvaged young John Mark and helped him grow into a great leader (Acts 15:37-39). We must learn to "exhort one another, and build each other up," even as Barnabas did (I Thessalonians 5:11).

JOHN risked all to follow Jesus even into

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 26:35

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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor

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Do You Pay Your Bills?

Honesty is a very strong biblical virtue, but one which is fast-fading in our society. "Shady" business dealings, lies, breach of contracts, petty stealing, and shoplifting have become commonplace; and businesses "plan" for such things in their budgets and inventory.



Ronnie A. Missildine

But such ought not to be the case, ESPECIALLY IN THE CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN. The Bible is very clear in its teaching against such: "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor . . . Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good . . ." (Ephesians 4:25, 28).

One thing I want specifically to address is the responsibility to **PAY OUR DEBTS!** That is just pure honesty. To fail to do so is **DISHONEST!** When we sign the loan or charge account documents, we are **promising** to make the payment of a certain amount by a certain date. To fail to do so is a breach of promise, a failure to be honest, a lie.

Now, I am aware that sometimes extenuating circumstances arise, such as emergency expenditures, etc. But even then, honesty and responsibility would demand that we contact our creditors and make arrangements. Too often, however, the problem is not in emergencies, but rather that we over expend ourselves. We over spend on the things we

Continued On Page 4

Faulkner Lectureship To Be Held October 5-9

Fifty-eight sessions, some of them concurrent, are scheduled for the 1986 Faulkner University Lectureship to be held October 5-8 in Montgomery, Alabama. "This is the most extensive program in the School's history," said Wendell Winkler, lectureship director. "Nearly forty . . . speakers . . . will participate."

Featured among the daytime speakers are Franklin Camp ("Difficult Texts on Sin"), Johnny Ramsey ("A Study of Sin in Jeremiah"), Winfred Clark ("Sin and Religious Error"), and Hugo McCord ("Word

Studies on Sin"). Each will conduct a daily session on his topic.

Ladies Classes will also be led daily by Jane McWhorter. Among her topics are: "Fortifying Our Children for Life in a World of Sin," and "Overcoming Sins Against Our Husbands."

For more information concerning the lectureship contact Wendell Winkler, Dean, Alabama Christian School of Biblical Studies, Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Highway, 36193-4601; (205) 272-5820, ext. 144.

Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?

One can seldom read a newspaper, or hear a newscast, without being confronted with tragedy. This has led some to question the existence of God. They ask, "If God really is all powerful, and all loving, why does he allow so much pain and suffering in this world?" The world has NO answer to the problem of suffering. Christianity offers an answer.



Bob Prichard

Genesis 1:27 tells us that God created man in his own image. Being made in the image of God, man has the free will to choose between right and wrong. Adam chose, and all men since Adam have chosen, to sin. This choice has brought the consequences of sin to mankind. Much of the suffering we see today is a direct result of man's sin. The innocent often suffer because others have used their free will to sin. Sin is here because of man, not because of God.

Much of man's suffering can also be attributed to the presence of the enemy, Satan. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus explained the ruining of the field by the sowing of tares, saying: "an enemy hath done this" (Matthew 13:28). The book of Job demonstrates Satan's ruthlessness in his persecution of men, including righteous men, such as Job.

God hates sin. The Bible is filled with demonstrations of God's judgment on those who sin. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying to the Holy Spirit concerning their gifts to the church (Acts 5). God again and again called Israel to repentance, although Israel often refused to hear. Some of the suffering in the world today may be allowed by God as punishment.

God is a God of love. Man's real problem is not suffering, but sin. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We cannot rightly say that God has done nothing about the problem; because he has done something, in sending Christ.

Often, there is value in suffering. Paul asked

the Lord three times to remove his "thorn in the flesh." The Lord's answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9). Paul wrote, "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 3:3-5). The key in suffering, is whether it makes us BITTER? or BETTER?

It must always be remembered, in facing suffering, that God himself is the Great Sufferer, who gave his Son to die for wicked men. He feels our pain and suffering. In these things we cannot understand, we must trust him because of the things we do understand.

—P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

Bible Lectureship

*ARAB, ALABAMA
Bible Lectureship
Saturday, October 11, 1986

Theme: O. T. Characters
Messages For Both Men And Women

9:00-9:30 a.m.	Registration
9:30-10:15 a.m.	Joe Gray Abraham Elsie Huffard O.T. Women in Bible Lands (Ladies)
10:20-11:05 a.m.	Basil Overton Moses Becky Blackmon Esther: What She Means To Us Today (Ladies)
11:15-12:00 p.m.	Joe Gray Joseph Elsie Huffard Women Of Today In Bible Lands (Ladies)
12:00-1:15 p.m.	Lunch (Provided by Arab church)
1:15-2:00 p.m.	Basil Overton Daniel Becky Blackmon O.T. Women You Never Think About (Ladies)
2:05-3:00 p.m.	Willard Collins 52 Years As A Gospel Preacher

For Further Information
Contact: Ken Tyler 205-586-8158

*Arab is 30 miles south of Huntsville on U.S. 231

John 3:16

And The Refutation Of Major Denominational Dogmas

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This verse is perhaps one of the most-frequently used passages in the Bible. Many would refer to it as the "Little Bible." However, this passage of scripture is perhaps the most misused passage by denominational preachers who espouse their particular doctrines and tenets. Let us study John 3:16 and refute some of the major denominational dogmas of our day.

1. **"FOR GOD."** This denies the false doctrine of atheism. Atheism denies the existence of Jehovah God, and denies the inspiration of the Bible. It seeks to undermine and destroy the faith of man in God. If God be marked out of John 3:16, there would be no great love of God, no Saviour to save, and no redemption available for mankind. Perhaps the atheist should ponder Psalm 14:1, "The fool (Emphasis mine, H.B.) hath said in his heart, There is no God." John 3:16 begins with the statement "For God." The Bible begins with "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Either it begins there, or there is no beginning! The book of Genesis is not a "myth" but is the commentary of God concerning how the Godhead created the heaven and the earth.

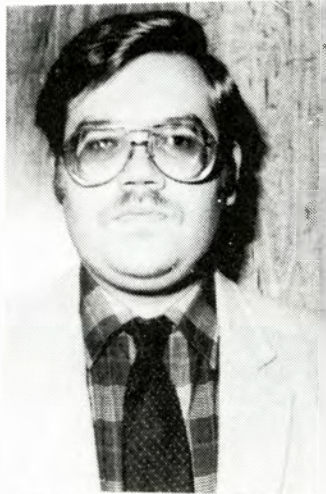
2. **"SO LOVED THE WORLD."** This denies the doctrine of Deism. This false teaching admits that God created the world, and set it in force; but God then left mankind to make his own way and destiny throughout the world. John 3:16 affirms not only that there is a God, but that God cares, and is concerned about mankind! God was concerned so much that he sent his only begotten Son to walk among mere men.

3. **"THAT HE GAVE."** This denies Premillennialism. John 3:16 states that God sent his Son into the world to die. God sent him that he might give him! He did not send Christ to build or to set up an earthly kingdom. Christ came to the earth to die, and to purchase his church with his own blood (Acts 20:28; Daniel 7:13, 14).

4. **"HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON."** This denies Modernism. Modernism denies the deity, virgin birth, miracles, and the resurrection of Christ. Modernism also denies the inspiration of Holy Writ!!!

But John 3:16 states that God gave his "only begotten Son." "Only begotten" means one of a kind, or unique. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God! (Hebrews 1:1-8).

5. **"THAT WHOSOEVER."** This denies Calvinism. Calvinism says that God unconditionally and unchangeably predestined the future of every man before time began on earth without any conditions placed upon man; therefore only a certain number specifically numbered and named will be saved. The word "whosoever" shows that man has a choice,



HAROLD BIGHAM

because he was created a free moral agent (Genesis 1:27). Man therefore always has the freedom to choose right or wrong, good or evil, obedience or disobedience. Adam and Eve in the Garden depict the free moral agency of man! (Genesis 3:1-6). Furthermore, Christ was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness, which underlines the freedom to choose good or evil! (Matthew 4:1-10).

6. **"BELIEVETH."** This denies the teaching of Universalism. Universalism teaches that everyone is going to heaven. None is lost! The word "believeth" definitely shows that salvation is conditional. It means the person who "keeps on believing." Of course, this verse does not teach the false doctrine of "Faith only." "Believeth" covers the whole process of obedience. When one hears the gospel, believes in the Christ, repents of his sins, confesses the name of the Christ, and is buried in baptism, then he possesses the obedient faith that saves (Hebrews 5:8-9). Matthew 7:13-14 definitely teaches that not ALL (Emphasis mine, H.B.) will be saved!

7. **"IN HIM."** This denies Sectarianism. Sectarianism states that "you can attend the church of your choice." The Bible teaches that one must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved (Acts 4:12; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4). Paul spoke condemned divi-

sion, in I Corinthians 1:10. The words "in him" teach that salvation is found only in him! (Galatians 3:26, 27).

8. **"SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."** This denies the false teaching of Materialism. Materialists state that when a man dies, that it is all over. It is finished. "Perish" doesn't mean annihilate, but it means ruin and destruction in a sense of eternal punishment that will be received by the disobedient ones (Matthew 25). "Eternal life" shows that it is not the end of man when physical death occurs (Luke 16:16-31).

This verse also denies the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. This damnable doctrine teaches that once a person is saved, he can do nothing to fall from the saved state. Denominational preachers will insert the word "shall" into this passage. But, alas, my Friend, does "should" mean "shall"??? The smothering fire of hell is pronounced upon those who would pervert the word of God! (Galatians 1:6-9). The person who would insert one word for another to change its meaning is deceptive (Genesis 3).

John 3:16 is a great passage of Scripture! Let us always give heed to the great lessons contained therein.

—P.O. Box 544, Bay Springs, MS 39422.

Come As You Are To Be Made Better

A now-deceased preacher, who was as much noted for his cantankerousness and orneriness as for his soundness, preached a sermon with the basic emphasis that God will not accept us in our sin; we must turn from our sins to be received by him. The song leader for the occasion had chosen the invitation song without knowing the exact topic and direction of the sermon. At its conclusion he arose to lead "Just As I Am!" He had no sooner gotten the first four words of the song out of his mouth when the preacher grabbed him by the shoulders, shook him with some degree of violence, and said something like, "You idiot, you've ruined my sermon! You've ruined my sermon!"

It is true that the song leader had not made the best choice to follow that particular sermon. It should also be noted, however, that any sermon ruined by a reminder that we have nothing to offer God for our past sins except the blood of his Son who died for us was not a gospel sermon to start with.

At the opposite end of the same pole, an article by Lloyd John Ogilvie, a well known Presbyterian preacher and writer, is making the rounds in church bulletins. The article is entitled, "A Friend Who Won't Go Away." It defines a friend as "one who knows all about you and won't go away." The article applies that definition of friend to Jesus and



Cecil May, Jr.

ends up saying of him, "There's one person whom I can trust. His friendship is so profound that there is nothing that can make him go away!"

I applaud the sentiment that ascribes to Jesus the highest qualities of truest friendship. I recognize the need to have, both in Christ and in other friends, a sense of acceptance that causes us to know boldly, though we have faults they know about, we can still be their friends. It is a bit too much to say, however, "There is nothing that can make him go away."

There is, indeed, nothing that can separate us from his love (Romans 8:35-39). There is nothing that would cause him to desire anything other than our salvation through the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). There is nothing that can make him want us to perish rather than come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). While we were yet sinners, weak and ungodly, God gave his Son; and Christ gave his life on our behalf (Romans 5:6-8). His love is unconditional.

His acceptance, however, is NOT unconditional. We must come to the knowledge of the truth to be saved (John 8:32). We must repent in order not to perish (Luke 13:3). We must be faithful to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). If we die in our sins, where he is we cannot come (John 8:21-24). It is sheer Calvinistic theology to make our acceptance with Christ unconditional; it is NOT, however, good Biblical theology.

—President, Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1109, Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090.

“Thou Shalt Not Steal” (Romans 13:9)

God has always taught the right of private ownership of property. This right is fundamental to a healthy society. In recent years respect for private ownership of property had reached a new low in the minds of many in our society. The Federal Bureau of Investigation releases annually statistics for crime in the United States. The latest statistics available are for 1984. Robbery (including highway,



W. Edwin Kearley

commercial house, gas station, convenience stores, residence, and bank) occurred 409,000 times, averaging \$609,000.00 per instance. Burglary (residence and non-residence) occurred 2,652,000 times. Larceny (including pocket picking, purse snatching, shoplifting, from motor vehicles, motor vehicle accessories, from buildings, and from coin-operated machines) occurred 5,899,000 times. (National Data Book and Guide Sources Abstract of the United States, 1986). The above statistics indicate moral teaching and moral learning is not taking place in many homes today.

Because Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, God cursed the ground. In the Garden of Eden, they could eat of all of the trees but one. In this paradise they could live forever. Sin changed things. God said, “. . . Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:17-19). From the beginning man has been expected to work for his living. Today far too many seem to believe the world owes them a living without effort on their part.

The law God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai contained the command: “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15). In Exodus (22:1-15)

we have the Mosaic laws concerning restitution of things stolen. Examples are: “If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it: he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up (entering the premises), and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him” (verses 1-2).

In the New Testament we learn stealing is still a sin against God. Paul stated: “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (II Thessalonians 3:10). Paul also wrote: “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the things which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28). The thief (one who steals) who is not converted cannot go to heaven. Paul said, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: Neither . . . thieves . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God” (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

Those who own property may be guilty of stealing. Exorbitant prices for products, and starvation wages, have often put people in oppression. To the rich James warned: “Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” (James 5:1-4). The property owner who cheats his fellow man is a thief.

MAY OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD AND OUR FELLOWMAN CAUSE US TO HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EARNINGS OF OTHERS.

—103 Elena Court, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

Bridge Building Or Ditch Digging?

Each is making life just a little bit “easier,” or a little more “difficult,” for those who follow. The apostle Peter said concerning Jesus, “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 left us instruction and example by which we can know every decision to make and route to take. Life can be so much easier and happier for us because Jesus lived!

Sadly, many make life more difficult for those they influence by digging ditches which become obstacles, rather than building bridges to smooth the way.

An unknown poet has written:



EDSEL BURLESON

An old man going a long highway
came at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fears for him.
But he turned when safe on the other side.
And built a bridge to span the tide.
“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You are wasting your time with building here.”

You never again will pass this way,
your journey will end with the closing day.
You have crossed the chasm deep and wide,
why build you this bridge at the evening tide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head.
“Good friend, in the way that I’ve come,” he said,

“there followeth after me today,
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This stream that has been as naught to me,
to that fair-haired youth might a pitfall be,
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim.
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.”

Fathers, mothers, husbands, wives,
Christians! Why not determine that each day you will build at least one bridge for those who are following you through life? May those whose lives touch ours be able to say, “It is easier to do right because I know him/her.”

There is no lovelier way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark.

—420 7th St. S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Do You Pay Your Bills?

Continued From Page 2

want and/or think we need; and we find ourselves in a financial bind. We ought to be wiser in our decisions.

—Warrington Church, P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507-0171.

Men Of Whom The World Was Not Worthy

Continued From Page 1

the face of death. He stood at the foot of the cross and took Christ’s mother under his protection (John 19:26-27). Others fled -- but not faithful John. Jesus promised, “There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel’s sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters . . . with

persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:30). May we grow in faith that we, like John, will never deny our Lord.

What great value there is in these wonderful examples! Let us teach them to our children, and emulate them in our lives.

—6608 Beaver Ridge, Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

To fail to pay our bills is a direct reflection on the church of God and his way. People form opinions of God, the church, and all Christians, by the way they see US live. If there is anything in the world that is a shame and a reproach on the church, it is dishonesty on the part of some of its members -- a failure to meet our obligations. God is glorified in our righteousness, not in our unrighteous dishonesty! “Owe no man anything, but to love one another” (Romans 13:8).



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1986

NUMBER 39

An Epistle To A Beginning Preacher

Dear Brother:

A heavy responsibility now rests upon your shoulders. Your brethren thought enough of you and your talent to ask you to be their preacher and teacher. With those duties you will have to provide leadership for the congregation and help, counsel, and encouragement to those individuals with special moral and spiritual needs. Now you will face challenges and decisions that will be weighty indeed.



John Waddey

As a friend, I am taking the liberty to share a few thoughts that you may find helpful as a "young preacher."

1. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Before you undertake any task, or seek to change or correct anything; before you preach any lesson, lay it before the Lord. We don't know how to direct our own steps (Jeremiah 10:23).

2. Pray especially for wisdom (James 1:5). It is one thing to know scripture, to be able to assemble a talk; it is something quite different to know how to apply that knowledge to the daily lives and needs of the congregation. Many a preacher with great knowledge and considerable skills in the pulpit has hurt, even destroyed, the Lord's congregation by unwise actions.

3. Remember to preach the truth "in love" (Ephesians 4:15). It is quite possible to preach true sermons, but to use the truth like a Roman scourge. Many folk are capable of always winning the argument, but in their method of so doing, they lose the soul. What

have they profited? When we have to correct the brethren, we must do it in gentleness and with forbearing patience (II Timothy 2:24-25).

4. While we must preach many sermons against specific vices and sins, we must never allow our preaching to become habitually negative and hypercritical. Study the teaching methods of the Lord. When circumstances demanded, he rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23). But much of his preaching reflects the positive, constructive themes of the great sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:7). Brethren can be led to do right more readily than driven to do so at the threat of a lashing.

5. "Be thou an example to them that believe in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). We cannot "preach" people into doing things which we ourselves do not do. Brethren will follow the example of a faithful leader, but they will likewise be turned off by a bad example.

6. Remember that a preacher is not necessarily an elder. By this, I mean that he cannot assume the authority to "run the affairs" of the congregation. A preacher is a teacher and a soul-winner. You have the authority to teach God's word (Titus 2:15), but not to be an overseer of the flock (Acts 20:28). While the decisions of elders must be obeyed (Hebrews 13:17), brethren are not instructed to obey preachers. God ordained that we preach the word (II Timothy 4:12); he did not appoint us policemen.

7. Never forget that in a multitude of counsellors there is safety (Proverbs 11:14). In a congregation without elders, it is important to lay the needs and plans of the congregation before the men of the church so that they can all contribute to the solutions, and help achieve the goals. A preacher will not always convince the brethren to do things his way. This doesn't mean that they are wrong, mean, or stupid. In fact, they may actually be wiser than he. Unless it is a serious matter of Biblical principle, he should defer to their col-

lective judgment in such cases.

8. "Be not rash with thy mouth" (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Neither be hasty for he that is hasty: "hasteth only to want" (Proverbs 21:5). Many preachers fail because they speak out before they have thought a matter through; and thus they get committed on the wrong side of a matter. Pride then makes it difficult for them to back up. Calvin Coolidge said, "I have never regretted anything I did not say." But many a man has regretted a sermon he rushed into, or a quick response to some problem that later was shown to be ill-advised.

9. Be long-suffering and forbearing with your brethren (Ephesians 4:2). It is very easy for a preacher to grow impatient and irritated when brethren don't respond as he thinks they should, or as fast as he wishes. The turtle didn't run as fast as the rabbit in the fable, but he was persistent and kept moving, and finally got there first. No preacher will successfully lead a group if he gets disgusted because they don't move as fast as he wishes.

10. A successful gospel preacher is a man of the scriptures. Before you can preach the truth that makes men free, you must know it (John 8:32). "Give heed to reading" (I Timothy 4:13). You will want to read God's word over and over again, carefully studying every line and word to make sure you understand it properly. In addition you should read other good books that will help you to comprehend the text and make application of it. Then you must "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). The pulpit is no place for personal opinions, speculations and matters of the world. When we stand before God and his people, we must "break the bread of life" unto them. This will require several hours of diligent study on your part each week, if you are to "handle aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15, ASV).

11. Beware lest false pride creep into your heart as you fill your important post. Like

Continued To 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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FLAVIL H. NICHOLS Editor
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The Lord's Day

Clifford Dixon

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet . . ." (Revelation 1:10). This is the only time "Lord's day" is found in the New Testament. The term "Lord's" is used one other time, where it describes the "Lord's supper" (I Corinthians 11:20). The "Lord's day" evidently refers to something about Jesus. He arose the first day of the week (Mark 16:9), and the church at Troas observed the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). It is most natural that we conclude that "the Lord's day" refers to the first day of the week.

The epistles of Barnabas, Ignatius and Dionysius, written near this time, so style it, and the name is of common occurrence from this time forward, and is confined to Sunday. Justin Martyr in his "Apology" had this to say about Sunday worship: "We hold our common assembly on the day of the sun, because it is the first day, on which God put to flight darkness and chaos and made the world, and on the same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead; for on the day before that of Saturn they crucified him, and on the day after Saturn's day, the day of the sun, he appeared to his Apostles and disciples and taught them these things, which we have also handed on to you for your consideration." (Documents of the Christian Church Selected and edited by Henry Bettenson, p. 67).

In the scriptures themselves we have the first day of the week observance of worship and in the writings of the early Christians we have a confirmation of first day of the week worship.

1. The "Lord's day" could not have been the Sabbath day because it came on the seventh day (Exodus 20:10), and it was done away along with the other observances of the law when Jesus died on the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). John was in the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9), and not under the law of Moses when he wrote Revelation; therefore he would not have been observing the Sabbath.

2. The "Lord's day" could not refer to the

Continued On Page 3

"Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness"

Being truthful should be a cornerstone of society. It certainly is a foundation stone of Christianity. John describes the judgment, saying: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and ALL LIARS, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).



W. Edwin Kearley

The law God gave Moses said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). Many times the wealthy and influential have put pressures on witnesses to color the truth, or tell the opposite of the truth before a court of justice. This command was intended to put a stop to wresting justice.

God also put responsibility on those who have heard unfounded information that they not repeat it. He said, "Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Exodus 23:1-2).

In the sermon on the mount Jesus taught one's speech must always be truthful: "Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:33-37).

Falsehood is the opposite of truth. It is utterly impossible for them to dwell in peace together in the same heart. This truth no doubt prompted the inspired Paul to exhort, "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25 A.S.V.). The Speaker's Bible notes that there are at least two faults that bear the name of falsehood, namely: (1) Carelessness about the truth. (2) The effort at deliberate deception. We must not believe without evidence. We must not seek to deceive.

An illustration of the above is found in E. W. McMillan's book entitled *The Minister's Spiritual Life*: "Quite some years ago, when I was in a revival meeting in a very large Texas city, the minister of the congregation talked at length with me about some severe criticisms of him on the part of some members in both his own congregation and others in the city. Those criticisms dealt with his character. He strongly denied the charges. I accepted his explanations and sympathized deeply; the matter passed there. Years later I read a confession from him, that the charges were true and he asked forgiveness on the part

of all concerned. I thanked God for his sincere penitence and forgave him in my heart. Still later he and I appeared together on the same college lectureship and he took me aside briefly to say, 'When I told you I was innocent of those charges, I lied; and I want you to forgive me for the lie.' He was assured that the difficulty in admitting such a thing was understandable, that I forgave him the moment I read his confession of guilt, and that he could rely firmly on my desires to help him. Then he told me (calling the name of a very prominent minister) that this minister suggested to him that he champion some religious issue and make a strong attack on somebody involved in that issue. Said the advisor, 'People like a champion, they will flock to you immediately and will forget your former sin.' But the man said to his eternal credit: "My guilt in the first sin has given me too much remorse for me to be willing to seek Christian friendship through any channel other than pure mercy from God and from forgiving Christians."

MAY WE BE DETERMINED TO SPEAK THE TRUTH WITH LOVE, AND NEVER BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST OUR FELLOW MAN.

—103 Elena Court, Bay St. Louise, MS 39520.

Short Sermons

Guess how I know my mother-in-law lives a stones throw away from us.

The man who invented the eraser had the human race pretty well sized up.

When money talks these days it is probably asking, "What happened."

The world is moving so fast these days that the man who says it can't be done is usually interrupted by someone doing it.

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Signature: *Flavil H. Nichols*

The Lord's Day

Continued From Page 2

second coming of Christ, because when he comes the heavens and earth will pass away (II Peter 3:10-12), every eye shall see him (Revelation 1:7), and time shall be no more. John was living back about A.D. 95 or 96 when writing the book of Revelation and observing this "Lord's day." It is true that Christ's second coming will be "the day of the Lord;" but we must distinguish that from the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10.

3. The "Lord's day" could not be any of the other days of the week, because no special significance is given to any of them. However, special significance is given to the first day of the week as shown from the following considerations:

A. Jesus Christ arose "early the first day of the week" (Mark 16:9).

B. Jesus made many appearances this day, but of special significance is his appearance to the disciples assembled in the upper room. He wished peace upon them, gave them their commission, and told them they would receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-23).

C. The Sunday evening following, he again appeared as they met in the upper room and convinced Thomas of his resurrection (John 20:26-29). Thus the precedent was set for the first day of the week assembly; and Jesus' personal appearance on two occasions

is indicative of his spiritual presence when Christians meet on this day (Matthew 18:20).

D. The church was established on the first day of the week, because this is the day on which Pentecost always fell (Leviticus 23:15); and those who obeyed the gospel worshiped on this day (Acts 2:42).

E. The first day of the week meeting was continued by other congregations as shown in Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20; and 16:1-2.

All this confirms beyond any doubt that the first day of the week is the "Lord's day." John's being in the Spirit is a great example of the importance of worship on that day.

Since Sunday is the "Lord's day," Christians are to meet on this day fifty-two weeks a year, with equal emphasis. The Bible has nothing to say about Father's day, Mother's day, Easter day, Prayer Sunday, or any of the other special days set up by men. Every Sunday is "the Lord's day." When Christians meet on the first day of the week, the same emphasis ought to be given to commemorate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The reason for the observance of the Lord's supper is to commemorate the death of Christ for our sins (I Corinthians 11:20-30). One Lord's day should not be put above another.

From the way the world sets up special

Sundays for special observances, it appears they are trying to take the day away from the Lord and give it to mothers, fathers, grandparents, etc. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Galatians 4:10-11). We are to honor our parents, and to have due respect for all our brethren, old and young (Ephesians 6:1-3; I Timothy 5:1-3). However, our respect for them is not to supercede our properly worshiping God through Jesus Christ on the Lord's day. Jesus said, "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. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37-38).

Jesus' church must meet on the first day of the week, observe the Lord's supper in remembrance of him, and give of our means to carry on his work. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24). "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

—Jay Church of Christ, P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

The Modern Preacher

The modern preacher is a strange creature, indeed! He wants people to think that he is strong and courageous; but, in fact, he is a moral and religious coward. He boasts of his love for the Lord and for humanity; but his actions prove him to be a false teacher (Galatians 1:6-10).



W. A. Holley

These modern preachers keep their ears to the ground, learn what people want to hear, then

preach to please the majority. They can preach the gospel (?) "either round or flat!" This accounts for different messages being preached in different denominational churches by different preachers (Jeremiah 5:30-31; 23:26-32).

In New Testament times all gospel preachers preached the same message. Peter did not preach one gospel to his group, and Paul another. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).

Denominationalism to the contrary notwithstanding, there are no brands of the gospel! All New Testament preachers and teachers

taught the same truth in its purity and simplicity. Their teaching did not result in the establishment and the perpetuation of different denominational churches (I Peter 4:11; Revelation 22:18-19).

The Bible teaches that we should not believe every preacher or teacher who happens to come along (I John 4:1ff). The honest soul should listen to the preacher and then read God's word to see if the preacher's teaching is correct (Acts 17:11). Apollos was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures," but he knew not the truth (Acts 18:24-28). Fortunately, Aquila and Priscilla recognized his error, "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Thus, thousands of preachers need to be taught the truth of God now! Just because a man is a highly-respected, well-educated preacher, it does not necessarily mean that he knows the truth of the gospel.

Neither does the fact that denominational preachers are in the majority, and are very popular, make them right in the sight of God Almighty. In II Chronicles 18:4-34 we have a striking situation presented: 400 prophets are wrong, while only ONE is right before God. The only safe way to measure preachers is by whether or not they "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2; Acts 17:11; I Peter 4:11). One cannot preach the word unless he preaches the word!!

How does the modern preacher present himself? Well, he talks about how the Lord came to him, how the Lord gave him a special message, how the Lord laid a message on his heart, how the Lord gives him continuous revelation, et al. According to the modern preacher the Holy Scriptures are not sufficient -- there must be the direct influence of the Spirit upon his heart, in addition to what the Bible says. In fact, the modern preacher gives lip-service to the Bible, but demands further miracles to support his claims.

Many of these preachers have never read the Bible through, from Genesis to Revelation. These fellows may not own a copy of the Bible (they really do not need it, according to their contention)! One young man about to graduate from the Divinity School of Harvard University, said to a fellow student: "They are assigning work in the Bible, and I guess I'd better go out and buy one. I never owned one." How can a preacher preach the Bible if he does not know it??

Continued On Page 4

An Epistle To A Beginning Preacher

Continued From Page 1

elders, preachers can be tempted by Satan in this area (I Timothy 3:6). A good preacher is a humble man. He is humbled by the vastness of the field of knowledge he is working in. The more a preacher learns, the more aware he is of what is left to be mastered. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Nothing is more obnoxious and pitiful than a proud, arrogant preacher strutting about, thinking that he has acquired ultimate knowledge -- when God and the brethren know how limited he truly is! A faithful man will walk humbly with his God (Micah 6:8).

Time fails to discuss every point, but perhaps these thoughts will be of some little help to you in your new service. If ever I can help on any matter related to your work, please feel free to call or write me.

May God bless and keep you and guide you in his service.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

“What Shall I Do With Jesus”

(NO. 1)

“Pilate saith unto them, what shall I do them, What shall I do is called Christ? They all say unto him, let him be crucified” (Matthew 27:22).

Jesus had been brought before the judgment bar of Pilate. After learning he was innocent, Pilate desired to release him, but he feared a mob of angry Jews who demanded the death sentence. The judge was greatly troubled, and in his perplexity he asked, “What shall I do with Jesus?”

Jesus has been brought before the judgment bar of numerous people. After learning of the beauty of his life, some have desired to do him honor; but some have been greatly disturbed by personal problems. In their perplexity they have been asking the Pilate's question, “What shall I do with Jesus?” To this momentous question various answers have been given.



W. Edwin Kearley

“I'll sell him” was the reply of greed. “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him” (Matthew 26:14-16). Jesus had prayed in the garden of Gethsemane and talked to eleven of the apostles. “And while he yet spake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him” (Matthew 26:47-49).

Judas betrayed the Master for the legal price of a slave. When he sold Jesus to the Jews, he sold himself to Satan. Jesus is the truth: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life . . .” (John 14:6). When we sell the truth, we sell Jesus.

“I'll deny him,” was the answer of fear. Peter was warming himself by the devil's fire. One of the high priest's maids said to him, “And thou also wast with Jesus of

Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by. This is one of them. And he denied again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom you speak. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept” (Mark 14:66-72).

Peter was a victim of evil environment. He was too weak for hostile company. When we deny Jesus' doctrine, or his church, we deny Jesus. Peter warned, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (II Peter 2:1). The one who denies Jesus and refuses to repent will be denied by Jesus (II Timothy 2:12).

103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

The Modern Preacher

Continued From Page 3

Such men are blind leaders of the blind (Matthew 15:13-14). Many are ignorant of the Bible! They may know philosophy; they know a little about psychology; they may know some history, and some science; but modern preachers do not MAJOR in BIBLE study!!

Many highly educated preachers who do not really believe the Bible are now filling the pulpits of some of the most prestigious churches in the United States. What are the marks of their infidelity?

These preachers may accept those parts of the Bible that agree with their theology, but reject the parts with which they disagree -- as for example, the Lord's plan of salvation

(Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38); the Lord's plan of worship (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; John 4:23-24); the deity of Christ, his virgin birth, his miracles, his resurrection, his vicarious death.

Modern religious dogmas are now being proclaimed by these modern preachers -- namely, salvation by grace only; salvation by faith only; salvation in answer to prayer (Ephesians 2:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:21).

Furthermore, these same preachers contend that the church of Christ is a non-essential (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians

1:18, 23-24); that baptism as commanded by Jesus has nothing to do with man's salvation (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47); that one church is just as good as another; that one should join the church of one's choice; et al.

We humbly suggest that neither Jesus, nor Paul, nor Peter, nor any other apostolic preacher ever preached what the modern preacher now holds so dear.

Dear Readers, if you know where the Bible mentions those things now being preached by the modern preacher, will you please send the Bible references to me.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Visit

Judy Epperson

God gave us time to work;
he gave us time to play.
There's time for us to visit,
as we go from day to day.

But we say I'm busy,
I have so much to do;
I really plan one day
to come and visit you.

Life goes so swiftly on!
We rush from day to day
And never make the visit
that we plan to pay.

Days fall into years;
family ties that bind
are like a ball of yarn
that begins to unwind.

We think about our kin—
ones we love so true;
But what happens to the day,
“I'll come and visit you”.

“Oh! I'll do that tomorrow!
Today — there's work to do!
I've got a lot of chores!
my hours are very few!”

Tomorrow comes and goes;
That visit we don't make.
We're so selfish with our time;
One hour we will not take.

Now time is gone forever.
God makes a somber call.
Gone our time for visits--
No more time at all!

Then we cry in grief,
for we know it's too late.
We made a silent visit:
Our loved one God did take.

—Rt. 1 Box 243, Bear Creek, AL 35543.

East Tennessee Graduates Eight

On July 13, 1986, eight men successfully completed two years of intensive Bible training at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, Knoxville, Tennessee. This brings to 120 the total number of graduates since the inception of the school in 1971. These eight men are all already located with congregations in Alabama, Louisiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Edwin Jones, former missionary to New

Zealand who has recently joined the ETSOPM faculty, was the speaker for the occasion. The 1985-86 school year saw a record enrollment in ETSOPM. Another record enrollment is anticipated for the fall quarter of the 1986-87 school year.

Rod Rutherford, Dean of Students
East Tennessee School
of Preaching and Missions
6608 Beaver Ridge Road
Knoxville, TN 37931



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

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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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NUMBER 41

How To Lead A Rebellion

Few names in the Old Testament are more associated with hypocrisy and deceit than the name of Absalom, David's son. He is perhaps most notorious for the rebellion he led against his own father in an effort to usurp the throne. Were it not for the providence of God, along with the counsel of Hushai, Absalom would have succeeded.



Bob Duncan

Why did Absalom so nearly succeed in taking away the throne of his father? Because, like most of those who take it upon themselves to lead a rebellion, he knew the steps he would need to take; and, with a conscience already numbed by his years of wickedness, he put into operation his devious plan.

He obtained a position of respect by feigning loyalty to the king. In II Kings 14:33 we are told that he "bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed" him. If David had just known how insincere Absalom was in pretending to honor him, he might have prevented the rebellion's gaining the momentum it gained. But Absalom had won David's confidence and a position which would enhance his chances of leading a successful rebellion. Why shouldn't the people listen to him and take his advice? After all, he was the king's son; and whatever he said or did must have had the approval of the king.

He undermined the king, and created unhappiness in the kingdom. He would position himself beside the gate of the city, and when the subjects of the king came to see the king about a matter, he would intercept them, and tell them the king was not giving them equitable treatment. People who had been heretofore happy and blessed to serve

under David now became unhappy. They were convinced they were not getting what they needed. They are now, through Absalom's undermining deception, ripe for the plucking.

He pretended to be unselfish, and that he really cared about others. Instead of allowing people to bow down to him, as would ordinarily be the case with the son of the king, he would pull them to him and kiss them. In this manner he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (II Samuel 15:5-6). But as we continue to read about him, it becomes quite obvious that all this was done to win the confidence of the people so that his own selfish ends must be served. He had taken advantage of the position he occupied to destroy confidence in his father and to cause the people to be willing to do whatever he later asked them to do. So it is with those who lead rebellions.

He let the people know that things would be much better if he were in charge. By telling them how they were being neglected, he had created within the people unhappiness and unrest. He now says: "Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" (II Samuel 15:4). To hear Absalom tell it, David was doing a very poor job as king, but he himself was a man of superior knowledge and ability. Furthermore, he was one who really loved the people and wanted to help them -- so he would have them believe! By his handsome appearance (II Samuel 14:25), and his magnetic personality, he convinced the people they should follow him instead of his father, David.

He privately boasted to the people of what he planned to do. "But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron" (II Samuel 15:10). He boasted of what he planned to do, and confidently let the people know that they could put their confidence in him to carry out his plan. Those who lead rebellions must be confident, else people will not follow them. Absalom knew in

order to succeed, he must be boastful of what he was going to do.

Despite the fact Absalom had done all these things to insure the success of his rebellion, it is somewhat surprising that the people followed him. Had they forgotten he was alienated from the king so long a time because of his wickedness? Had they forgotten he lied to his father? and had murdered his own brother?

It appeared that Absalom's bid for the throne would be successful. David fled, and Absalom took over the castle. Just the small matter now remained of destroying David and his army. But God was still in charge! When the battle was over, Absalom was dead, and his army was defeated.

When we are on God's side, we do not have to fear those who would destroy us. God is still in charge.

—4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

No Radio, No TV, No Newspaper, Nothing

DAN JENKINS

I knew there was something special about him from the first time I met him. You only had to be around him a short time to see just how much Christ had touched his life. He was more than seventy years old, yet every day he was at the church building working as the janitor to keep it clean. I never asked him to do anything but what he readily responded, and the task was not only done, it was done well.

He and I would often talk, and his interest in spiritual things was so keen, that is what he wanted to talk most about. There was always a Bible question, a Bible comment, or conversation about how the scriptures applied to our lives. He would not hear of

Continued on page 4



Words Of Truth

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"Waiting To Die"

We were in Aukland several years ago when a man told me something I will never forget. A dear friend and I were knocking on doors, seeking people who would be interested in studying the Bible. An elderly man opened the door and listened to us as we began to tell him about our concern for him and his family. He clearly told us he was not interested, saying, "My family is all raised and gone. My wife and I are old. We are just waiting to die."

I have thought of this many many times since then. It is difficult to imagine coming to the end of life, and having nothing to live for.

Some think the Bible teaches we are only to endure life. Life, they think, is just what we "put up with" to get to heaven. This teaching is not biblical. Although we are clearly taught this world is not our home, we are taught we are to enjoy life. It is true we are only strangers and pilgrims; yet we are to find here a life that is full and abundant (John 10:10; I Peter 2:11).

Our Father has richly blessed us with good things that make our life on earth meaningful and worthwhile. Tragically, only those who stop "living" find meaning to life. I read once of a government agency who gave money to repair the houses of those in poverty. They visited an elderly lady whose house was about to fall down. They asked her, "What would you do if the government granted you \$5,000?" She replied, "I guess I would give it to the poor." When we stop thinking of others, we stop living, and start "wait-



Ancil Jenkins

The term "oncers" aptly describes those who only attend only one service a week—the Sunday morning service. Some engage in much false reasoning and rationalizing to justify (?) their not attending Sunday night and Wednesday night services. According to Jesus, those who do such put themselves in a bad class. He said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts" (Luke 16:15).

What is wrong with being a "oncer"?

I. "ONCERS" FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLY. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Correct exposition will not allow "the first day of the week" to be read into this passage. "But what was 'the day approaching'?" you may ask. Some say the judgment day (Clarke), and others the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation (Milligan and others). To read "the first day of the week" into this passage is rank eisegesis (reading into a passage what is not there). Thus the saints are to assemble **WHENEVER** it is appointed for them to assemble. Some elders will schedule Sunday evening services and Wednesday night services, but will not attend themselves. How much more inconsistent can you get than that?

II. "ONCERS" FAIL TO OBEY JESUS' teaching. "And Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matthew 5:41). Roman citizens were required by law to assist a courier for one mile in carrying out the demands of the government. Do you think

"Oncers"



W. Douglass Harris

Jesus was only teaching his disciples a lesson in Roman law? Would you bet your soul that he was? You would lose it if you did! Jesus was teaching his disciples that, rather than retaliate against the government, they should go beyond the required one mile, and GO TWO! No one, then, can be a true disciple of the Lord and be satisfied with a minimum of service, but must strive for the maximum—he goes beyond the call of duty. He implies that those who do only what is required will not be accepted as his when he comes. If not, why not?

III. "ONCERS" ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty do to" (Luke 17:10). What happens to unprofitable servants? Jesus says they will cast into outer darkness (Matthew 25:30). All the rationalizing one can muster will not explain this passage away. Coleman Overby says, "The servant was not hired to do so much, but the Master had a right to all of his time. . . The servant can never say that what is required is done." "To be a faithful servant, one must put the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33)" (W Gaddys Roy). "Jesus said, 'Even so ye also,' and means the case is similar to the matter of our service to God" (John T. Hinds). We have done the Lord no favors having done "that which was our duty to do" —**WE ARE STILL UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.**

IV. "ONCERS" FALL TO PUT THE KINGDOM FIRST. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). How can any professing Christian claim that attending one service a week is giving the church top priority in his life? And the echo comes ringing back, **HOW?**

Conclusion: There is the matter of love involved here. If one loves the Lord and his people more than anything or anybody else, why would he not want to be with the Lord and his people on Sunday and Wednesday nights? (Matthew 18:20).

Jerry Clower To Speak At Benefit Dinner

Country humorist KAT WATSON and Grand Ole Opry Star JERRY CLOWER will speak at Faulkner University's 31st Annual Benefit Dinner at 7 p.m. October 31 in the Montgomery Civic Center.

Holding the title of "Country Comic of the Year" by the major Country Music trade and fan publications for nine consecutive years. Clower co-hosted the nationally-syndicated TV show "Nashville On the Road" and wrote two top-selling books, "Ain't God Good!" and "Let the Hammer Down." The comedian is one of the leading album sellers for MCA Records, with 12 hit LP's. He currently appears in radio and TV commercials for Dodge Trucks and Vans, the Lil' General Stores, and Sutherland Lumber Company.

The program will also feature entertainment by school groups, and a state of the university address by Chairman of the Board Jimmy Faulkner.

For the past 31 years the Annual Benefit Dinner program has been one of the most popular events sponsored by the School.

Dinner tickets are \$125 per couple and \$600 for a table of eight. For more information call (205) 272-5820, ext. 189; or write the Development Office, Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL, 36193-4601.

Proceeds from the Faulkner University Benefit Dinner will be applied toward funding institutional scholarships for students who could not otherwise attend the university.

“The Human Animal:” A Timely Review

Mr. Phil Donahue presented on television a five-part series entitled **The Human Animal**. It is sad that such a false one-sided view of man and marriage is presented to prime-time viewers on a national network.

Donahue's view of man as just an animal is an indication that he accepts the theory of organic evolution. However, it should be noted that man is not just a mere animal. Man was created by God, and created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). This sets man apart from the animal creation.

It is true also that man, having been made in the image of God, is a free moral agent -- that is, he has the ability to make decisions between good and evil. Man also has been given a conscience. This part of man sits as a judge over his actions -- approving him in the good he does, but condemning him when he does what he has classified as wrong. These two characteristics are not possessed by the animal kingdom.

Although man has a body made from dust, he has a spirit that came from God (Genesis 2:7; Hebrews 12:9). This means that man, although similar in some respects to animals, has a capacity to reach up to the heavens -- to worship a Being greater than himself. This sets him apart from the animal creation. Man is a human being, not an “animal.”

If man were just an animal (as some tell us), then there would be no difference between killing a dog or a man. Human life would then cease to be sacred or precious. The very fact that God specified that those who murder

“Waiting To Die”

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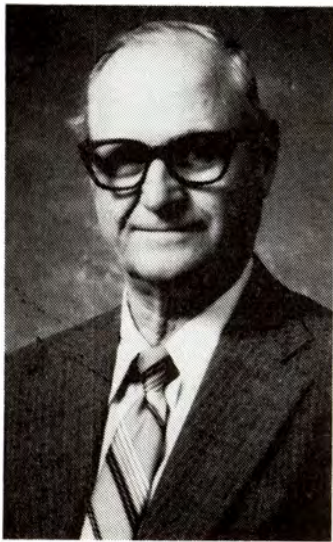
ing to die.”

There is another reason why this man who was “waiting to die,” was miserable: he had no goals. He was retired; his children were grown. He had nothing to look forward to. I recently read some advice Ted Turner, the media tycoon, received from his father. He told him to set his goals for life high. --In fact, he said to set them so high that he could probably never reach them. This meant he would always be working for something.

This is so true for the Christian. Yet, our ultimate goal is not of this world. Paul said, “If ye then were raised with Christ, seek the things that are above . . . not on things that are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2). Life is not so meaningful because we REACH our goals, but because of the benefits we get from striving to reach them.

This life is meaningful because we are trying to reach our heavenly goal. This adds much meaning to life! We are therefore unable to just give up, and “wait to die.” Let us learn from the one who said, “I'm going to live until I die and I am not going to confuse living and dying.”

—8445 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143.



Kyle McWhorter

their fellow man forfeit their right to live (Genesis 9:6), suggests to one that God intended to impress upon mankind the preciousness of human life. The animals that God created were placed here on the earth as helpers for man, with some of them to be slaughtered by man for his consumption (I Timothy 4:4-5). Yes, it is true that man may be “related” to the animal kingdom in that he has a physical body; yet he is very different in that he is made in the image of his Creator. He is, therefore, not just an animal, as Mr. Donahue says.

Mr. Donahue further made the statement that men have always treated women as either Madonnas or prostitutes. He then showed several shots of Madonna statues, and interviewed several prostitutes on his program. Yet, he never did interview any of the millions of happily married women who are loyal and faithful wives. This indicates the one-sided nature of his program. One is made to wonder why Mr. Donahue chose not to do so. Do you think that it might indicate that Donahue himself is really biased in his attitude toward women? and that he really looks upon all women as either Madonnas or prostitutes?

It may be true that some men either look upon women as objects of worship, or prostitutes. However, it is the belief of this scribe that the majority of the men in this

nation look upon their wives and/or woman-kind as God intended: that is, they neither worship them nor consign them to moral degradation. Such men love their wives as the Lord commanded (Ephesians 5:25-27), and remain throughout their lifetime loyal and faithful husbands. These men recognize marriage as a partnership where spiritual values and life in general are shared equally.

Mr. Donahue also implied that since most animals do not mate for life, it is foolish for one to think that such is essential for the happiness and well-being of mankind. He also implied that monogamous marriages were something of recent origin. However, he overlooks the fact that at the very beginning God pronounced a blessing upon marriage as a life-long contract between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:18-24). The only reasons for which marriage ties may be severed scripturally with the right to marry another, are either the death of one's spouse, or the spouse's adultery (Matthew 19:3-9).

It is true that some people may act like animals, and minimize the importance of fidelity in monogamous marriage as a lifetime relationship. However, those who would please God must know better. Man, therefore, should recognize marriage as monogamous in nature, and that it has been such “from the beginning of the creation” (Mark 10:6-9); this is NOT something of recent origin.

—Rt. 2 Box 150, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

Fundamentals To Our Young

“We are always only one generation away from apostasy in the Lord's church” is a point well-taken! Deuteronomy 6:12 warns, “Beware lest thou forget the Lord . . .” The principle is that if we fail to teach our children the truth of God's word, in only one generation ignorance will devastate the Lord's church. It's true; and I think we all accept that fact intellectually.



Ronnie A. Missildine

But have we accepted that in practice? what efforts are we making to be sure that our children grow up understanding and believing the fundamentals of the faith? Deuteronomy 11:18-21 says, “Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, AND THE DAYS OF YOUR CHILDREN, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.”

Are we even concentrating on the fundamentals? do our teenagers understand the real

reason we can't use an instrument in our worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)? or, do they think we just don't like the sound? do they have the same idea that most religious people have -- that one church is just as good as another? or have we carefully taught them the biblical concept of the one church (Ephesians 4:4)? and the only way? do we teach them the sins involved in the drinking of alcohol? taking illegal drugs? (Even some public school students are doing that now! We never should have stopped teaching them, if we have). Do they know why sexual activities outside of marriage are wrong, although many of their friends are participating in them?

I have raised several questions; and there is a reason: I hope to prompt all of you who are truly interested in the soundness of God's church in the future, to be sure that we do not neglect the fundamental teaching of God's word. In asserting this great need, the Psalmist says of the commands of God, “We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Psalms 78:4-7). Most youth forums, teenage devotionals, etc., have in recent years concentrated on every-day living; and by all means that

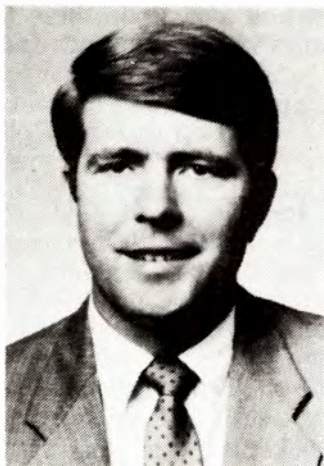
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How To Develop A Better Attitude

Webster defines "attitude" as "one's disposition." Other words as "mental state; emotion; mood; and opinion" are used by him to define "attitude." Our attitude is our most important quality. The attitude we have determines what kind of person we are.

Every person should desire to have a good attitude. A good attitude is essential for a proper relationship at home, work, school --and, yes, in the church. Our attitude affects every aspect of our lives. Here are five suggestions that I hope will help all of us develop a better attitude.

1. **THINK POSITIVE.** Most people who have bad attitudes are very negative people. There is always something wrong, never anything



Ken Tyler

right. Individuals who fit into this category are usually very unhappy, and are hard to get along with. A better attitude begins with being a positive, optimistic person. Don't allow yourself to become so negative that you cannot function as a child of God.

2. **LEARN TO COPE WITH FAILURE.** This is one of the most difficult aspects of life. We all fail, both spiritually, and in our day-to-day activities. How we handle failure will determine what kind of life we have. Both David (II Samuel 11) and Peter (Matthew 26:69-75) failed miserably; but neither allowed it to destroy them. Judas, on the other hand, went out and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5). Remember, you never completely fail until you quit trying.

3. **KEEP BUSY DOING THINGS FOR OTHERS.** It is very difficult to have a bad attitude if you give your life to others. Truly, " . . . It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Individuals who fill their lives doing for others are the most happy people on the face of this earth. Remember, Jesus " . . . went about doing good . . . "

(Acts 10:38).

4. **DON'T LET SICKNESS, SUFFERING AND DEATH CAUSE YOU TO BECOME BITTER.** It would do us all good to read Job 1 and 2 often. Unfortunately, sickness and death are a part of this life (Hebrews 9:27). Only a deep abiding faith in God will see us through. May we never forget that our eternal abode, heaven, is a place free from sickness, suffering and death (Revelation 21:4).

5. **PRAY CONSTANTLY THAT YOUR ATTITUDE MAY BE RIGHT.** God can help all of us to have a better attitude. The question is: --do we want to change? Are we satisfied with a bad attitude and a miserable life? If we want the right kind of attitude, God will help us get it. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

It is my prayer that these five suggestions will help you and me develop a better attitude. Many people will be in hell because they had a terrible attitude. May we not let it happen to us.

—P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

Give No Opportunity To The Devil

It is unusual for man to do an outstanding job of something he undertakes for the first time. And, when such an exception occurs, all are ready to say, "Beginner's luck." How different has been the success of Satan's efforts!

His very first experience in temptation met with tremendous success (Genesis 3). Though that effort brought a curse that has remained upon him until this day (verse 15), he hasn't slowed down. The evil and sadness he has brought seem but encouragement to him to bring more.

His trail of destruction is endless. He left Noah in a drunken stupor, Abraham a liar and a coward, Job childless and penniless, David an adulterer and murderer, Peter a liar, and Judas a betrayer and suicide. How has he left YOU?

Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians (4:27), "Neither gave place to the devil" should be carefully considered by us.

How does one "give place" (opportunity) to the devil? Perhaps, the more simple explanation is this: when one puts himself in circumstances, places, relationships, or conditions favorable for opportunities or advantages for Satan, he is actually handing him an engraved invitation.

His purpose is to destroy souls. He is "seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). His craftiness is such that many approaches have the appearance of good. He transforms himself into an "angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14). He has his angels, apostles, and ministers (Matthew 25:41; I Corinthians 11:13, 15).

With such a task force at his command, and the successful tactics he employs, how



Edsel Burleson

much greater care must be taken by us to avoid the "wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

The "whole armour of God" is the greatest possible weapon, offensively and defensively, we can possibly have. Study his word regularly, diligently, and reverently that you

may be so equipped (Ephesians 6:11-17).

The devil never overlooks a single opportunity to tempt a soul. But God has not left us defenseless! "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

—420 7th St., S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Fundamentals To Our Young

Continued from page 3

is needed. But in the process, let us not forget the fundamentals.

The strength of the present body of Christ and the very existence of the church in the future will indeed depend on how we meet this challenge. The church's young people are a valuable asset. DON'T

NEGLECT THE FUNDAMENTALS! "That they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."!!

—Warrington church of Christ, P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507-0171.

No Radio, No TV, No Newspaper, Nothing

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retirement, for, as he said, "My whole life is wrapped up in the church."

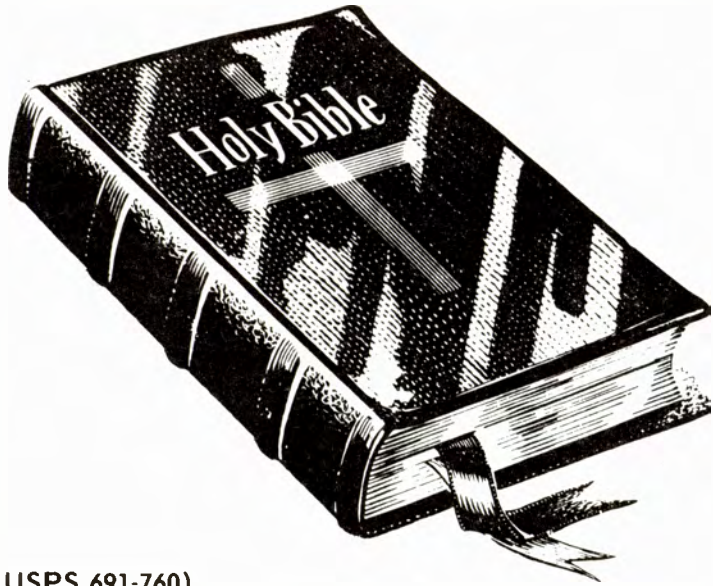
And then just a few days ago I gained new insight into the source of his strength. I'll never forget his words. "More than thirty years ago I made a rule which I have lived by every day. Because the word of God is so important, I simply won't do anything secular until I have spent time with his word. Sometimes things that are really pressing come up; and I may only have a few minutes to spend before I get started. But I still live by this rule: --If no Bible, then no radio, no TV, no newspaper, nothing! "Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalms 119:97).

Think how this simple decision has transformed the life of one man! Just think of how the SAME decision would transform your

life!

—125 Dory Road South, N. Palm Beach, FL 33408.

**Be Sure And
Attend
Church
Sunday!**



Words Of i

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

—Acts 26:25

(USPS 691-760)

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1986

NUMBER 42

Caution: Please Read Before Using

Some medicines and toxic chemicals are so potent and so likely to cause harm to the user that warnings are posted stating the possible danger and giving advise as to correct use. A wise consumer will carefully read this information before using.

A push is currently underway to explore the possibilities of fellowship between our brethren and those of the Independent Christian Churches. The eager reception of this proposal by some of our brethren prompts the following suggestions.



John Waddey

MATTERS THAT DIVIDED US

Our relationship with the Christian Churches can only be understood in light of the history of the 'Restoration Movement' for the last 130 years. The conflict which resulted in division was not some silly disagreement over unimportant trivia, as some are suggesting. Rather the conflict centered on serious fundamental matters, such as:

1. Do we have the right to tamper with, and add to, the divinely-ordained plan of worship?
2. Is the Bible to be our exclusive guide in matters of faith? or, are we free to impose our opinions and ideas of expediency over the plainly-stated word of God?
3. Have we the right to alter the biblical plan of church government? Can we form organizations to do the work of evangelizing the world and make the local congregation subject to them?
4. Is the role of a preacher that of the "pastor" of the congregation?
5. Should people be received into the fellowship of God's church who have not been properly immersed after the New Testament order?

6. Is the Bible the inspired, inerrant word of God? or, is it the product of the human religious emotions of the ancient Hebrews -- thus uninspired and imperfect?

7. Is the 'restored' church of which we are part simply another denomination, such as the Baptist and Methodist churches?

These are the issues that Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, and Austin McGary confronted in the last half of the 19th century.

It was not OUR brethren who forced changes and innovations upon the church, offending the consciences of fellow Christians. WE did not (by the imposition of our opinions on the divine worship) drive brethren out of meeting houses they had built.

KNOW WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

Before elders and preachers participate in "Unity Meetings" with folk of the Christian Churches, they owe it to themselves and their congregations to read the history of this awful schism. A fair and impartial record of those years is recorded in Earl West's *Search for the Ancient Order*, Vols. I & II. The first volume will tell the reader about the noble quest of great men of God for truth in a world of error and sectarian confusion. The story of the toil, labor, and sacrifice of those early pioneers will humble us as we realize the price paid for the ground we now occupy by inheritance. Volume two informs the student of the subtle change and erosion of faith that paved the way for the creation of the Missionary Society and the use of instrumental music in worship. The reader will thrill at the courage and conviction of faithful men who stood firmly against the tide of digression. He will weep at the wounds inflicted on the precious body of Christ by uncaring men whose personal ambition and desire for power led them to push their opinions to the point of division. With an accurate knowledge of this sad chapter of our history, he will then be cautious of all invitations to "shake hands and forget the past problems." Other volumes which will help to inform us of our past problems are *Attitudes and Consequences of the Restoration Movement* by Homer Hailey;

and *Christians Only*, by James DeForrest Murch. Murch was associated with the Independent Christian Churches and spearheaded Unity Movements of the past.

RISKS INVOLVED

Among the possible dangers inherent in any move to enter into fellowship with Christian Churches are the following:

1. **Compromise.** We are charged to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 27). Would men be tempted to hold back needed teaching on such vital questions as the sin of instrumental music in worship, etc., for the sake of unity?

2. **Opening our doors to men of unsound faith.** There is a sound doctrine that God wants taught and maintained (Titus 2:1). If these efforts toward increased fellowship are successful, would it result in our having men teaching in our pulpits and classrooms who are of unsound faith?

3. **Absorption of error.** Would our extension of fellowship under the present circumstances result in the absorption of error into the membership of our congregations? Beliefs are learned both by instruction and example. If you count as a faithful brother the man who worships with an instrument of music, will not your brethren reason that they could be "faithful" and do the same?

4. **Loss of identity.** If we acknowledge these people as our brethren in good standing, could it lead to a loss of identity among our own people? Ancient Israel was forbidden to intermarry with the Canaanites. When they ignored God, and did so, they were slowly swallowed up by the heathen system. Why, too, should a Christian Church preacher leave that body and come into our fellowship if his own group is acceptable as they presently are?

5. **Apostasy.** Could such a move be the first step down the road to apostasy on our part? The Disciples of Christ denomination did not get into their present apostate condition overnight. It took 125 years for them to reach their denominational status from which the

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 26:35

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A Call For The King's Best Men

To win the victory over our infamous enemy, the King calls for volunteers. The recruits must be of a rare breed, as outlined below. They must be absolutely loyal to King Immanuel. Their will must be surrendered totally to his; they must become his bond - servants (Romans 1:1).

They must pledge their unwavering commitment to his ideology. The words of Jesus are the only power to save (Romans 1:16). He alone has the answers to the world's needs (John 6:68).

They must be willing to undertake the rigors of training in the camp of the Kingdom, under the guidance of veteran warriors (II Timothy 2:2; Matthew 28:20).

They must be willing to deny themselves (Matthew 16:24), and dedicate their lives wholly to this holy war, not becoming entangled in the affairs of this world (II Timothy 2:3-5).

These men cannot be mercenaries. They must be personally committed to the Cause (I Timothy 6:5).

All recruits must be prepared to accept front-line duty. No soft, behind-the-lines posts are available. Literally, thousands of beachhead invasions must be mounted (Romans 15:20).

Volunteers must be ready to spend and be spent for the King and his Kingdom (II Corinthians 12:15).

They must be willing to die at their post of duty if called upon to do so (II Timothy 4:6-7).

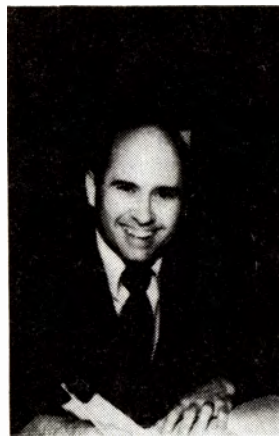


John Waddey

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Back To The Basics

There comes a time when a business or institution must get back to basics. Such a need occurs when leaders lose sight of the original intent and purpose of their organization. Should this condition -- a departure from its goals-- prevail for long, it can end in disaster. Many a company, cause, or institution has floundered when the distinctive reasons for their existence have been forgotten. The Lord's church is no exception.



John Waddey

When ministers of the gospel think the church of Christ is a sect, and that denominational disciples are true Christians, we need to get back to the basics. When they will no longer speak against instrumental music in worship, and other common religious errors, we need to get back to the basics. The watered-down and undirected preaching that prevails in numerous quarters tells us we must get back to the basics. The loss of evangelistic zeal, the shrinking numbers of conversions, dying churches, and declining missionary emphasis tell us we must get back to the basics.

Churches of Christ in America desperately need to get back to the basics of preaching and practicing New Testament Christianity.

We must remember our basic reason for existence --i.e., seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10), by preaching the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

Preachers must get back to the basics in preaching the inspired word (II Timothy 4:2); in declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27); in teaching those great truths of sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:10); in reproofing and rebuking sin (II Timothy 4:27).

Elders must get back to the basics in shepherding and feeding all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made them bishops (Acts 20:28). With the uncertain sounds being heard in our pulpits, elders must exercise a closer supervision of the preaching so that only things which befit sound doctrine are allowed to be taught (Titus 2:1).

We must get back to the basics in our congregational Bible schools. When our youngsters can spend 17 years in our classrooms and emerge with the current low level of Bible knowledge and understanding, brethren, we must get back to the basics! Like our public schools, we have somehow failed to get the job done. We must get back to the fundamental facts of Bible instruction. Let us exchange literature written by denominational hands for that written by faithful brethren. Only those who are sound in faith, and who are godly in life and practice should be asked to teach. Only those should teach who are willing to invest the time and energy in preparation to give their students a meaningful lesson. Even without frills and fancies, eternal truth can be taught, as was basic education in the one-room school house. Dedication, and commitment to the basics, are the essential ingredients.

We must get back to the basic doctrinal fact that Christ built only one church (Matthew 16:18); that denominational division is sinful and displeasing to God (I Corinthians

1:10; 3:1-3). If your congregation is a sect, then you should shut it down, ask God's forgiveness, and seek out a true family of Christians! If we are only a denomination, no man should leave anything to become a member of our brotherhood. To do so -- if we are a sect-- would make him two-fold more a son of hell (Matthew 23:15).

We must get back to the basics in our teaching on worship. Brethren desperately need instruction on why we commune weekly; why we use unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, and do so as a simple memorial and not a eucharistic sacrifice (Matthew 26:26-29). They need teaching on why we sing unto God rather than use instrumental music. They must understand it is a matter of faith, and not opinion (Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 13:15). They need to be reminded why we worship on the first day of the week rather than the Sabbath (Acts 20:7). We desperately need indoctrination on how one becomes a Christian; just who is a Christian; what constitutes faithful discipleship (Revelation 2:10).

Those who train tomorrow's preachers must get back to the basics. Today's problems are flowing from the pulpits of our churches. The preachers who are preaching with uncertain sounds are generally products of our colleges, graduate schools, and schools of preaching. If a factory produces a faulty product, wise management will review their procedures to find the problem. I plead with brethren in these schools to go back to the drawing board. Let us revamp our programs so that we are once again producing men of God who are Bible-believing, Bible-preaching evangelists. We need men who know what they believe and have the courage to boldly preach that distinctive New Testament message (Ephesians 6:19). The "gospel" according to Schuler (!) is destroying the Lord's church here in America!! We need strong doses of the gospel of JESUS to save us (Romans 1:16)!

Brethren, look around you. The cause of Christ is suffering throughout the land. A progressive deterioration is evident. Something must be done, and that quickly -- lest we suffer major loss. Let us get back to the basics! Let us start today! May God give us the wisdom and determination to do what must be done!

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN
37931-9599.

Correction

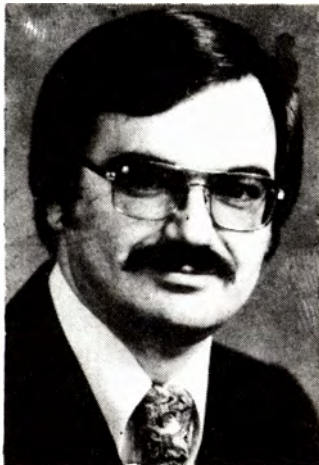
Words of Truth last week "October 10, 1986" announce the Benefit Dinner for Franklin University. The article was written by Kat Watson, but her name was inadvertently printed in the first sentence rather than under the title. The 1st paragraph should read:

By Kat Watson

Country humorist and Grand O'le Opry Star JERRY CLOWER will speak at Faulkner University's 31st Annual Benefit Dinner at 7 p.m. October 31 in the Montgomery Civic Center.

"Here I Raise My Ebenezer"

We must always be careful what we sing as we worship God, remembering that we are **worshipping**. Singing in worship is not for entertainment, but according to the command of God. Paul taught, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). If we sing words that are unscriptural, or that we do not mean, our worship is vain.



Bob Prichard

The phrase, "Here I raise my Ebenezer," is the beginning of the second verse of the familiar hymn, "O Thou Fount of Every Blessing." This hymn, written by Robert Robinson, stresses the joy of Christianity and the Christian's need to rely on the Lord. Robinson chose the phrase, "Here I raise my Ebenezer" from I Samuel 7:12.

I Samuel chapters 4 through 7 describe the battles between the Israelites and the Philistines. In an attempt to defeat the Philistines, the Israelites had taken the ark of the covenant into battle, as a sort of "good luck charm." The Philistines captured the ark, which greatly distressed the Israelites. It also resulted in the Lord's sending plagues upon the Philistines, and toppling the Philistine idol Dagon. The Philistines finally sent the ark back; but they continued to fight the Israelites.

More battles were fought, as the great prophet Samuel served as the last judge of Israel. Samuel offered sacrifices to God, and when the Philistines approached, God "thundered with a great thunder" (I Samuel 7:10). In the confusion that followed, the Philistines were soundly defeated. As a reminder of the Lord's care for the Israelites, Samuel took a large stone, and raised it as a memorial "between Mizpeh and Shen." As he raised the stone, Samuel gave it the name, "Ebenezer," which means "stone of help," and said: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (I Samuel 7:12).

Thus, when we sing "Here I raise my Ebenezer," we are quoting Samuel, who raised the Ebenezer stone to remind the Israelites of God's help for them in their time of trouble. The words fit well into the sentiment expressed in the familiar hymn.

"O Thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me ever to adore Thee;
may I still Thy goodness prove,
While the hope of endless glory
fills my heart with joy and love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer:
hither by thy help I've come."

The hymn recognizes God as the "fount of every blessing" who deserves our worship and praise. Although the words, "Here I raise my Ebenezer," sound obscure to us, they do express the thankful attitude we should have toward God, who definitely is our "help" in time of trouble.

—P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

A Call For The King's Best Men

Continued From Page 2

Duty assignments may be anywhere in the habitable world. Only those who are committed to this world-wide mission are acceptable (Romans 1:14-15).

Other qualifications are:

They must be Bible believing, Bible respecting men (Hebrews 11:6).

They must be Bible knowing, Bible preaching men (II Timothy 4:2).

They must be set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:16).

They must be men who will never think of abandoning their post of duty (Revelation 2:10).

They must preach with power, but be willing to go out to the highways and hedges to bring in the lost by twos and threes.

They must be men whose goals are more than a comfortable pulpit behind the lines.

They must be men of courage and zeal who will challenge the devil in his own lair and set the captives free.

All men who feel they can meet these high requirements are encouraged to enlist today. There is no time to waste. The battle is raging throughout this earth. King Jesus needs you now.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Rain Or Shine - We Go To...??

Several years ago, Jim Bill McInteer wrote this amusing but most appropriate article to prompt a careful inventory by each of us.

It was 7 a.m. As it did habitually, the alarm sounded, calling Sue and John from their slumber. With customary stumbling, John wove his way to the window to peek through and assess what kind of day it was -- for after all, weather is such a determinate factor.

"Why, it snowed!" he shouted.

"Then go back to bed -- there's probably a sheet of ice under it, everything will be locked in today" said Sue as she rolled over for that longer snooze.

But, she was to be surprised!

"That's just the way with you women -- you think a little snow and ice ought to stop the wheels of progress -- we've got to have a tough generation or we'll amount to nothing!" John snorted.

"But, honey, I --"

"Don't but me! That paper better be out front when I go to get it. That's what I pay the paper boy that profit of twenty-five cents a week for anyhow. He's got to learn to go, heat or snow, makes a man out of him."

"But, John, all I said was --"

"Listen Sue, that office better be ready for me when I get there. It's part of the custodian's job. And if that policeman isn't on the corner, I'm going to call the Mayor -- it's my tax money he's wasting. Tell you what else, too: --that waitress better be in the coffee



Edsel Burleson

shop, ready to serve me, or I'll take my ninety-seven cent breakfast somewhere else! We can't stop the routine of living just because it snowed. America's got to learn character." "But John -- you don't go to the office; it's Sunday!"

After an embarrassing silence, softly heard was -- "Move over Sue, only an idiot would be out on a day like this!"

(Is Sunday, to you, a day of unimportant things? Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). — E.B.)

—420 7th St., S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.

Don't Corrupt God's Word

The apostle Paul said in II Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God . . ." From this verse we see that there were many people in Paul's day who were corrupting the word of God. I wonder what he would say today if he lived in America, which is filled with religious division evidenced by over 1,000 churches? With the passing of centuries and the growth in population, the departure from God's word has increased more and more. I am amazed



Ken Tyler

Continued On Page 4

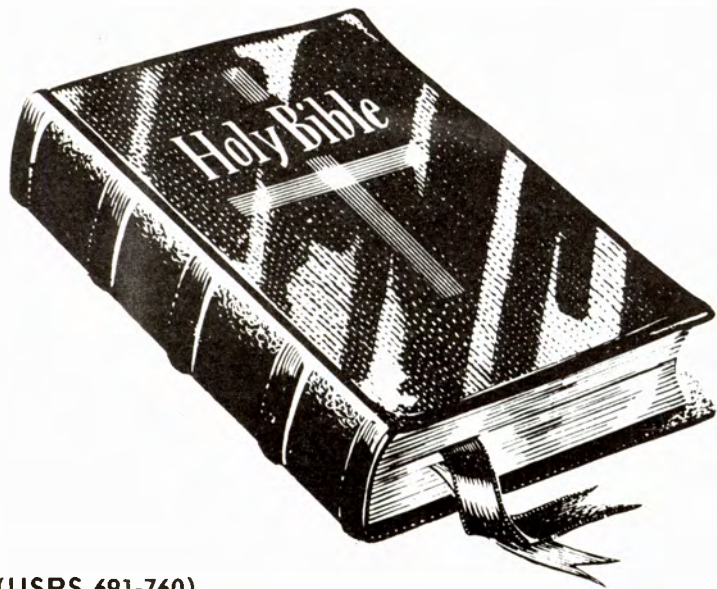
Caution: Please Read Before Using

Continued From Page 1

fathers struggled to escape. Some of their leading preachers took the first step down that road in 1849 when they created a Missionary Society. Yet another step was taken in 1859 when a musical instrument was introduced. Is this our first step? A misdirection is easily corrected early on; it is almost impossible further on down the road.

The ancient Greeks advised that above all, 'man must know himself.' Surely before we consider realignment with the Christian Churches we should 'know' our history, lest we repeat the tragic mistakes of a past generation. If there is danger in the bottle, please read carefully before using!

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 43

"Looking Unto Jesus"

To encourage Christians to accept the chastening of the Lord, the writer of Hebrews borrows exhortations from the Messianic prophet: "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Hebrews 12:11-13; Isaiah 35:3; Job 4:3-4).



R. W. Gray

While they had not "resisted unto blood" in their struggle against sin, the Hebrews were nevertheless inclined to look elsewhere for spiritual comfort when difficulties were thrust upon them (Hebrews 12:4). There was a constant need "to provoke unto love and good works," to "hold fast the profession of faith without wavering" (Hebrews 10:23-24).

Isaiah's metaphors of listless hands, feeble knees, or lame runners describe as well many who make up the "kingdom that cannot be moved" in our time (Hebrews 12:28). Many are looking back, turning back, abandoning the race, and selling their birthright as members of the church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:16, 23).

This halting, vacillating, tentative faith stems from a powerful influence exerted by the wicked world in which we live. As in a former time, we, too, are surrounded by lawlessness. And because iniquity abounds the love of many has "waxed cold" (Matthew 24:12). Others cease the fight, abandon the race, and forsake the faith through discouragement growing out of internal divisions and strife, and from the observance of others who have drifted away from all things we

have heard (Hebrews 2:1-2).

First century Christians required constant reminders, persistent exhortations, and frequent assemblies for edification (Hebrews 3:12; 10:24-25). They were in constant danger of missing the "rest" that awaits the faithful, of falling, after the example of a former generation, into unbelief (Hebrews 4:5, 9-11).

The answer set out by the inspired writer, then, is the pressing need of OUR day. If they were to receive the prize, preserve their birthright, and enter into their rest, there was need again to "consider the Apostle and High Priest" of their profession, Christ Jesus (Hebrews 3:1). By him the worlds were made, and by him are all things upheld. When he by himself purged our sins, a place at God's right hand was his by inheritance. In that exalted position he has a name better than that of the angels. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of his kingdom. Through him alone God speaks to a world that has lost its way (Hebrews 1:1-8; John 14:6). By him we are privileged to enter into the holiest, to draw near unto God with full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22). As members of his household we may boldly approach God's throne with petitions that will fall upon sympathetic ears (Hebrews 4:15-16; 10:21).

To abandon Christ and his house is to surrender all hope. We must keep in constant view the former days, in which we were first "illuminated," remembering that in heaven we have a better and enduring substance (Hebrews 10:19-22). As members of his household we may boldly approach God's throne with petitions that will fall upon sympathetic ears (Hebrews 4:15-16; 10:21).

To abandon Christ and his house is to surrender all hope. We must keep in constant view the former days, in which we were first "illuminated," remembering that in heaven we have a better and enduring substance (Hebrews 10:32, 34) It is still the case that

there is no other sacrifice for sins. There is no other approach to God that is approved. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). To be justified we must continue in the faith as men and women of faith. We must not find ourselves among those who draw back unto perdition. May we be found among those who "believe unto the saving of their souls" (Hebrews 10:38-39).

How glorious the thought that we have truly arrived at mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where we are in a great company of angels, having come to "God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." It lies beyond our power to comprehend the importance of hearing him who speaks from heaven's vantage point as King of kings (Hebrews 12:22-25). May we keep our eyes upon Jesus, knowing we have received a kingdom that cannot be moved, and that "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:12, 28-29).

Many of our present ills are the result of our attention being diverted to other things. Having minimized through neglect the glory of the cross God erected upon Golgotha's summit, we have lost power in our preaching; and in our own lives we have not the hope of salvation and immortality. Too much emphasis has been placed upon hearing men -- albeit faithful men; and too little emphasis placed upon a thorough search for freedom and truth to be found in Christ. The cloud of witnesses that have gone before provide great inspiration; but our real hope resides in the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews chapter 11; 12:1-4).

—Rt. 3, Box 306, Bremen, GA 30110.



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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Be Not Deceived

In Galatians 6:6-10, the apostle Paul admonishes the Galatian brethren to sow to the spirit and not to the flesh. In verse 6, Paul instructs them to support their teachers. In verse 7, Paul stresses that a person reaps what he sows. In verses 8-10, he encourages them to be faithful in sowing that which is good. In connection with the fact that one



Harold Bingham

reaps what he sows, the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul issues the command: "Be not deceived." Let us notice some things relative to the thought of being "deceived."

1. The definition of the word "deceived." "Deceived" is the translation of the Greek "planao," which simply means "to lead astray; to lead into error." The passive would indicate "to be led astray; to be led into error." In Matthew 24:4-5, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Paul records, ". . . and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).

2. The possibility of being deceived. The command issued in Galatians 6:7 forcefully teaches the possibility of an individual's being deceived. In the Old Testament, several examples can be cited: (1) The serpent deceived Eve (Genesis 3); (2) Rebekah and Jacob in their joint effort to deceive Isaac (Genesis 27); (3) Joseph's brothers deceived their father (Genesis 37). Thus, the Bible teaches the great possibility of being deceived.

3. By whom we be deceived? One may be deceived and led astray by others. Christ sounds the warning against false prophets when he stated, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but

Warnings Issued In The Bible

The names of Cain, Lot's wife and Uzzah all remind us of warnings issued from God. They came as a result of their disobedience to God. Paul stated, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

A look at Cain warns that we are to do all things according to God's commands (Genesis 4:5, 7; Romans 10:17). Lot's wife warns that we, who have been redeemed through obeying the gospel (Romans 1:16; I Peter 1:18-19), must not look back to the world of sin (Luke 9:62; 17:32). Uzzah presents the serious lesson that God means what he says (II Samuel 6:1-7). Through these characters God delivered vital lessons all need to learn!

However, let us study some warnings that are sent forth from three other characters in the Old Testament. Their lives echo the following warning to all men: "Respect the blessed word of Jehovah."

Friends, let us note some warnings sounded forth by Noah, King Saul, and Nadab and Abihu.

1. Noah issues the warning "DO NOT ADD TO GOD'S WORD." Old Noah, a man who is listed in the "Bible Hall of Faith" (Hebrews 11), was given the command: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14). This just and upright man (verse 9) was given the exact pattern to build this ark of safety (verses 14-16). How did Noah fare in his service to God's command? The Bible answers: "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (verse 22). When God commanded Noah to construct an ark of gopher wood, had he made the framework of gopher wood, and then braced it with hickory, he would have been in violation of God's law! He would have been guilty of adding to the heavenly Father's word! Men today would do well to study Noah. For example, those who use mechanical instruments of music in worship are adding to God's word. The Bible teaches that we are to offer sing from the heart to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:17). John, the beloved apostle, through inspiration penned this caution: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18). Yes, Noah sounds aloud the message: "LEAVE GOD'S WORD ALONE"!

2. King Saul issues a great warning against subtracting from God's word. The king of Israel (I Samuel 15:1) was given the command: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not: but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (verse 3). King Saul was told to "utterly destroy" everything! However, the divine account reads: "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile



Howell Bigham

and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" (verse 9). By sparing Agag and these things, Saul fell short of obeying God! He took away from God's command to "utterly destroy" everything! Samuel, the aged prophet, rebuked king Saul, saying: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (verse 22). Therefore Saul, through his rebellion and rejection of God's command, demonstrates the stern warning: "DO NOT TAKE AWAY FROM GOD'S COMMANDS"!

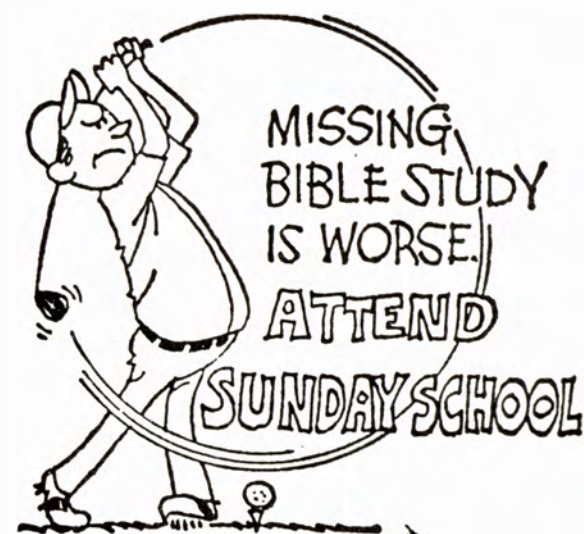
In what areas can men today be guilty, as was Saul, of subtracting from Jehovah's law? Some take away from God's word in the area of the Lord's supper. Instead of partaking of this memorial upon the first day of each week (Acts 20:7) some partake of it quarterly, or only once, or twice, a year! Those who are guilty of doing such have a "woe" pronounced upon them! John states "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 22:19)!

3. Nadab and Abihu illustrate God's warning against substitution. These sons of Aaron "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1). Nadab and Abihu, rather than performing their duty as was commanded (verse 10), substituted "strange fire" which God did not command. Their disobedience was rewarded by death! "There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (verse 2).

Some today are "akin" to these rebellious sons of Aaron! Some substitute sprinkling and pouring for immersion. The Bible nowhere teaches sprinkling and pouring for baptism! However, being buried in baptism with our Lord is authorized and commanded (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 10:48)!

Friend, Noah, king Saul, and Nadab and Abihu all teach that we are to have respect for God's word. They warn that we are not to: (1) add to; (2) subtract from; nor (3) substitute for God's eternal word. Truly, these great warnings issue from the Bible (I Corinthians 10:6). May we ever remember them!

—1412 Parsons Avenue, Sheffield, AL 35660.



Teach Them To Say "No!"

It is encouraging to see that President Reagan and the First Lady along with other prominent figures are leading the attack against drug abuse in our great nation. The priority theme of this attack is to teach people to simply say, "No!" That is the solution! If we can only teach people to "Say 'No' to Drugs," then the drug war will be over, the victory falling to the side of goodness.



Jerri Manasco

What is so remarkable about all this, however, is the fact that for years gospel preachers have been trying to persuade people that the best way to avoid any kind of moral or spiritual disaster is to simply say, "NO." Is it not remarkable that this approach to evil, just now being adopted by our authorities and "experts," is suddenly thought to be unique!?!? The word "no" is the only sure thing that will stop sin in its tracks.

It may surprise many people to read this, but godly people have ALWAYS been aware that the best way to answer temptation is a simple, yet firm, negative. The young man Joseph, Jacob's teenage son, was conscious of this "unique" way out of Satan's clutches. When Potiphar's wife "cast her eyes upon Joseph" (lust), and invited him to commit adultery with her, Joseph "REFUSED" and exclaimed, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and SIN AGAINST GOD?" (Genesis 39:7-9). Not one to be so easily rejected by the youth, the woman persisted "day by day" in her pursuit of Joseph. But Joseph

"hearkenèd not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her" (verse 10). When she would have forcibly insisted on his compliance with her lust, Joseph "fled, and got him out" (verse 12).

Young people today might learn from this episode that it is always right to refuse sin. Joseph preserved his purity and maintained his integrity by his wise actions. Youth today can do the same. Young ladies will reinforce their self respect and earn a virtuous name by simply refusing the deceptions of any 'fresh' young man, no matter how prominent he may be in high school sports, nor how well liked he may be in the school. A shining virtue is much superior to a moment's dark passion.

Vashti, the wife of a pagan king, refused the orders of her husband to present herself to be viewed by the leering eyes of her husband's drunken party-guests. When the king commanded her to appear before his provincial princes and governors, "Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment" (Esther 1:12). The king in his anger and foolish resentment deposed her from her royal place. Modern "situationists" might argue that Vashti gave up much too great a position simply by refusing this one simple thing. To this we would ask: What husband in his right mind (the king was drunk!) would subject his wife to such ungodly display? Beside that, it is clear that royal privilege can be so easily stripped away. But Vashti retained what REALLY mattered: she still had her modesty, integrity and virtue!

Can you imagine that a woman of Vashti's frame of mind would pose for a nude magazine under the guise of "art"? Why is it that young ladies -- and older ones -- display their bodies in public with revealing garments, and yet profess to be Sunday school teachers? and Christian women? The fact is: If our

homes would lay stress upon the power of the simple word "NO," there would be much less of this moral cowardice! We praise Vashti for her decency!

The noble Three Hebrews, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, receive our fullest commendation for their refusal to participate in sin. The faith of these men would do a world of good in our day, when it seems that the only answer to religious error is to compromise with it -- lest we "hurt someone's feelings!" King Nebuchadnezzar had commanded that upon hearing the signal for worship, all those under his rule must bow down to the golden image he had set up. Anyone who failed to comply would be cast into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3:6). The king's "rage and fury" was unleashed against the notable Three Hebrews for their failure to obey his order. The royal rebuke was met with a simple answer: "... WE WILL NOT serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:18). What an answer! How thrilling that these men gave an answer that no one could misunderstand! Like the apostles in later centuries, the Three Hebrews knew that we must "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). How different from today when we are treated to the notion that the way to win souls and heal breaches among brethren is to compromise in love -- in order to spare feelings! The best thing is to say: "NO, we will not compromise truth for the sake of false unity" (Galatians 2:1-5).

The word "no" will go a long way in earning a good name for oneself. "Just one drink" (to please the boss!), or "just one" shady joke (to impress one's co-workers) is JUST ONE TOO MANY! The moral courage to say "NO" will keep our moral and spiritual fabric whole. —Whitehouse Church of Christ, Rt. 2 Box 513, Haleyville, AL 35565.

The Times Of Our Lives

Guy F. Hester

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

In the above text the apostle gives the formula for a successful and happy life: LIVE IN THE PRESENT, FORGET THE PAST AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE.

Life has three important chapters: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. The attitude that we have toward each of these will to a great extent determine our welfare here and eternal welfare in the world to come.

THE PAST

Life's first chapter is the PAST. What a great storehouse of memories we have of the past, both happy and sad. Memory is such a useful tool for successful living. It is so good to occasionally reminisce, and in our memories re-live some of the good times of our past. Sometimes we may want to spend some time with some of our SAD memories; and even this can be good for us, if we remember soon to put them back where they belong, and go back to living in the present. But there are some things about the past that we are not to remember, if we would be happy and successful. Paul said, "Forgetting those

things which are behind" (Philippians 3:13). We should forget the mistakes of the past. When we have done all that we can to correct our mistakes, we should bury them in the sea of forgetfulness. That is what God does: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). There is no sin so great but that the blood of Jesus will

wash it away, if forgiveness is sought in the right order. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). After we have properly sought the Lord's forgiveness, we must be willing to forgive ourselves, put the past where it belongs, and live in the present.

Continued On Page 4

Be Not Deceived

Continued From Page 2

inwardly they are ravaging wolves" (Matthew 7:15). John echoed, "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).

One may also be deceived by his own self. He may be greatly influenced by his own opinions, feelings, and his own prejudices. He may have already made up his mind as to what he is searching for, and may refuse to listen to the authority of the Scriptures.

4. **The time of deception.** One is deceived when he thinks: (1) That morality alone will save. --Examine Cornelius (Acts 10); (2) That the unrighteous will go to heaven. --Examine I Corinthians 6:9; (3) That one can "mock" Jehovah and be saved. --Examine Galatians 6:7; (4) That he can sow one thing and reap

another. --Examine Galatians 6:7, 8; (5) That he can be saved while disregarding the plan of salvation. --Examine the Scriptures on hearing, believing, repenting, confessing Christ's name, and being baptized for the remission of sins.

5. **How can we avoid being deceived?** We must always study the scriptures regularly, whether those things are so (Acts 17:11). We must study the scriptures carefully, prayerfully, and constantly. We must rightly divide the scriptures (II Timothy 2:15).

Paul encouraged the Galatians to "be not deceived." Let us never be deceived by the wiles of the devil, but always be sober-minded and alert so that we may "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12).

—P.O. Box 7233, Jackson, MS 39212.

“Quid Pro Quo”

Raymond Allen Hagood

The watchwords of politics have always been encapsulated in three Latin words: “quid pro quo” -- “something for something,” or, “one thing in return for another.” So it has always been that in the word of politics one learns to trade favors. One GIVES only if one GETS; and one GETS only if one GIVES. The atmosphere of “quid pro quo” is always one of selfishness. It precludes giving on any basis other than one of illiberality.

One can little doubt that the prevailing view of the majority of the world is one of “quid pro quo,” the attitude of “something for something,” never “something for nothing.” Even the television preachers use this plea. They say, “Send your love offering and God will return it to you fourfold.” Oral Roberts calls his “quid pro quo” philosophy “Seed Faith.”

Since this is the prevailing view of the world concerning these matters, is it the case that such should be the view of Christians? Should Christians embrace the “quid pro quo” philosophy? or is there another way of thinking for those who wear Christ's name? Only the Bible can answer this question correctly.

There are several passages which deal with this theme, but we shall consider only one in this article. “Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12-14).

The Lord's teaching here is unavoidable. When we prepare a meal or a feast, instead of calling someone who can ‘pay us back’ with a

meal (like our kinfolk, friends, or some rich people), call those who do not have the means to repay our generosity. Call the poor, the blind, the unfortunate who are just simply unable to reciprocate. It is true that there is a reward involved, but this reward is heavenly, not earthly.

B. W. Johnson said in the *People's New Testament With Notes*: “To give dinners for the sake of earthly reward is worldly; to feed the needy is heavenly, and will be rewarded in heaven.”

It should be obvious from this passage that the philosophy of “quid pro quo,” as it applies to Christian service, is wrong. If Christians do things only for some earthly advantage or “pay-back,” they violate the law of Christ.

If we do anything in Christian service because we see in that service some earthly benefit and this selfish desire is our motive for such service, we have sinned.

If a man preaches for personal, earthly “glory,” he sins. If a man serves as an elder in order to have some kind of earthly “power,” he profanes God's will. If someone gives money, time, or talents on the basis of “quid pro quo,” he transgresses both the spirit and the letter of God's law.

Let all Christians learn to give and to serve for the right reasons; and those right reasons do not include the philosophy of “quid pro quo.”

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The Times Of Our Lives

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THE PRESENT

The second chapter in our lives is the PRESENT. There are things that we must do TODAY, if they are ever to be done. Today we must choose whom we will serve (Joshua 24:15). Today we must be workers for the Lord (John 9:4). Today we must exhort and encourage one another in Christian living (Hebrews 8:13). We must plan for the future but live as though today were our last; it may be! (James 4:13, 14).

We must set our priorities in order and learn to put first things first. We have time enough to do all the things that God requires of us, but that time is NOW! “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2). The Lord has promised us NOW, but nothing beyond!

THE FUTURE

The final chapter of our life is the FUTURE. While the PRESENT always remains the same, the PAST is continually getting

longer, and the FUTURE is getting shorter. We need to plan well for the future. Time is running out for us all. Paul said, “reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The best preparation we can make for the future, is to do the best we can today. We need to learn to live one day at a time. The one who is not a Christian should see in the approach of death the need to penitently confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Matthew 10:32, 33; Acts 2:38). Being a Christian makes for a better life now, and eternal life in the world to come. When this life is over eternity will have only begun!

Live in the PRESENT, forget the PAST, and look to the FUTURE. Do the very best that we can day by day, and trust in the Lord to take care of the rest (Matthew 6:33).

—P.O. Box 501, Hanceville, AL 35077.

I Believe In The Holy Spirit

Earl West

Since that day (May 30, 1935,) when Hugo McCord baptized me into Christ, I have believed in the Holy Spirit.

Although by me the Spirit was not unknown before, it was scarcely possible for me to have been baptized “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19-20), and be ignorant of the Spirit.

Between 80 and 90 times the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the New Testament. Here, the divine Spirit is far more prominent than in the Old Testament. Here, too, Jesus gave the Spirit to the apostles to guide them “into all truth,” and bring to their remembrance “all” they had heard from their Master (John 14:26; 16:13). When the Spirit was poured out upon them on Pentecost, this ushered in the age of the Spirit's work. The “Acts of the Apostles” might well be called the “Acts of the Holy Spirit,” for it is a record of the Spirit's work in redeeming men from sin.

From Acts one learns of the Spirit's preaching through inspired men. Yet, significantly the Spirit does not call attention to himself -- but to Christ! It is Christ (Acts 8:5, 12, 35) who is the subject of preaching (I Corinthians 2:1-5; 15:1-4). It is Christ who is the Savior (Ephesians 1:7). It is Jesus' blood which was shed (Matthew 26:28). It is Christ who became the head of the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). It is Christ after

whom the early disciples were named (Acts 11:26; Ephesians 3:14; I Peter 4:14).

The Spirit's mission was obviously to draw attention to Christ, to make him the central Person in human redemption. The early disciples were not named “Spiritualists” to honor the Holy Spirit; they “were called Christians” (Acts 11:26), to honor Christ. Even though God spoke in the past thru the Spirit in the prophets (Nehemiah 9:30), God speaks in modern times thru the Son (Hebrews 1:1-3).

With the emphasis the modern denominational world has given to the Holy Spirit, in their concept the divine Spirit has virtually pushed Christ into the background. The Roman Catholic Church did this at the close of the Middle Ages with the Virgin Mary; and today, Christ, in Catholicism, is secondary to Mary.

It was necessary for the Holy Spirit to speak through the apostles in the work of saving men from sin. Jesus did not give the Spirit to men in sin. He said: “. . . whom the world cannot receive” (John 14:17). The Spirit cannot come and live in hearts full of sin and rebellion. The human heart must be cleansed from sin before God's Spirit can dwell there.

Consequently, when sinners had heard the word of God, believed it, and repented of their sins, been baptized for the remission of sin,

then could they be given the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32). Being cleansed and purified, they had hearts that the Spirit could inhabit.

That the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of Christians is scarcely deniable. Those who do not have the Spirit are none of his (Romans 8:8-9). By this Spirit's indwelling, the Christian can call God, “Abba Father” (Romans 8:15). To the Christian the Holy Spirit is an “earnest of his inheritance” (Ephesians 1:13-14), a down payment of that eternal inheritance that awaits him in the final day.

It is fallacy to imagine that the presence of the Holy Spirit provides for miracles. John the Baptist had the Holy Spirit, but he did not work miracles (John 10:41). His mother, Elizabeth, had the Holy Spirit, as did his father, Zacharias; and neither of them performed miracles.

Let all disciples of Christ preach Christ, imitate him in their daily walk, call themselves by his name, and pray through him to the heavenly Father. This is what the Holy Spirit in the divine word taught Jesus' disciples to do. They follow the Holy Spirit best who leave the Holy Spirit in the background, and make CHRIST central in their religion.

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Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

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Believing The Premillennial Lie

Thinking Bible students are amazed at the wild speculations of the various teachers of premillennialism who seem to dominate the religious book market, the journals of most conservative denominations, and the religious broadcast media. Almost weekly some new discovery is announced -- "the man of sin" has been identified, "Armageddon" is just around the corner, the "mark of the beast" has been spotted, the state of "Israel" is ready to fulfill Bible prophecy. The date of Christ's return has been repeatedly set -- and then abandoned! The absurdity of this religious game-playing would be humorous were it not for the precious souls being led astray by its false teachers.



John Waddey

A few clearly stated Biblical facts forever refute this ancient heresy. God is omnipotent. Therefore the Jewish nation could not thwart his plan to establish his kingdom in the days of the Roman kings (Daniel 2:44). Christ established his kingdom, and first-century saints were citizens in it (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9). Christ now reigns on David's throne in heaven (Revelation 3:7; Acts 2:29-33). No one knows the date of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36). When he does return, there will be one general resurrection of the good and the evil (John 5:28-29). These and many other plainly-stated Scriptural truths destroy once and for all the foundations of this false system.

Why is Premillennialism So Popular?

The burden of this lesson is to try to understand why this anti-Scriptural teaching is so

widely received. It is startling to observe that it is the cause celebre of most of the evangelical churches. Generally speaking, the Lutherans, the conservative Presbyterians, and Churches of Christ are free from its taint. Most other bodies are infested to some degree.

The following are reasons which help to explain why this strange, contradictory teaching has such an attraction and hold on people's minds.

A. Paul writes of people who believe a lie, "Because they receive not the love of the truth . . . but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). Those who have had much experience in trying to teach people who hold this view have observed this amazing lack of interest in those plain, simple truths of God that would nullify the millennial heresy. Jesus spoke of a kind of person who seeing, saw not; and hearing, understood not: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart . . ." (Matthew 13:14-15).

B. Some folk are attracted to the bizarre and incredible. The more unbelievable the proposition, the more eagerly they rush to embrace and then cling to it. We see this spirit demonstrated in the huge crowds lined up to view the freak shows at the fair, and the masses that pay their money to see movies based upon the occult, the ghoulish, and the impossible. Perhaps the human race is not so far removed from the primitive superstitions of yesterday, with witches, ghosts, and apparitions of demons. Premillennialism abounds with spicy fruits for the superstitious souls.

C. Premillennialism appears to answer questions of the unknown future. Men have always had an insatiable desire to know what lies beyond the curtain of tomorrow. With its pre-

dictions of the date of Christ's return and the end of the world, it attracts these date-seekers, even as does astrology its disciples.

D. There are people who relish the thought that they have discovered a mystery that others have not found. This (in their proud minds) elevates them, and makes them superior. The infamous gnostics of the early Christian centuries suffered from a similar illusion. Thus false pride, a superior attitude, is at least one of the many causes. It will not take many encounters with such teachers to see this elitist attitude demonstrated. Paul warns against being lifted up with pride lest we "fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:6).

E. Some folk are prone to be naive and gullible in religion. They do not like to expend the mental energy required to THINK for themselves. They reason: "Let the preacher do the studying, and then explain it to me." Thus they are like baby birds that trustingly open wide their mouths to whatever the mother bird brings them. Such people need to take heed to all those verses that stress individual responsibility for one's faith. Study to show yourself approved unto God, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). The Bereans were commended because they "searched the scriptures daily" to see if the teaching were true (Acts 17:11). In judgment each one of us will give account of himself before God (Romans 14:12).

F. Some people believe this lie because they have been told that they are supposed to believe it in order to be faithful. They have the "sheep" complex: they blindly follow their leaders. They should remember that the 'Judas goat' leads the flock into the slaughter pens. God never intended for his people to be blind followers of blind teachers. He warned us that both will fall into the pit (Matthew 15:14). John admonishes us: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits,

Continued On Page 4



Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
—Acts 26:35

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"Oncers"

The term "oncers" describes those who attend only the Sunday morning services. It is an apt description. Some engage in much false reasoning and rationalizing to justify (?) their not attending Sunday night and Wednesday night services. According to Jesus, those who do such, put themselves in a bad class. He said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts" (Luke 16:15).



W. Douglass Harris

What is wrong with being a "oncer"?

I. "ONCERS" FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLY. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Correct exposition will not allow "the first day of the week" to be read into this passage. "But what was 'the day approaching'?" you may ask. Some say the judgment day (Clarke); and others, the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation (Milligan and others). To read "the first day of the week" into this passage is rank **EISEGESIS** (reading into a passage what is not there.) Thus the saints are to assemble **WHENEVER** it is appointed for them to assemble. Some elders will schedule Sunday evening services and Wednesday night services, but will not attend themselves. How much more inconsistent can you get than that?

II. "ONCERS" FAIL TO OBEY JESUS' TEACHING. "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matthew 5:41). Roman citizens were re-

Handling Snakes And Drinking Poison

Occasionally we see or read interesting news stories about the snake handling services of the Holiness Church of God in Jesus' Name. While such fascinating reading about our Appalachian culture, it leaves a distorted image of the true Christian religion.

The promise about taking up serpents (Mark 16:18) was never intended to be a program for a worship service. A careful reading of Mark 16:9-20 shows the correct context and meaning of these strange words.

1. The eleven surviving apostles "disbelieved" the witnesses who told them they had seen Christ after he was raised from the dead (Mark 16:9-12).

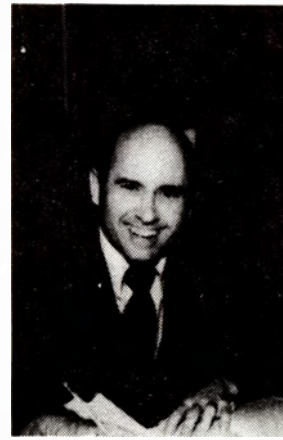
2. Jesus appeared to the apostles and "upbraided them for their unbelief . . ." (verse 14).

3. He charged them (the apostles) to "go preach the gospel to every creature . . ." (verse 15).

4. He promised them (the apostles) that certain miraculous signs would accompany them if they believed (verse 17).

5. Those gifts included casting out demons, speaking with new tongues, taking up serpents, immunity to deadly poisons, and the ability to heal the sick (verses 17-18).

6. They (the apostles) went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the "signs



John Waddey

that followed" (verse 20).

Thus the signs were intended to put God's divine stamp of approval on the teaching and work of the apostles. But to enjoy this divine confirmation, they must fully believe in the resurrected Lord.

It is important to realize that they did not have the written New Testament of Christ to which they could appeal for authority; thus Jesus confirmed their preaching with miracles (Hebrews 2:3-4). Today we have the recorded and confirmed word of God (the written New Testament). All questions of faith are resolved by an appeal to it. We need no miracles.

It is noteworthy that there is no record of "snake handling services" in the Scriptures. No one had to thus demonstrate his faith. Only once do we read of anyone's picking up a snake, and that was an accident when the apostle Paul was gathering firewood (Acts 28:3-6). Travellers in Asia frequently see Hindu devotees handling snakes in the fashion of our Pentecostal neighbors. They need no miracle to do so.

We credit these folk with being the only consistent practitioners (?) of the Pentecostal system of religion which claims to have the supernatural gifts of the apostolic age. Others make the claim, but studiously avoid the snakes and poison. In view of the frequent deaths from these services I do not fault: those who avoid the risk -- I only ask: "Where is your faith?"

However, the modern snake-handlers in no way are fulfilling the teaching of Mark 16:9-20. Christianity is reasonable. "Faith" is not foolishness!

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Sin — The Great Separator

The word "sin" is one of the shorter words in the English vocabulary. However this small, three-letter word describes that which has the most devastating effect upon man -- separation from his Maker. Isaiah, the city prophet, stated: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).



Howell Bigham

Man first separated himself from God in the garden of Eden. Adam hearkened unto the voice of his wife Eve (Genesis 3:17), and partook of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17), thereby transgressing the law of God (I John 3:4). From a study of the scriptures, one will find man to be a free moral agent. Man has the ability to choose who he wants to serve: Satan and sin, or God and righteousness (Joshua 24:15).

Paul, the fighter of the faith, taught that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of

God" (Romans 3:23). He further stated that we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies (Romans 6:12). Therefore, even though all men have chosen to transgress the law of God, we must not let sin rule, reign, or be king of our lives!

Sin is indeed the great separator! However, may we always realize that God "so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son" (John 3:16) to shed his blood as the "lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). It is the blood of Christ that reconciles man to God (Hebrews 2:17; II Colossians 5:18). Just as sin is the great separator, the blood of Christ is the great reconciler: ". . . when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10)! Indeed, those pleasing to the Creator "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

Friend, have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb?

—1412 Parsons Avenue, Sheffield, AL 35660.

Are One's Feelings Evidence Of Salvation?

W. A. Holley

The Lord God Almighty has a law of pardon. God is always ready to pardon all sinners who will yield to his will (Nehemiah 9:17; Isaiah 55:7).

For one to be "pardoned" is equal to his being saved (Mark 16:16). When one's sins have been remitted, he has been pardoned (Acts 2:36-38). Those who have heard, believed, and have obeyed Christ have been pardoned (Hebrews 5:8-9; Acts 3:19; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Feelings can be deceptive. Nadab and Abihu may have "felt" like they were doing the right thing when they "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-2). Moses might have "felt" justified in smiting the rock, but his rashness cost him his entrance into Canaan (Numbers 20:7-13; Psalms 106:32-33).

Pardon is an executive act. It takes place in heaven, in the mind of God -- not in the heart of man. A man cannot know he is pardoned by the way he feels. Have you heard it said, "I know I am saved because I feel like I am saved." Where is the proof? One can prove (?) any thing by subjective feelings. Such subjective feelings nullify the teaching of the word of God, and make every man "right in his own eyes." (Cf. Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The Hindu, the Buddhist, the Shintoist, the Atheist, et al., set aside God's holy word and claim they are right because they "feel" they are right (Mark 7:6-13; II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5).

Again, we state: Pardon is an executive act. Just suppose that a man in prison demands to be released because he "feels" like he has been pardoned. Do you suppose he would be released? Not at all! Why? Because pardon takes place in the mind of the Governor, and not in the mind of the prisoner. The prisoner cannot "feel" the Governor pardon him. Similarly, forgiveness of sin (on the conditions set forth in holy scripture) takes place in the mind of God. The sinner cannot "feel" God pardon

him (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Who wants to purchase a gallon of gasoline, or a yard of cloth, or a pound of bacon, on the basis that the merchant "feels" like he is giving the correct measure?? Do we not have correct standards of measurement? Thirty-six inches equal one yard; four quarts equal one gallon; 5,280 feet equal one mile; sixteen ounces equal one pound. We care little about how the merchant "feels;" we want and demand correct measurements. These formulas are explicit, specific, definite, and categorical.

God's word is God's rule (II Corinthians 10:13, 15; Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:16). Mankind, before the Judge of all the earth, in the Great Judgment to come, will be judged by the word of God (John 12:47-48; Revelation 20:11-15) -- not by "feelings"! Of this conclusion we can be sure.

One can know that one has heard, believed and obeyed the truth. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Notice, the Spirit bears witness "with," not "to," our spirit. What does Romans 8:16 mean? The

Holy Spirit, through his word, as revealed in the New Testament, has given testimony as to what one must do to become a child of God; and our spirit testifies that we have done those things. Thus the two witnesses "bear witness" together, that we are the children of God. How can one know that he is a child of God? In answer, we quote: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4).

If the sinner will but do his part -- believe, repent, confess Jesus' name, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins -- (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4) -- the sinner can rest assured that God Almighty will not fail to do his part in saving him (Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21; Titus 2:11-12). God always keep his promises; he "cannot lie" (Hebrews 6:18-19).

Trust in God to keep his word; but do not trust in your own heart, for, to do so is to become a "fool" in the sight of God (Cf. Proverbs 3:5; 28:26).

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Some Things

You Will Not Find In Psalms

David Courington

One man was heard to say, "I spend time reading my Bible every day, and I always read from Psalms." Surely the Psalms are a source of great comfort and encouragement to all who will read them. There is much to be learned from the Psalms that can make us better, more God-like people. Paul said of all the Old Testament writings: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written

for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). There is indeed comfort, patience, and hope found in the Psalms.

However, there are some things that one needs to know, which cannot be found in the Psalms. One cannot read about the life of Christ there. One can see some things predicted about him, but not a record of Jesus' life. One can read this in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Peter said in I Peter 2:21 that "... Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." One needs to study his example.

How one is converted is not found in the Psalms. Acts, the book of conversions and the beginning of the church, is the place one may learn this. One today is saved like the people on Pentecost in Acts 2 who were told to repent and be baptized. What began in Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-49) in for "all nations," and "every creature" (Mark 16:16) -- like the Samaritans (Acts 8), the jailor in Acts 16, and other cases of conversion in the book of Acts.

Furthermore, one needs to study the epistles to know how to solve present-day problems. The problems of the church are dealt with in Corinthians, how one should behave in the church in I Timothy (see I Timothy 3:15), how to make it through hard times in I Peter, and in all of them, how to live a holy life.

One might mention many other things, but the point is that we need to be students of the whole Bible to know the truth. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

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"Oncers"

Continued From Page 2

quired by law to assist a courier for one mile in carrying out the demands of the government. Do you think Jesus was only teaching his disciples a lesson in Roman law? Would you bet your life that he was? You would lose it if you did. Jesus was teaching his disciples that, rather than retaliate against the government, to go beyond the required one mile, and GO TWO! No one, then, can be a true disciple of the Lord and be satisfied with a minimum of service, but must strive for the maximum -- he goes beyond the call of duty. Jesus implies that those who do only what is required will not be accepted as his when he comes. If not, why not?

III. "ONCERS" ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). What happens to unprofitable servants? Jesus says they will cast into outer darkness (Matthew 25:30). All the rationalizing one can muster will not explain this passage away. Coleman Overby says, "The servant was not hired to do so

much, but the Master had a right to all of his time . . . The servant can never say that what is required is done." "To be a faithful servant, one must put the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33)" (Roy). Jesus said, "Even so ye also," and means the case is similar to the matters of our service to God" (John T. Hinds). We have done the Lord no favors having done "that which was our duty to do" -- WE ARE STILL UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

IV. "ONCERS" FAIL TO PUT THE KINGDOM FIRST. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). How can any professing Christian claim that attending one service a week is giving the church top priority in his life? And the echo comes ringing back, HOW?

CONCLUSION: There is the matter of love involved here. If one loves the Lord and his people more than anything or anybody else, why would he not want to be with the Lord and his people on Sunday and Wednesday nights? (Matthew 18:20).

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The Correct Attitude In Worshiping God

The Bible clearly teaches that we are to worship God. Jesus states that "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Therefore, we are to (1) worship God; (2) worship God "in spirit," that is, rationally and sincerely; and (3) worship God "in truth" as the Bible teaches (Colossians 3:17; John 17:17).



Howell Bigham

However, do not possess the proper attitude in worshiping God Almighty?

There are those who display their

irreverance and lack of respect for the heavenly Father by their actions. Some, when in the midst of the invitation song, become amused by someone, or some thing, and begin to chuckle. Instead of studying what they sing (I Corinthians 14:15) and "singing with grace" in their hearts (Colossians 3:16), they have their thoughts on something else. Others display their indifference while the evangelist is "preaching the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Rather than listening attentively to God's eternal truths, they have their minds attentively on events planned after the worship service.

Friends, we are to have an attitude of reverence, sincerity, and thankfulness in worshiping God as his word directs! May we possess the blessed attitude of the Psalmist of long ago who uttered "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalms 122:1). Are we eager to assemble with those of "like precious faith" (II Peter

1:1)? or, is the assembly for worship something we dread? do we become bored with hearing God's word preached? or, do we desire to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18)? are we among those who have their minds centered on the sacrifice of Christ's body and his blood during the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-26)? or, is the communion just commonplace with us (I Corinthians 11:29)? where are our minds during prayer? are we concentrating on the contents of the prayer? or on something else? what is our attitude concerning giving "as God has prospered" us (I Corinthians 16:2) on the first day of the week?

Friends, when we come to worship God on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) we are to have the right attitude in worshiping God. Those who do not have the correct attitude and who are not willing to change, would be better off doing something else. Their worship is unacceptable to the Father. In the Bible we read of some whose worship was not acceptable unto the Creator. While Christ was on earth he spoke of the Pharisees: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (emphasis mine H.B.). "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9). The Bible vividly teaches that our worship will be in vain if we do not worship God as his pattern directs; but our worship can be just as unacceptable if we do not have the proper attitude in worshiping. May we center our thoughts, not on the things of this world, but on God, Christ, and his word when in worship.

—1412 Parsons Avenue, Sheffield, AL 35660.

Balance

Timothy Richburg

We need balance in the three-fold mission of the church. There are three areas of the mission of the church of our Lord. Number one is preaching the gospel. Number two is worship or edification. And number three is Benevolence. All three are equal. One is no more important than the other. We must have a balance. We must not overemphasize one of these above the other. In my judgment, some have begun to overemphasize evangelism to the point that they no longer mention teaching, edification, and benevolence.

First of all, the gospel is to be preached. Jesus said to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). Man has a choice to serve God, or to serve Satan (Matthew 16:24). Jesus tells us we are not going to be able to save every body, for some do not want salvation (Matthew 7:13-14). We can not force people to obey; all we can do is put the gospel before them. God has a part in one's salvation, for by grace he makes it all possible (Ephesians 2:8-9). Only God can cause the seed to grow.

Some have said that the church of our Lord will no longer be in existence in the future if we continue to win (?) the lost at our current rate. Jesus said he would build his church and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus said he would arise from the dead; and no plot or scheme of men would overthrow his church. "It shall stand forever" some where (Daniel 2:44). --It shall always exist, at least in "seed" (Luke 8:11) form. The church may end in certain places; but not every time is it because of a lack of evangelism. We find that five of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3) had sin among them. Some had false teachers, some had indifferent members; one had left its first love. One church had no apparent faults. Only one, Philadelphia, had a problem in failing to preach the gospel.

The second part of the mission of the church is worship or edification. The church must praise God and build itself up; and it must teach those that are in Christ. (Philippians 2:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-2; II John 4).

The third mission of the church is benevolence. We are to help those in need "especially them of the household of faith"

(Galatians 6:10). "All men" also in this verse includes those in the world who need our help. Notice I said those who are in need. We should not help those who are just lazy and do not want to work (II Thessalonians 3:10). We are to help those in need (Acts 4:34-35; I Timothy 5:16; Romans 15:25-26).

May we as elders, preachers, teachers, and other members have a balance in the three-fold mission of the church. Let us not overemphasize any one to the neglect of the others.

—Rt. 8, Box 3, Selma, Alabama 36701.

Believing The Premillennial Lie

Continued From Page 1

whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

G. Some blindly hold to premillennialism because they have heard it proclaimed in a bold, matter-of-fact way, all their lives; and they have never thought to question it. Long ago the propagandists learned that a lie oft repeated is soon held to be truth by the thoughtless masses. The early church had men miraculously endowed by the Holy Spirit to be discerners of spirits (I Corinthians 12:10). Though inspiration has past, each of us needs to measure what we hear by the infalible Word of God. Jesus warned "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24).

H. There are some Bible students who have fallen into the trap of premillennialism because they have failed to "rightly divide the word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15). By that we mean that they commingle Old and New Covenant promises. They have not compared scripture with scripture to learn of God's fulfillment of the promises to Israel. They fail to distinguish between figurative and literal language. It has well been said that a correct hermeneutic will for forever destroy the premillennial doctrine.

I. Most believers in Premillennialism have not taken the time to review the spotted history of the many millennial movements, and thus to discover their numerous false predictions and contradictions. Among the most

glaring are the predictions of the time of Christ's return, by William Miller (of the Adventists), and of 'Judge' Rutherford (of the Jehovah's Witnesses). The most recent mistaken prophet is Hal Lindsay, author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously . . ." (Deuteronomy 18:22).

J. Shrewed false teachers have taken advantage of the ignorance and credulity of the believing masses. They feed them their sorry diet of speculation for the notoriety and wealth it brings them. "By their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Romans 16:18). They are "false teachers, who . . . bring in destructive heresies . . . bringing upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1). They make merchandise of non-discerning believers.

Brethren it is not enough that we do not believe these strange doctrines of men. Our task is two fold: a) To fortify the faith of our brethren lest they be led astray. b) To liberate those held captive to the false systems of premillennialism. May God give us wisdom to understand the issues, and the courage to press the battle in Jesus' name.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad,
Words of Truth and Justice"

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 45

What Is Baptism?

Don Ruhl

CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM

One who hears and receives the word. After Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem, it is written, "They then that received his word were baptized . . ." (Acts 2:41). This would exclude babies and those who do not really love the word.

Believers. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Salvation is not by belief alone, nor by baptism alone. When the Ethiopian asked to be baptized, Philip responded, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." Babies are again excluded. Most young children "believe" in Jesus innocently, even as they might believe in Santa Claus.

Penitent believers. When John the Baptist saw some religious leaders coming to him to be baptized, he warned them: "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). When Peter convicted that great multitude on the day of Pentecost of crucifying Jesus, he set forth repentance and baptism as the conditions for forgiveness. Repentance means to regret sin and change from a sinful life to a righteous life. Children are excluded, for they have no sin to repent of.

Confessors. Nowhere does the New Testament state that SINS must be confessed before being baptized into Christ. The Bible is equally silent about confessing: "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven my sins." We are required to confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord" -- that he is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:8-10).

PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

It is commonly taught that baptism is nothing more than a declaration to the world of one's faith. Some think baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace.

Baptism is an act of faith, and is the result of God's grace; but it is not a sign that one is already saved (Colossians 2:12; Mark 16:16).

What is baptism? How should it be performed? Who should be baptized? Why should a person be baptized? These are questions that for centuries have stirred controversy. Let us together investigate the scriptures and find the answers.

Spirit or Water?

In the Spirit or in water? "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." This account from Acts 10 shows that water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism are not the same. Cornelius had just been baptized in the Spirit, then Peter commanded that Cornelius be baptized in water. The baptism authorized by Jesus is performed in water by man. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was performed in the Spirit by Jesus (Matthew 3:11).

"MODE" OF BAPTISM

Sprinkling? If baptism is sprinkling, then it should make sense to place "sprinkling" in the verses that have "baptism." In Acts 8:38 it is said, ". . . and he baptized him." Could it be written: ". . . and he sprinkled him?" This would say that Philip took the Ethiopian and the Ethiopian was the substance sprinkled. If sprinkling is the mode, then it would have said, ". . . and he sprinkled water on him."

Pouring? If pouring is the correct mode, then "pouring" should be able to be put into the clause of Acts 8:38: ". . . and he poured him." Obviously Philip could not have poured the Ethiopian like water. Again it should have been written, ". . . and he poured water on him," if pouring were baptism.

Immersion. Now Acts 8:38 sounds rational: ". . . and he immersed him." The eunuch was the substance immersed by Philip. Immersion fits the figure of baptism which is likened to the burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-5). At his death, was Jesus sprinkled? or poured upon? (with dirt)? or placed in a tomb which was closed, hiding his body?

Salvation. Jesus and Peter state that baptism is an essential element involved in our salvation: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). "Which also after a true likeness" (water, v. 20, D.R.) "doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God . . ." (I Peter 3:21).

Forgiveness. Saul of Tarsus was told to "wash away" his sins in baptism (Acts 22:16). Peter instructed the Jews to be baptized "for the remission of" their sins (Acts 2:38).


Other results of baptism. Paul told the Roman Christians that they were in Christ and participated in his burial and resurrection, as the result of baptism (Romans 6:3-5). The Galatian churches were reminded, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). No man can be saved outside of Christ. Prior to faith and baptism, one is not in Christ. Furthermore, one is not a Christian until he has put on Christ. Christ is put on at baptism. Therefore, one is not in Christ and is not a Christian until he has faith and is baptized. Plus, baptism puts the believer into the church (Acts 2:41, 47; I Corinthians 12:13). Being born again occurs through baptism (John 3:5; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:11-13).

Have you been baptized according to the Scriptures?

—2521 Nile Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97603.

Invite A Friend

To Church Sunday!



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 Preacher's Job?!

Dale Jenkins

It is becoming more and more popular--that phrase: "It's not my job." I don't know where it came from, nor am I sure that I agree with it. What ever happened to the day when a man would give his life up for service in the kingdom of God? What ever happened to the preacher who knew he was involved in the greatest work on earth, therefore he would work tirelessly in God's Service?

I know that the preacher needs to spend time with his family. I am aware that he can't be expected to do all the work. I am sure he is not a "pastor." And I have known these things a long time. But, it seems to me, that in our new perspective on preaching, we are forgetting several things.

First, and foremost, that the man who preaches is a Christian; and he, like all other saints, is required to produce as much fruit as he can, using the ability God has given him. God never has, nor will he ever, accept half-heartedness! We are not in the comparison business! Just because some of the brethren aren't working, does not mean we can get out of our God-given responsibility (Matthew 28:18-20). This verse applies to us just as much, if not more, because of our ability to teach God's glorious word, as it does to our listening brethren. Some are so afraid of becoming glorified errand-boys, they have stopped being God's message carrier! I recently heard of a man who moved to a congregation, saying he "just preached." He had a family just like everyone else and he had a right to time with them. His service was to preach and that was all he planned to do! That man will be condemned by Jesus' commands to "Go" and "teach" -- as will the folks he tries to convince each week if they also have that attitude. No wonder we can't convict people of the "priesthood" of all believers; we evidently don't believe it ourselves.

Secondly, we have a responsibility in our example. How can we preach the gospel, part of which requires every saint to produce fruit (at least plant the seed), if we are not living examples. The old adage "Practice what you preach" comes to mind. Have you come to view preaching more as a profession than a passion? "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we

Continued on page 3

I Remember Gus Nichols

Hudson Nichols

"Gone But Not Forgotten" is an epitaph on many markers in the silent city of the dead. In the no-longer-used cemetery behind our house on Fifth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, were many graves which had been forgotten for many years. As I grew up, I recall that only one grave was cared for each year; but eventually it, too, was forgotten. Reminiscent of those who "knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8), a generation came which did not remember their dead.

Born January 12, 1892, Gus Nichols departed this life on November 16, 1975 -- eleven years ago this month -- to receive the inheritance promised by his Father in heaven. He is gone; but I remember Gus Nichols.

At the time I, the youngest of his eight children, was born, the characteristics which shaped his life were firmly fixed. I do not remember my father as a young man in his 20's or early 30's, for he was 38 years old when I was born. I was blessed and touched by his life for 45 years. I could recite many personal things which I remember about Gus Nichols, such as his being my father, my preacher, and the one who baptized me into Christ; but I remember also his:--

Generosity

He did not have much of this world's goods, but he liberally supported the church, and also generously gave to Christian education, and to support orphans and others in need. According to his ability, and many times "beyond his power" (II Corinthians 8:3), there was support for "every good work" (I Timothy 5:10). He was generous with his time, his advice, the work around the house, and with his love for us.

Unique Qualities

He arose from the unknown among people, to make an indelible impression upon so many throughout the world. He rose from the log cabin to wide acclaim and great respect. To me he was an extraordinary man -- but I admit that I am prejudiced.

Servitude

He was a slave unto his Lord, and practiced Galatians 5:13: "By love serve one another." Like David, he "served his generation by the will of God" (Acts 13:36). The sincerity of his lessons was clearly seen, as tears would often flow when he would speak about God's love and goodness. He was truly a servant of God and man.

Nobility

For 55 years, Gus Nichols spent an average of five hours a day studying the word of God. If searching the scriptures daily made the Bereans "more noble" (Acts 17:11) than others, truly Gus Nichols was among God's nobility. Many honors, including two honorary "Doctor" degrees, were bestowed upon him in life. When such were received, in humility he would give honor to his wife and others, saying that if it had not been for them, he would not thus be honored. Truly he left for his family a noble name, because of his reverence and respect for the name of Christ.

Investments

He truly believed in people. Some spend their lives investing money and every available material asset in THINGS -- substances which will pass away and be gone forever. Gus Nichols invested in PEOPLE! He gave of himself to mold young men into great gospel preachers, with 53 going out into all the world from the church in Jasper, where he preached for 43 years. He had a great influence in the brotherhood for good.

Compassion

His compassion was clearly seen in the gentleness with which he gave us boys hair-cuts with the old 'hand-clippers' -- before he could afford electric clippers. It was also shown by his many visits to the bedside of the sick and dying, and to those whose hearts were broken by grief and sadness. Genuine compassion was manifested even when sin had wrecked a life, or ruined a congregation. The pathos of his voice reflected the love in his heart as he preached to dying men and women as if they might never hear another sermon.

Honesty

It was said of him by a denominational preacher, when agreement was being sought on the wording of a proposition for their third debate: "If Gus Nichols said this proposition fairly represents our differences, I would sign it without even reading it. Brother Nichols would not take advantage of any one."

Old Age

Gus Nichols grew old gracefully. He did not reach the point in his life of 83 years where he thought his efforts were in vain, nor that almost all people had 'gone to the dogs.' He did not become bitter nor childish as he grew older. Like Abraham, he "died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years" (Genesis 25:7).

Love

I remember the great love Dad bestowed upon Mother. Poems would flow from his heart unto her. Words expressing that love for her were often spoken, even in the presence of the children. Dad loved Mother, and Mother loved Dad; and they both loved all of us children.

Sermons

In the daily life of Gus Nichols, we "saw" the sermons he preached from the pulpit. I know that he, like David, is "dead and buried, and his grave is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29); but like Abel, "he, being dead, yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

—Yes, I lovingly remember Gus Nichols. But I know, if time continues for a few generations, there will arise some who knew him not, nor will they even recognize his name. But I knew him, and still gratefully remember him.

—2300 Parrish Ave., Owensboro, KY 42301.

Free Personal Evangelism Aids

About 1958 I designed three personal evangelism and Bible study aids called CONDENSED CIRCULAR CYCLOPEDIAS that were used all over the world. Almost 100,000 were printed. I still have about 1000 sets which normally sell for \$2. For those who will use them in personal evangelism, I will give you a set FREE if you just send a stamped (39¢) envelope at least 6½x9 with your name and address on it. If you are teaching correspondence courses or students in World Bible Studies and wish to send one to your students, I will provide one free for each student you have if you will send 44 cents for postage for each one you want.

—T. Pierce Brown Box 144X, Route 2 Wartrace, TN 37183 (615) 454-9042.

"My Kingdom Is Not Of This World"

Though this is not a sensational sermon, it is a much-needed one. The desire for security is very basic in man. Most seek security in material things.

However material things are very unstable. Trust in material things hinders spirituality. When we make a god of material things, we dethrone the Almighty God. The wise Christian makes use of material things to serve God. Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).



W. Edwin Kearley

A definition of the word "world" helps us to see that Jesus spoke not of the habitable earth, nor the evil people of the universe (Psalms 90:2; I John 2:15-17). He is speaking of all of the lost humanity (John 3:16).

In order to have a vivid idea of the kingdom, it is necessary to give the Biblical description. It is composed of those purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 2:47). The church and kingdom are the same institution (Matthew 16:18-19). Christ is its king, or head (Ephesians 1:23). It is designated (1) the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23), (2) the house of God (I Timothy 3:15), (3) the bride of Christ (Revelation 22:17; John 3:29-30), and (4) leaven (Matthew 13:33).

At the end of the world Christ will deliver the kingdom to God, the Father (I Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 5:25-27).

Jesus declared he and the apostles are not of the world (John 17:16). The world hates righteous people (John 17:14). The reason is stated in John 3:19-21. The world feels condemned as Cain did in his rebellion. The world reacts today as Cain did. Many Christians today are more influenced by the world than they influence the world.

Jesus did not pray for deliverance from the world, but from the evil of the world (John 17:15). As it is fine and fitting for the ocean liner to be in the ocean, it is fine and fitting for the kingdom or church of Christ to be in the world. As it is tragic for the ocean to be in the ocean liner, it is tragic for the world to be in the church. When truth is compromised, our influence for good is lost.

Christ's kingdom is a militant kingdom. It does not use carnal weapons but spiritual ones (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Paul urged, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). The kingdom also is an offensive kingdom (Mark 16:15-16; Jude 3). Its mission is world-wide in scope. However, we must begin where we are located. It is not selfishly contentious but it must be contentious for "the faith once delivered" (Jude 3).

Paul uses the armor of the Roman soldier to illustrate the Christian's armor (Ephesians 6:10-17). The Christian's loins are girded with truth. Truth must be one of the highest priced commodities (Proverbs 23:28; Matthew 5:6; John 17:17). The Christian soldier has a "breastplate of righteousness," "his feet shod . . . with the preparation of

the gospel of peace," quenches fiery darts with the "shield of the faith," "puts on the helmet of salvation," and takes "the sword of the Spirit, . . . the word of God." The word is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12, A.S.V.), and produces faith (Romans 10:17).

Every activity of life should serve a spiritual end (Colossians 3:17). One should find service to his fellowman in his employment. Even rest and recreation should improve one for future service (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 25).

John 18:36

I. REAL SECURITY IS NOT FOUND IN MATERIAL THINGS.

II. TRUST IN MATERIAL THINGS HINDER SPIRITUALITY.

III. THE CHRISTIAN MAKES USE OF MATERIAL THINGS TO SERVE SPIRITUAL PURPOSES.

IV. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM (John 18:36), NOT OF THIS WORLD.

A. WORD "WORLD" IS USED IN THREE SENSES (Psalms 90:1-2; I John 2:15-17; John 3:16).

B. TAKE A LOOK AT THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

A. Composed of those purchased with blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 2:47).

a. Church and kingdom are synonymous (Matthew 16:18-19).

B. Christ is its head (Ephesians 1:22-23).

C. How designated?

. Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23).

b. House of God (I Timothy 3:15).

c. Bride of Christ (Revelation 22:17; John 3:29-30).

4. Leaven (Matthew 13:33).

d. Christ will deliver kingdom to God (I Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 5:25-27).

C. JESUS DECLARED HE AND THE APOSTLES ARE NOT OF THE WORLD (John 17:16).

1. The world hates righteous people. (John 17:14).

a. Reason: (John 3:19-21).

2. Jesus prayed for their deliverance (John 17:15).

a. Illustration: Ocean liner.

b. Christ planned for church to be in world, but not for world to be in the church.

D. CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS A MILITANT KINGDOM.

A. Not carnal weapons but spiritual (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

1. Ephesians 6:11.

2. Offensive (Mark 16:15-16; Jude 3).

B. Roman soldier's armor illustrates Christian's Armor (Ephesians 6:10-17).

1. Loins girded with truth.

2. Breastplate of righteousness.

3. Feet shod with preparation of the gospel of peace.

4. Quench fiery darts with shield of faith.

5. Helmet of salvation

6. Sword of the Spirit is the word of God

E. EVERY ACTIVITY OF LIFE SHOULD SERVE A SPIRITUAL END (Colossians 3:17).

A. A selfish life serves no one, not even the individual who is selfish.

B. Happiness is found in spiritual service (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 25).

1. Spiritual matters are first in priority (Matthew 6:33).

F. AS THE OUTWARD MAN DECAYS LET US EACH DAY RENEW THE INWARD MAN

(II Corinthians 4:16).

—103 Elena Court, Bay St. Louis, MS 39530.

"Cheers" Or Tears?

Bob Plunket

It amazes me what television is doing to put a pretty face on old evils. All of my life I thought of the bar, the saloon, as a place of the worst kind of evil. Even in the old movies it was a place of drinking and fighting and prostitution and gambling.

But the television program "Cheers" would lead young people to believe it is a happy and friendly place. People love each other and help each other. They laugh and have a wonderful time together. You can even get counseling from the bartender! They bill it as a place for the lonely. It is even the place where you go and get a solution to your problems.

But this is another television lie! The bar exists for the purpose of making money from the sale of drugs in the form of beer, wine, and mixed drinks. They encourage people to drink, often offering two (2) drinks for the price of one! But when your money runs out, they want you to get out; and if one becomes drunken and disturbs others, they throw him out.

Liquor has never solved anybody's problems. It may make you forget them temporarily. Many of the drinkers that I know cry. They don't laugh. Most have left the bar, not with their problems solved, but with new problems created. Many have left the bar to go home to lose their jobs and their self respect. The old pictures were the right pictures of the bar.

"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20).

—110 E. 4th Street, Tusculumbia, AL 35674.

A Preacher's Job?

Continued from page 2

persuade men," "Preach the word," "the love of Christ constraineth me." How about the verses that teach us to be daily cross-bearers? or that we must put God's kingdom first? Where is the fire that burned within the proclaimers of old like David and Jeremiah? the debt owed that moved Paul tirelessly (I Thessalonians 2:9)? singlemindedness that moved Christ to the cross? the love that swelled the vocal cords of Paul and Silas-- and led to the jailers' conversion? the desire to tell others that prompted persecuted Christians to go everywhere spreading the word (Acts 8:4)? the desire to see the Kingdom advanced that pushed men like Hardeman, Nichols, and Campbell? are we above them? why are there no more stories of extreme sacrifice that seemed so commonplace when those names are mentioned?

Luxuries have made us both lazy and materialistic! We seem more concerned about hearing our name called out than calling out God's name. You can't be "sound" if no SOUND is being heard. Let us awake to the lost world around us! Let the trumpet of God's "Good News" ring loud and clear! Get out there! Dust off those old Jule Millers filmstrips! Get the Sword sharpened -- and get busy!

—Eva Church of Christ, Route 1 Box 3, Eva, AL 35621.

The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ

Many false teachers have had the audacity [reckless boldness] to dare to set the time and year of Christ's and year of Christ's second coming. For example, William Miller (1782-1849) figured the time of Jesus' coming; but the passing of the years have shown him to be a false teacher. "Russellites" (Jehovah's Witnesses) contend that Jesus came in October, 1874, and he has been here ever since. "Pastor Russell" further argued that the 'consummation of the ages' would occur in 1914; but time has shown him to be a false teacher (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). Here, in Walker County, Alabama, we have a smart (?) fellow who claims that Jesus will come in 1989. We shall see!!



W. A. Holley

To settle the question as to man's ability to determine the hour or day of Jesus' second coming, we shall quote Jesus Christ himself: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:33-37, A.S.V.).

The fact of Jesus' second coming is attested by the inspired testimony of God's holy word (Acts 1:10-11; Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 9:27-28; John 14:1-6); but the hour, or the day, or year of his coming is unknown. No man knows, nor can know! Hence, Jesus will come again if Jesus (John 14:1-3), if angels (Acts 1:10-11), if James (James 5:7), if John (I John 3:2), if Peter (I Peter 1:13), if Paul (Philippians 3:20-21), spake the truth of God. --And they did, beyond all reasonable doubt!!

According to the Holy Scriptures, what shall be the manner of his coming? Jesus will come "with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). He will come personally, "... 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" (Acts 1:11). His coming will be audible for "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice . . ." (John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:16). When the trumpet sounds, the dead shall be changed by resurrection; the living shall be changed -- because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 15:50-57). Jesus' coming will be visible: "Every eye shall see him . . ." His coming cannot be secret, as some allege (Revelation 1:7). The hour and day and year of his coming will not be published to the world by newspapers, nor television, nor by any special sign from heaven. Jesus will come "in flaming fire," accompanied by them "which sleep in Jesus . . ." (I Thessalonians 4:14; Jude 14; cf. I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The time of Jesus' coming is unknown to

angels, as well as to man; it is known only to God (Mark 13:32-37). His second coming will be before the Great Judgment (Matthew 25:31, 34, 41, 46; John 5:27-30; I Thessalonians 4:13-17). All speculation, guessing, or calculation can never alter the truth of God's word.

At the time of Jesus' return there will be scoffers and mockers who ridicule the thought of his coming (II Peter 3:3-9). Indifference and immorality will characterize earth's citizens (for the most part) of that day (Luke 17:20-37). Jesus taught (Matthew 7:13-14) that only a relative "few" shall be saved. The wicked shall weep and wail because of the great calamity which comes upon them (Revelation 1:7; 6:15-17). But, according to the Bible, the righteous shall welcome his coming (Philippians 4:5; Titus 2:11-15; James 5:7-9; Revelation 22:20; II Timothy 4:6-8).

What is the grand purpose of Jesus' coming? It is not to teach and instruct the human race, as at his first coming (Matthew 25:31-46). He will not offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross a second time (Hebrews 9:27-28). Jesus will not return to set up an earthly kingdom, since his kingdom/church has been established since the first Pentacost after his resurrection (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 11:14-15; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9). No passage of Scripture teaches that Jesus will ever set his feet upon earth again. At his coming the earth

will be burned up (II Peter 3:10-15). Thus, there will be no place for a thousand-year-reign of Christ upon the earth!! His kingdom is here and now!! It will be delivered up to the Father at Jesus' coming (I Corinthians 15:20-28). "Then cometh the end," not the beginning . . . (vs. 24).

Jesus is not coming the second time to give people another chance to be saved (Hebrews 9:27-28; Luke 16:19-31). But, Jesus will return to raise the dead (John 5:28-29), to judge and separate all nations (Matthew 25:31-46), to reward every one according to his works (II Corinthians 5:10), to take vengeance upon the wicked (II Thessalonians 1:7-9), and to save eternally the righteous (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 2:10).

What is our duty toward God Almighty while we await the second coming of the Lord? Sinners need to be taught the truth of God (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; Romans 6:3-4). Christians must be instructed to remain faithful even unto death (Hebrews 5:11-14; II Peter 1:5-11; Revelation 2:10). Thus, Christians must worship right (John 4:24), live right (Titus 2:11-12), and must talk and walk right (Ephesians 5:3-16).

Dear Reader, remember that soap is only useful when it is applied. Even so, the truth of the gospel never changes the lives of men unless it is applied!!

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

A Hard Lesson To Learn

Thank God for material blessings! "It is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18). Thank God for this rich and prosperous country in which we live! But can we handle riches? Can we keep them from controlling us? These are important questions, and this is an area in which all of us must be extremely careful. It is very easy to become **POSSESSED** with materialism.



Ken Tyler

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5:10: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity." Why can't we understand this point? When we make money and material things our LIFE, we are never "satisfied." The more we have, the more we want. It is just a vicious cycle. I want to make some suggestions which I hope will help you avoid this great device of the devil.

1. **TAKE THE LORD'S OFF THE TOP.** Realize the first responsibility with your prosperity is to the Lord. He gave it to you. Solomon said: "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" (Proverbs 3:9-10). If you will practice this Bible principle, God will take care of the rest.

2. **DON'T BASE YOUR HAPPINESS ON MONEY.** Of course, material things are important; but they are not the basis of our lives. Find a job that you like, and resolve to be contented with it. Plan and save for an adequate house and then be satisfied with it. But please base your happiness on your relationship with God, and not the things of this world. Then you can rejoice through thick and thin, good and bad. Truly, in this life there are both. Paul said from a Roman prison, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). This is the attitude toward life that all of us need.

3. **BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVERSPEND.** There are multitudes of credit cards, and all kinds of loans; and if we are not careful, we will reach too far. Buy only what you can pay for without putting yourself in a worrisome turmoil. This is a hard lesson, but all of us must learn it. Young couples, I especially encourage YOU to be careful in this area.

I sincerely hope the thoughts of this article will help us to always control things, instead of letting things control us. Remember that God's Holy Spirit through Paul said, "the love of money is the root of all evil . . ." (I Timothy 6:10).

—P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, n
Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 22

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Media Ethics And Modern Music

Wayne Coats

(No. 1)

The Rage Of Rebellion

The serenity and quietude of the Country Musician's beautiful home presented a perfect picture of peace and tranquility. Some few years had passed since we had first met and "made music."

My visit on this occasion was primarily for an interview pertaining to the effects of Country Music on our society. I felt that the person best qualified to speak on the matter would be someone who has devoted his time and energies to Country Music as an artist. The person interviewed has traveled over the seven continents where millions have been enthralled by his singing.

"What do you think about the very suggestive, even vulgar, lyrics which some of the Country Music artists are using today?" I asked. For two hours we sat discussing this matter.

Obviously many do not see the lewd and lascivious lyrics of some Country Music as posing any problem. My good friend commented:

"Such is uncalled for, but this is the way some artists get attention."

I replied:

"There is a segment of our society which has little time or attention for that which does not appeal to the coarse, suggestive, and vulgar."

With a very serious expression upon his face my friend continued by saying:

"The unmatched success of some of the all-time 'great' artists in the Country Music field who have kept their recordings, concerts, and personal appearances clean and free from the lurid and lustful, is proof that we do not have to resort to the selling of smut in order to be successful."

I agreed with what was said and listened as he continued:

"There are millions of plain, simple folk who still enjoy and appreciate good, clean, Country Music; and that is what we try to do."

This definitely was not a conjecture, for the gentleman who made the aforementioned state-

ments had been singing all over the nation for the past several months -- with the exception of only two week-ends which were spent at home. It would seem that the principles of Christian ethics can be used by Country artists; and indeed this is demonstrated by several highly-successful groups.

In a letter to this scribe, the very popular Country artist, Bill Anderson, said:

"There are a lot of good drivers who will never have an accident; and there are lots of good singers with songs that up lift and inspire."

We surely agree with this very judicious statement and admire those people, both writers and singers, who have sufficient talents which enable them to stay out of the gutters and cesspools as they perform.

On the other hand, according to *People Magazine*, Conway Twitty declared:

"As a Country artist, I'm not proud of a lot of things in my field. There is no doubt in my mind that we are contributing to the moral decline in America."¹

If indeed this is true, we wonder how anyone can justify the performance of that which helps to destroy our nation. To deny that moral decline and degradation is destructive to a nation, a community, or an individual, is to deny all the lessons of history. We do not fear the woodpeckers without, as much as we fear termites within. Is it not possible to build a stronger nation morally, instead of helping to destroy the essential qualities which have helped to make our nation great? Can we be consistent in our support of men, music, and movements which admittedly help to destroy the morals of a nation -- and yet plead for a return to holy and righteous living?

In the *Nashville Banner* of June 7, 1985, there is a rather large spread article including a picture of Jeannie Seely as she performs at the opening of her *Printer's Alley Club*. The article informs us that Ms. Seely is a Grand 'Ole Opry star. Those who attended the nightery were served

"... cool drinks and a hot show." The star gave a

"... torrid, top-flight performance."

Do we wonder about the meaning of the word, "torrid," when it is used to describe the performance of a Country singer in a nightclub? We are reminded that it was the singer's version of the torch song "Don't Touch Me" that won her a grammy award a few years ago. We do not have any plans to visit the night club, but no doubt for many people it would be interesting to listen to one who can sing a "torch" song while giving a "torrid" performance during a "hot" show! Are such performances given with the idea of appealing to the "pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8)? Or, do they tend to produce lewd emotions? "Lasciviousness" (Galatians 5:19) is a work of the flesh, whether enacted by someone called a "Star," or by a 'clod.'

It is interesting to observe some of the song titles which are listed in the Country Music magazines. They are exceedingly crude when compared to moral and ethical standards. We list just a few titles in order to demonstrate our point:

"Everybody Needs Love On A Saturday Night."

"That's What You Do When You're In Love."

"The Girl Most Likely To."

"My Son Calls Another Man Daddy."

"Unwed Fathers."

"You Turn Me On."

"Waltz Me To Heaven."

"A Girl's Night Out."

"Smoking."

These and many others of similar nature seem to be what the fans are interested in. At any rate, this is what many of the artists are offering.

(To be continued).

¹*People*, September 3, 1979, page 82.

[Editor's note: The booklet from which this is quoted by permission may be ordered from the author.]

—184 Hillview, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness." —Acts 26:35

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The Parables Of The Lost

W. Gaddys Roy

Jesus gives three parables in Luke chapter fifteen. They are the parable of the Lost Sheep, the parable of the Lost Coin, and the parable of the Lost Boy, or the Prodigal Son. Each parable illustrates a different way one may be lost.

The Lost Sheep

The sheep was not lost because he wanted to be lost; but he was likely careless and grazed along, paying no attention to the flock, nor to the voice of the shepherd. The masses are lost today, not because they want to be lost; but because they will not listen to Christ, the good shepherd (John 10:14, 27).

Though the shepherd was not responsible for the sheep's being lost, he sorrowed much and sought for the lost sheep. The shepherd did not rationalize that the sheep was not of much value. He did not say, "I still have 99 sheep left!" Nor did he philosophize that the sheep should not have wandered away. Instead, the shepherd went to seek for the lost sheep. Jesus, the good shepherd, "came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

God was not responsible for man's being lost. However, he sent his Son that man might be redeemed (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; II Corinthians 5:18-20; Isaiah 53:4-6). God is not "willing" that any should perish (II Peter 3:9).

Christians should not reason that it is not their fault that people are lost; rather, we should see that all people have an opportunity to hear and obey the gospel (Romans 10:13-17; II Thessalonians 1:6-9). We should seek the lost as the shepherd sought for the lost sheep. Jesus, the good Shepherd is our example (I Peter 2:21).

The Lost Boy

The Prodigal Son was lost because he wanted to be lost. He was tired of home restraint. A child of God may become tired of the restrictions of the Christian life. One may

Continued On Page 3

Study In Romans 14 (No.1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

[In this issue we begin a series of nine (9) articles by brother Robert Taylor on Romans 14. This chapter has been perverted by many. A study of it will refute, and the truth revealed in it does refute, the false assumptions many have made. Brother Taylor so clearly presents the truth in this series that I have chosen to give it editorial endorsement; herewith his first article is issued as a Guest Editorial. I believe our readers will wish to keep these from week to week and file them for future use. --The Editor.]

An Initial Outline Introduction

A. What the basic thrust of Romans 14 is not, and how men by the masses abuse it, misuse it, misapply it, misunderstand it by trying to find therein justification for mechanical music in Christian worship, for social drinking, allowing for doctrinal compromises, etc.

B. What the basic thrust of Romans 14 is, and how it should be understood and applied. Matters indifferent in and of themselves are treated therein.

C. Romans 14, when understood and properly applied, would go a long, long way toward clearing up many of our problems.

D. Background of problems discussed in this chapter.

E. A truly great and monumentally unique chapter now looms lovingly for our diligence in its stately, dignified, and accurate exegesis (the meaning of the chapter).

I. THE STRONG AND WEAK: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS (Romans 14:1-12)

A. Relative to meats (vs. 1-4).

B. Relative to days (vs. 5-6).

C. Jesus as Lord and Judge -- the sure solution to the problem presented (vs. 7-12).

II. THE STRONG AND WEAK: MUTUAL CONCERN (14:13-27)

A. Do not become a stumblingblock to others (v. 13).

B. Conscience and unclean meats (v. 14).

C. A charitable walk before others (vs. 15-16).

D. The kingdom negatively and positively depicted (v. 17).

E. True service to God (vs. 18-20).

F. How far Christian love is to go relative to brotherly aid (v. 21).

G. Final admonitions of the chapter (vs. 22-23).

H. Paul continues the discussion about the strong and weak on into the early part of Romans 15.

CONCLUSION: This chapter is filled with weighty wisdom in dealing with problems that persistently face every generation of Christians.

INTRODUCTION

It is amazingly amazing the number of crystal-clear verses such as Genesis 1:1; Mark 16:16; John 3:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 10:25; James

1:27; 2:24; I Peter 3:21; and I John 3:9 which are abused, misused, misapplied, and misunderstood. The same is true with Biblical chapters such as Genesis 1; Matthew 24; Acts 2; and Revelation 20. Romans 14 also is one of the most abused, misused, misapplied, and misunderstood chapters in the whole Bible.

This is not a chapter that justifies digression from truth relative to doctrinal differences between Independent Christian churches (there were no such in New Testament times) and the Lord's church (churches of Christ which did exist in the first century -- Romans 16:16). It is not a chapter that justifies or condones doctrinal falsehood. If such were the case, it would stand in utter contradiction to such Biblical principles as Psalms 119:104, 128. It is not a chapter that justifies any mechanical instrument in Christian worship. If it were, it would stand in utter opposition to the principle that forbids our going beyond what is written (I Corinthians 4:6 --ASV). It is not a chapter that says users of the piano, organ, and ten-piece bands in Christian worship are the "strong" brethren, and those of us who just sing-- and stand adamantly opposed to the mechanical machinery idol in worship -- are the "weak" brethren. It is not a chapter that justifies the social drinker in his infamous, nefarious habit of imbibing the "waters of eternal destruction." It is not a chapter that teaches the infallibility of following one's conscience in lieu of allowing God's word to be our infallible gauge or standard. Yet the foregoing are some of the abuses, misuses, misunderstandings, and misapplications made of the chapter. If Romans 14 taught what the masses have said it teaches, it would stand in hopeless, hapless, and helpless contradiction to EVERY other chapter in the New Testament. There would not be then that FIRST ONE that would be a spiritual colleague with it!! It would then be the proverbial 'fly in the ointment' of two hundred fifty-nine (259) other chapters that teach only truth and expose all errors.

The basic thrust of Romans 14 is a treatment of matters indifferent, such as meat eating, day keeping, etc. Brother Guy N. Woods has well written: "It was his purpose, in our lesson text for today, to show that all such were in the realm of opinion; and, that the brethren should exhibit tolerance, patience, kindness, and forbearance in all such" (Gospel Advocate ADULT QUARTERLY, Winter, 1968, p. 51). He further labels these as "matters of indifference such as the eating of meats, etc." (Ibid., p. 52).

Brother Noel Merideth also said such matters were "in the realm of opinion" (J. Noel Merideth, THE BOOK OF ROMANS, Editors -- Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren, Jonesboro; National Christian Press, 1983, p. 216).

Romans 14, when understood properly and applied accurately, would go a long, long way toward clearing up many of our present problems.

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

**BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH
WITH YOU ON SUNDAYS!**

I'm Not Ashamed

R. W. Gray

"There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing it's worth;
It sounds like music in mine ear,
The sweetest name on earth."

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear.
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fears."

Bible readers should not be surprised to learn that the community of believers purchased by the precious blood of Jesus is variously described in the sacred writings. They are said to be "of God, "of Christ," Christ's body," God's possession or "peculiar people," "The temple" and/or "house of God," etc. (I Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 1:13, 24; I Peter 2:9; I Timothy 3:15).

The various appellations or descriptions are used to designate or denote varying relationships shared by members with one another, or with our heavenly Father; and sometimes to indicate our relationship to the world about us.

Words or phrases chosen in various texts underscore the particular relationship the writer wishes to emphasize in that given setting. The description used is not selected by mere caprice, but is chosen for a wise and specific reason.

While we are at liberty to use any term the Spirit has chosen to describe the Lord's temple, we would be wise to search for the term that best fits the particular relationship or lesson intended in our speech, or contained in an article written. Inasmuch as this was the procedure followed by inspired men, we will not improve upon it by making arbitrary changes or choices.

Who among us has not noticed that Paul selected a term that would be recognizable by saints everywhere when he said to Roman Christians, "the churches of Christ

salute you!" (Romans 16:16)? We would not maintain, of course, that another means of identification could not have conveyed the message adequately. But we do insist that a good choice was made, as it magnifies the name of him who purchased the church and was made head over all things to it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:23).

There is a growing sentiment within our ranks that "over exposure," as some would state it, to the appellation "churches of Christ" creates a climate in which we use the term in a sectarian sense. This, we believe, is wholly unwarranted. For while some may use this Bible description of God's people with a sectarian slant, it is not likely the case at all that they do so because of frequent usage.

Some apparently feel that changing the name on the marquee on the lawn of the church's meeting place from time to time will cure the problem of misuse. One group has pledged to use a different name every week so as to be "more scriptural."

We would be remiss to impugn the motives of brethren who practice such seemingly childish things. But the practice, at best, indicates a lack of depth of thought. To say the least, a problem will result among strangers

in the neighborhood. Such a practice makes it virtually impossible for our motorized brotherhood to know where the saints meet. Rather than impressing our friends with the undenominational character of the church, such practices will turn them away in amusement, or dismay.

Our people have traditionally used the multiple choices presented in the Bible when speaking of those who have been washed in the blood of the lamb. This is as it should be. But for the sake of uniformity, for the sake of owning property, transacting business, and the avoidance of lengthy explanations, is it not best to be identified as we generally are, simply as "churches of Christ?" Do frequent changes contribute any worthwhile thing to the ongoing of the kingdom? Does anyone seriously believe that arbitrary and frequent changes will prevent a sectarian use of Biblical terms?

Because I'm not ashamed of the name of Christ, nor of those who are his people, I do not advocate changing the marquee on the lawn, nor the letterheads of our pages of correspondence.

—Rt. 3, Box 306, Bremen, GA 30110.

At Last-The "Pot Of Gold"

Wallace L. Wilder, Jr.

My mother, Brinnie Mae (Sims) Wilder, was born May 26, 1908, in Attica, near Athens, Georgia. She was the youngest of six children. She told me that when she was a little girl there was much talk about a "pot of gold" that lay at the end of those beautiful pastel shades that arch in perfect symmetry across

the sky during a rain. She often dreamed of finding it. Her life, as is common to many, had many heartaches, disappointments, and struggles, most of which related to her uncompromising belief in God and his commandments.

J. P. Prevatt baptized her when she was 14, in Gainesville, Florida. She in turn led her older sister and her mother to the truth. She borrowed the money for tuition and one-way (!) transportation to Freed-Hardeman College, going on faith -- and over the objections of her father. She taught the gospel to her husband-to-be, Wallace L. Wilder, of Tampa, Florida. When she married, she left her new A-model Ford at home so her mother could have a way to go to church services. This meant she and her husband had to travel by bus. She was in frequent conflict with her, and her husband's relatives, because of her unyielding belief in God's commands. They brought up their only child in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, "chastening him betimes," when required. She encouraged her husband to become a preacher of the gospel and aided him in his twelve years of full-time work. She went to work at Anniston (Alabama) Army Depot so her son could attend Freed-Hardeman College. Her employment became the family's only source of income when her husband was struck down with a disabling stroke. She faithfully stood by him until his death nine years later.

She spent the next eighteen years pursuing a ministry of dedicated Christian service. Her diligence in reaching out to help others prompted some to refer to her as "Dorcas of Munford."

She was extremely "proud" of her four grandchildren, and lived to see the older two attend Freed-Hardeman College. The younger

The Parables Of The Lost

Continued From Page 2

leave the church thinking life will be easier and happier by his not being a Christian; but instead he finds himself a slave to sin. There is a burden in following Jesus; but the burden is much lighter and easier than the burden of sin! Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). The "burden" of being a Christian leads to happiness and contentment in this life, and to eternal life in the world to come (I Peter 3:10-12; Mark 10:29-30).

The father gave the Prodigal Son his portion and allowed him to go. God has given us our possessions and has told us how to use them. God wants us to do right (II Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 33:11).

However, God has left us free moral agents; and we must choose how we use our possessions, being assured that we will reap accordingly. When the father gave the Prodigal Son his portion, the Prodigal turned his face from God, and took himself out of God's hand. He therefore apostatized (John 6:66-67; Isaiah 59:1-2). One takes himself out of God's hand when he fails to hear and follow Jesus (John 10:27-29).

The Prodigal Son wasted his substance, money, manhood, self-respect, and good name. He lost everything except his father's

love. Sin saps our vitality of life, and separates us from God; but it does not separate us from God's love (John 3:16; Ezekiel 33:11; Romans 8:5).

The Prodigal Son gave vent to his lusts, and was soon in want. He lost self-respect and joined himself to a citizen, becoming a slave. Sin robs people of their self-respect, and leads from freedom to bondage to sin (Galatians 5:1,4). The Prodigal Son gratified his selfish desires; but such gratification is expensive. If we gratify our lust, we will do it at the expense of our souls (Matthew 16:26).

The Prodigal Son came to himself and returned home. Those who have wandered into the world of sin need to "come to themselves" and return to the Lord (John 6:37).

Conclusion

The parable of the Lost Sheep and the parable of the Lost Coin teach the importance of seeking the lost. The parable of the Prodigal Son teaches that there must be a willingness on the part of a sinner to come to the Lord. The parable of the Prodigal Son also teaches the reception that one should receive when he turns from sin to righteousness.

—Rt. 3 Box 680, Dora, Ala. 35062

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Our Children

"Children!" what a wonderful word! We are told in Psalms 127:3-5 "... children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them..." We see from these verses that children are a wonderful blessing which bring much joy to our lives. Jesus said, "... Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." On another occasion he said,



Ken Tyler

"... Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3; 19:14). Jesus points out how beautiful and wonderful little children are.

All of us know that children grow up so fast. It seems that in a matter of no time they are teenagers; and then before you know it they have graduated from high school, and are gone from home! I think one of the greatest mistakes many of us make is not spending enough time with our children. We live in a hectic world, with great demands; and it seems there is just not enough time. Too often the family is neglected. I am convinced this is one of the main reasons divorce has grown in leaps and bounds the last few years. Families do not have (or take) time for one another. The children suffer, and the marriage relationship suffers.

I don't know what the answer is to your

particular situation, but let me stress one thing: — don't neglect your children. Spend as much time with them as you possibly can. Don't miss their birthday parties; take them fishing; support them at school and in their recreational activities. Our children need us. Soon those 18 years will be gone. I hope we won't look back and say, "Why didn't I spend more time with my children?" The story is told of a little fellow who returned home from school and visited his father in the workshop. His dad gave him a piece of gum, and told him to run on. Later he came back, and his father gave him a quarter. A third time he returned and his dad snapped, "Son, I gave you gum and 25¢; what more do you want?" The little boy replied, "Daddy, I want YOU."

May we never forget that it takes time to be a parent, to mold character, to build a boy or girl.

—P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

The Proper Attitude In Worship

"Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29, A.S.V.).

When the children of God assemble for worship, awe, godly fear, respect, and reverence should characterize their most sober thoughts.

All levity, frivolity and lightmindedness (during the worship service) should be cast aside.

Jesus taught what true worship ought to be. He said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24, A.S.V.).

A word of warning: It is possible for one to do the right THING in worship, but in the wrong SPIRIT. Also, it is possible for one to worship contrary to the demands of the scrip-



W. A. Holley

tures, but do so in the RIGHT SPIRIT (Leviticus 10:1-2; II Samuel 6:6-11; Revelation 22:18-19). Only those who worship God "in spirit" (i.e., rationally and sincerely), "and in truth" (as the word or truth directs) meet the demands of the Lord (Cf. Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 1:10).

We offer a few suggestions which can hinder acceptable worship to God Almighty.

(1) Any unnecessary noise, talking (ever so low), constant coming in and going out of the auditorium, or absent-mindedly flipping back and forth the pages of a song-book, can lead one's mind and heart and attention away from the worship of God (Colossians 3:2; Ephesians 6:6).

(2) Any inattention of younger people, especially the ill-advised practice of note-passing, or the drawing of figures on scraps of paper [or in song-books], and giggling at such foolishness, can cause others to lose respect for the Lord's will and way (I Corinthians 14:33, 40; 15:33-34).

(3) The practice of day-dreaming during the worship hour -- allowing the mind to wander away from the activities of service to the Lord -- robs the participant of any spiritual benefits that might have been available. Such worshipers (?) have little, if any, participation in the acts of worship (Acts 2:41-42; Colossians 3:6). Dear worshiper: Are you

'present in body, but absent in spirit?' Do you sometimes lose contact with what is being said and done? Do you, during worship, spend any time in planning how you are going to use the remainder of the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10)? Such an attitude deprives one of that wonderful enthusiasm so necessary to worship and service to God Almighty "in spirit and in truth."

(4) When there is more interest manifested in new clothes, or the latest hair-styles, than there is in the God of heaven, the effort is certain to be cold and indifferent (Revelation 3:14-22). Such thoughts will never fill the heart of one who wishes to draw near to the Almighty in true worship (Hebrews 10:22-25; 4:16). God is not concerned with the latest Paris fashions or elegant hair-styles; but he is very interested in the attitude of the heart.

(5) Those who insist on "visiting" with a friend or neighbor during the worship service reveal a very poor and inconsiderate attitude or spirit. The assembly is no place to exchange personal pleasantries or the like. Even some older members of the church who should know better have been known to sit and carry on personal conversations with others -- right in the midst of the worship! They thus disturb the preacher or teacher, and others near them (I Corinthians 14:1-2, 22-23, 32-33). Such conduct is shameful and disgraceful!

(6) Hindering the worship of God is a very serious matter. The worship of God is not a side-show! There must be no laughing or joking as we worship God (Cf. Ephesians 5:3-4). Actually, the worship of God is a time for the most serious considerations and meditations (Cf. Psalms 19:14; I Timothy 4:12-16). When it comes to the Lord's Supper we must "examine" ourselves (I Corinthians 11:23-30; II Corinthians 13:5).

(7) If you are a child of God, never get into the habit of wishing for the worship to quickly end. Those who do not have time to worship God are in too big of a rush. Thank God that you are alive and that you still have the opportunity to worship and serve the Great Creator

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

At Last-The "Pot Of Gold"

two are ages 11 and 13.

Mother passed from this life May 27, 1986, after faithfully serving our Lord and Savior for 65 years. She had pre-planned her own funeral, requesting that as many as possible of her former Bible class students participate in it. She had also requested that the beautiful song, "Meet Me There," be the last one sung at her services -- because it would be "one last plea" she could make to those this side of eternity.

During her 79 years she accumulated very little of this world's goods. This mattered

little to her, however; because the REAL "pot of gold" is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and her rich inheritance! She never indicated a shred of doubt of that.

She made human mistakes. If I could make but one observation about her life, however, it would be that "she had a CONSISTENT, LIFE-LONG, UNWAVERING FAITH IN GOD AND HIS PROMISES."

In death, she leaves a challenge for our faith to be the same as hers!

—308 6th Street NE, Jacksonville, AL 36265.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak to me in words of truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

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NUMBER 47

Studies In Romans

(No. 2)

BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

I wish to give further or additional introductory matters relative to Romans 14. To understand the background of the problems discussed is a marvelous must, an intense imperative. It needs to be kept firmly fixed in mind that the church of the first century was neither Jewish exclusively, nor Gentile wholly. It was



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

composed of some from a strict Jewish background, and some from a loose, lax, pagan background where almost anything was permissible. Those from the Jewish background had long been wedded to a system of religious practices that included 'clean' and 'unclean' meats, restrictions about idols and meats offered to them, periods of fastings, the keeping of days, and many other similar matters. As a rule, they were exceedingly slow and adamantly reluctant to give up these. Some eight years after the Mosaic Law had been nailed to Calvary, and after Christianity had begun, When commanded to "Rise Peter; kill, and eat," Peter told the Lord: "... Not so, Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:13-14; Cf. 11:7-8). With force and frequency adamant Judaistic sympathizers sought to compel Gentile converts to the same practices.

But Gentiles or pagans were from a wholly different background. They had never been bound by such Mosaic mandates and felt no obligation in Christ to honor such, to keep such. The 'Jerusalem Conference' and such Pauline productions as Romans, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians,

Colossians, and Hebrews (especially) should have cleared up these matters during the A.D. 50's and 60's. However, such was not the case, as this chapter fully exhibits and as Paul's constant battles with the forces of adamant Judaism fully attest. Judaism was dead; it was a corpse; however, it refused to accept death and be buried permanently. With the Jews insisting that such be honored by Gentile converts, and with Gentile reluctance to be either bothered or bound by such, there was an inevitable confrontation; and this chapter, to a remarkable degree, addresses it, analyzes it, and presents solid, sound, and sane solutions for clearing the matter up once and for all.

Without successful argumentation or quibbling to the contrary, Romans 14 is a truly great and monumentally unique chapter. Lovingly and invitingly, it now looms for our close contemplation of its precious principles, its golden gems, its sensible solutions to a perennial, persistent problem. Limited space will allow for only brief comments on each of these valiant verses.

THE STRONG AND THE WEAK: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

To eat meats, or not to eat meats, is Paul's initial order of business in this chapter. The opening quartet of verses states, Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:1-4).

Strange as it may seem, the Jewish brethren, for the most part, were those "weak" in the faith, those who refused to eat of certain

meats lest they be unclean, or perhaps had been offered to an idol. Some among the Gentiles may also have been of this disposition, and especially is this possible in view of their strong desire not to risk partaking of any meat that might have been offered in sacrifice to idols. These who were "weak" in the faith -- not the faith IN CHRIST, BUT TOUCHING MATTERS ABOUT THE PROPRIETY OF EATING ANY AND ALL MEATS -- WERE TO BE RECEIVED BY THOSE "strong" in the faith, i.e., those who saw no problems with any and all meats. Those "strong" were to receive the "weak," but not continue to discuss such matters with them which would only compound the problem by further confusion, chaos, and alienation. More profitable matters could and should occupy their discussion opportunities together.

The "strong" believer felt he could eat all things; the "weak" believer, running no risks of eating something he deemed unclean or had been offered to idols, stayed clear of all meats; he ate only a diet of herbs -- vegetables and the like.

How are the "strong" and "weak" to react to one another? Paul answers in the next two verses (verses 3-4) which shall be the gist of our study for the next time.

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

Short Sermons

It isn't difficult to make a mountain out of a molehill - just add a little dirt.

Often the bone of contention among nations is just above the ears of the diplomats.



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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Gathering The Fragments

In the Bible God gives unto man "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). It contains lessons from the great Master teacher, Jesus the Christ. These lessons are simple -- yet, they will linger in the minds of men who sincerely serve God and obey his blessed will.

In John 6:1-4 we read of the miracle where Christ fed



Howell Bigham

more than five thousand with "five barley loaves and two small fishes" (verse 9). After Jesus "took the loaves" and had "given thanks," the disciples distributed "to them that were set down," and "likewise of the fishes as much as they would" (verse 11). "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (verse 12).

Christ taught his disciples, and he teaches us through his word today, that we are to "gather up the fragments" in order "that nothing be lost." The lesson derived from the context is that his disciples are not to be wasteful. Let us notice this lesson, and others, that may be gleaned from the phrase "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

First, the Savior said: "Gather up the fragments that remain, THAT NOTHING BE LOST" (Emphasis mine, H.B.). Thus, He teaches the lesson that we are not to be wasteful. In what area can we apply this needed lesson? One such area is that of our talents. Friend, we are not to waste our abilities! In the parable of the talents

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Grace — The Possibility Of Falling Therefrom

INTRODUCTION

The grace of God consists of his mercy [his "undeserved compassion"], love [his "desiring the best for man"], and kindness [his "moral goodness"] (Ephesians 2:4-8; Titus 3:4-7). This brief study considers the possibility of falling from God's grace [apostasy].

What is meant by the phrase, "falling from God's grace

(apostasy). (a) **Negatively speaking**, the phrase does not mean that God ceases to love and starts to hate an individual, withholding his kindness and refusing his mercy out of spite. (b) **Positively speaking**, the phrase refers to the fact that God, infinite in his justice, removes all of the riches [benefits] of his grace from an individual.

Some do not believe such is possible. One writes: "All the prayers a man may pray all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul" (Sam Morris, "Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul — A Discussion Which Involves A Subject Pertinent To All Men").

What does the Bible say? To prove the possibility of falling from God's grace, three lines of evidence will be presented.

I. "PASSAGES" WHICH "SPECIFY" THE POSSIBILITY

(1) **Luke 8:11-15** — Jesus' parable of the sower identifies four possible ways men hear and respond to holy writ. There are those who hear but do not receive the word (verse 12). There are those who hear and receive the word, but "fall away" in time of temptation (verse 13). There are those who hear the word, and as they go on their way in the Christian life are "choked" with cares, riches, and pleasures (verse 14). Then, there are those who hear, receive, and continue to hold the word, bearing much fruit for the Lord's glory (verse 15). Jesus' parable specifies two possible reactions to scripture which entail a "falling from God's grace."

(2) **I Corinthians 9:24-27** — Paul spoke of beating himself [lit. placing blows on the face; that is, beating himself black and blue] to keep from becoming one of the rejected. He manifested a wholesome fear of apostasy rather than a smug complacency regarding the same. Paul thought it was possible to "fall from God's grace."

(3) **II Corinthians 6:1** — Paul's word, "receive" carries the idea of "a reception and a retention." The Corinthians had, thus, come into fellowship with the benefits of God's

grace. But such could be rendered vain if they refused to heed his subsequent warnings. Later in the context, he charged them to avoid the fellowship of iniquity (II Corinthians 6:14-18) and cleanse themselves of defilement (II Corinthians 7:1). What if they had done otherwise? Their coming in fellowship with God's grace would have been rendered vain; in other words, they would have "fallen from God's grace."

(4) **Hebrews 2:1-4** — The term "ought" emphasizes the "necessity" of giving heed to the "things that were heard." The phrase "things that were heard" is translated from an aorist participle carrying the idea of one's having heard and having understood. Thus, the writer was warning his readers about the necessity of holding on to what had been heard and understood rather than drifting from the same. And if they didn't? They would neglect the great salvation that would have otherwise been theirs (verse 3); that is, they would "fall from God's grace."

(5) **Hebrews 10:19-29** — Contextually, when a Christian forsakes the assembling of the saints together (verse 25), he willingly sins (verse 26) and is brought into "a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (verse 27). He is worthy of such judgment because he has insulted Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and the Spirit of grace (verse 28-29) and the justice of God will cry for vengeance against him (verse 30-31). Note: those who are thus described, were numbered among God's people, they had received the benefits of God's grace (verse 19-24). They had been sanctified by the blood of Jesus (verse 29). Still, they were warned of "falling from God's grace."

II. "PRINCIPLES" WHICH "INTENSIFY" THE POSSIBILITY

(1) **The fidelity factor should be considered.** Salvation is contingent on faithfulness (John 8:51; I Corinthians 15:1-2; Colossians 1:21-23; I Timothy 4:12-16). Why should the child of God bother to be faithful if it is impossible for him to fall from God's grace?

(2) **Repetitious warnings should be considered.** Repeatedly, the New Testament warns against apostasy (Cf. Acts 20:28-30; I Timothy 4:1-4; II Timothy 4:1-4). Why the concern, if it is impossible for a child of God to fall from God's favor?

(3) **The second law of pardon should be considered.** To initially be granted the remission of one's sins, baptism for that purpose must be undergone (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Cf. I Peter 3:21). Having become a child of God through this act of obedience by faith (Galatians 3:26-27), the blood of Jesus is made available for the cleansing of those who continue to walk in the light (I John 1:7). The Christian's availing himself of Christ's cleansing blood is termed the "second law of pardon." What is the need for such, if it is impossible for the child of God to fall from God's grace?

(4) **The need for confessing sins should be considered.** Even Christians sin (I John 2:1-2). When they do so, a confession of such is required (I John 1:9; Cf. Acts 8:22, 23; James

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Grace — The Possibility Of Falling Therefrom

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5:16). Why confess? Better still, why would God even bother to forgive a Christian if it be impossible for the Christian, through his sins, to fall out of God's grace.

(5) **Christ's post-resurrection ministry should be considered.** Jesus stands as the Christian's intercessor/high priest (Hebrews 2:10; 4:15; Cf. Romans 8:34). He is the Christian's mediator (I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1-2). What purpose would these ministries of Jesus meet if it is impossible for a Christian to fall from God's grace?

III. "PEOPLE" WHO "EXEMPLIFY" THE POSSIBILITY

(1) **Judas (Acts 1:25; Cf. John 17:12).** Judas was an apostle and preacher (Matthew 10:1-7), a miracle-worker (Mark 3:14-15), and one who belonged to Jesus (John 17:6, 11, 12, 24). Yet, he fell from God's grace and was lost.

(2) **The rich man of the Rich Man and Lazarus fame (Luke 16:19-31).** Note: this rich man spoke of Abraham as father (verse 24, 27, 30). Even further, Abraham spoke of him as his son (verse 25). But Abraham was viewed as the father of Israel (Cf. John 8:39) and Israelites were the children of God under the Mosaic dispensation [the dispensation under which the Rich Man and Lazarus lived] (Cf. Isaiah 63:16). Thus, this rich man was an Old Testament child of God. Yet, in death he lifted up his eyes "being in torments" (verse 23). He fell from God's grace and was lost.

(3) **The apostle Peter (Galatians 2:11-14).** Paul resisted Peter to the face because Peter "stood condemned" [the perfect passive participle translated, suggests that he "stood and remained condemned" until he changed]. Peter was an apostle and a preacher (Matthew 10:1-7), a miracle worker (Mark 3:14-15), and the principle figure during the beginning years of Christianity (Acts 1:5; 10, 11). However, due to his hypocrisy in dealing with the Gentiles, he fell from God's grace. Thankfully, his unrecorded repentance enabled him to return into the benefits of God's grace as evidenced by the epistles he later penned (I Peter and II Peter).

(4) **The Galatian apostates (Galatians 1:8-9; 5:4).** Certain ones of Galatia were causing their fellow brethren to drift away from Christ (Galatians 1:6). They bewitched (Galatians 3:1), hindered (Galatians 5:7), and troubled (Galatians 5:10) their brethren, zealously seeking to shut them out of the benefits of Christianity (Galatians 4:17). Such ones had been "severed from Christ" and had "fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4). Note: one cannot be severed from what he has never been a part of, nor can one fall from where he has never stood. Thus, these individuals had enjoyed the benefits of God's grace at one time but fell from the same.

(5) **False teachers of Peter's day (II Peter 2:1, 12, 20-22).** These false teachers brought to themselves destruction (verse 1) having the darkness of an eternal hell reserved for them (verse 17). At one time they had "escaped the defilements of the world" (Cf. 13, 4), but being "again entangled therein and overcome" the last state was "worse with them than the first" (verse 20-22). They had fallen from God's grace.

CONCLUSION

Passages specify, principles intensify, and various people exemplify the possibility of one's falling out of God's grace. They who so do, "crucify . . . the Son of God

afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:6). Better things are expected of God's people (Hebrews 6:9-12). Thus the

charge of Paul, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Gathering The Fragments

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(Matthew 25:14-30), there was a man who had servants. He called them before departing to a far country in order to deliver unto them his goods (verse 14). He gave one servant five talents; another received two; and the third was given one. These talents were given according to his "several ability" (verse 15). The parable illustrates how the five talent man "went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents" (verse 16). The two talent man, likewise, "gained other two" (verse 17). However, the one talent man did not even attempt to work with his talent: "But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money" (verse 18). Here was a man who had the ability to work with his talent (verse 15), but he went and buried it! How did his master respond to his action? His lord called him a "wicked and slothful servant . . ." (verse 26). Not only was this man a "wicked and slothful servant," but be aware also that his talent was taken from him and was given to the ten-talent man (verse 28). Therefore, we learn that God desires and expects us to use our abilities, whether one be a five, two, or one talent person. If we bury our talent(s), we too will be wasteful and thus will be "unprofitable servants" and will be cast into outer darkness where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (verse 30).

A second lesson that may be gleaned from the sentence concerns the words "GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN . . ." We can apply this statement to those who have left the ship of Zion and have returned to the old world of sin. Peter describes their latter end as being worse than their beginning (II Peter 2:20). Their lives have been darkened by the deceitfulness of sin because they have chosen to enter once again the pollutions of the world. Friend, the unfaithful of the Lord's body, the church of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Romans 16:16), must "pick up the pieces" of their lives that have been shattered by sin, repent, and come home to God as did the prodigal son (Luke 15). Let it be known, that the one who must do the gathering is the unfaithful child of God. However, may we notice also that the faithful are to "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness" (Galatians 6:1). If he does convert the sinner from the error of his way, he shall "save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). Let us heed the warning that was issued from the life of Lot's wife. That warning was simply "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). Therefore, the unfaithful child of God can indeed "gather up the fragments" by simply repenting of his sins (Acts 8:22), confessing his sins to the faithful brethren (James 5:16) that he and they may pray to God in his behalf (Acts 8:24).

The third lesson that we can glean from the Savior's statement "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" has to do with the teaching about the LOST of this world. Some have the mistaken idea that the

gospel is only for some. Friend, the gospel is for all (Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 16:15)!

Let us apply the words "Gather up the fragments" to those whom many would class as "undesirables," "social outcasts," or "derelicts." There are some who think it would be "wasting their time" on people such as these. Friend, the "fragments" of this world have souls as well as any one, and their souls are as important as the next fellow's! When studying the Bible, we find the worth of the soul: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Therefore, God's power unto salvation -- his word (Romans 1:16) -- must be preached to all men, yea, even the "fragments" of this world, that none should be lost. If one will obey the gospel of Christ and remain faithful to the end of his way (Revelation 2:10; II Timothy 4:6-8) he shall be saved.

These are three lessons that we can glean from the simple statement of the Master teacher: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Indeed, the Bible contains a great storehouse of knowledge that can be studied throughout one's lifetime.

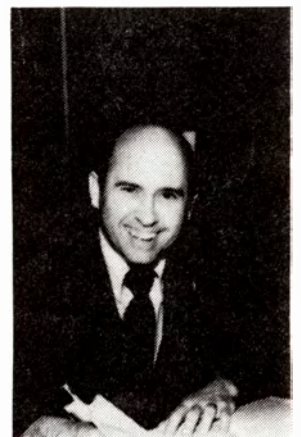
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The Salem Witch Trials

Recently, I visited the old New England city of Salem, Massachusetts, infamous in history as the site of the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. In February of that year, eight young girls, including the daughter of a preacher named Samuel Parris, began to exhibit strange symptoms of behavior that were diagnosed as bewitchment. Interrogated by a local minister, the girls accused a family mulatto maid servant named Tituba of witchcraft. Soon two other older ladies were accused, and then several ladies of Parris' congregation.

Within days, one of the most bizarre and shameful incidents in the history of our nation occurred. Mass hysteria broke out that wrecked and destroyed numerous lives and forever put a blot on the town of Salem.

The following quotes from the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge offer



John Waddey

Continued On Page 4

“Easy To Swallow”

Dana Watford

While visiting in the hospital recently I saw a bulletin board that carried an important message for parents of young children. It read, “Poisons are easy to swallow, but the consequences are not.” The message was easily understood and applicable in many different areas.

There is a spiritual application of this message, and it concerns the “poisons” of false doctrines that are being fostered today. Many false doctrines are easily swallowed,

but the consequences are not. That false doctrines would be easily received came as no surprise to the apostle Paul. He wrote; “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1). In II Timothy 4:3-4, Paul wrote: “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.”

Many people easily “swallow” those poisons promoted by denominationalism; but that is the way of denominationalism -- for without false doctrine it could not exist. That many are swallowing such false doctrines is in keeping with Christ's words: “For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat” (Matthew 7:13).

False doctrines are so numerous! It is easier to learn the truth contained in God's word than to learn all false doctrines. Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). If one knows the truth, then any false doctrine can easily be recognized and not “swallowed.” While it is beyond the scope of this article to mention all false doctrines (even if one could know all), some of the most prominent ones will be mentioned.

The poison “Once saved, always saved” is one very often swallowed. This may be for two reasons: it is easily accessible, as it is taught by many denominations; and it evidently has “good taste,” judging by the numbers who partake of, and promote, it. But the consequences of this poison leave: an “after-taste” that will be eternally bitter. God's word warns, “Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12). This scripture would make no sense if it is impossible to fall away from God. Also one could not fall away from God if he had not been with God. And one could not have been in God's fellowship as an unbeliever (Hebrews 11:6).

Another popular poison is the one which says, “Baptism is not necessary for one's salvation.” Again, this poison is easily swallowed; but the consequences are just as deadly, eternally. Jesus said both belief and baptism are necessary to procure one's salvation (Mark 16:16). Peter stated definitely that baptism is for the purpose of receiving the remission of sins; and he places salvation after baptism (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).

One other poison comes disguised under different labels: it may read: “The church is not essential to one's salvation: or: “You don't have to be a member of any church to be saved.” Because of denominationalism during the last 300 years, it is hard for people to think of THE CHURCH separate and apart from denominationalism; but the Bible “church” existed long before modern churches came into being. If the “church” one speaks of is any of the various denominations, then indeed! one does not have to be a member of it to be saved. Neither is any denomination essential to one's salvation. Even the “church” of which one reads in his New Testament is essential to salvation. It is necessary, for Christ shed his blood that he might purchase this “church” (Acts 20:28). Ephesians chapter 5 teaches us that Christ loved the “church” and gave himself for it, and is the saviour of it (vs. 23-25).

There are many other such “poisons” that are easily swallowed; but these will suffice to show the consequences of doing such. As for most poisons, there is an anti-dote that affects one's eternal well-being. That anti-dote is the truth, God given, which gives us “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). The poisons are many; the anti-dote is but one (John 8:32). TRUTH is a “specific” remedy.

—Rt. 6 Box 248, Benton, KY 42025.

The Salem Witch Trials

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some helpful insights to understanding this destructive experience. It seems “there was the predisposition of the community to accept at its face value every claim and assertion made by the afflicted.”¹ “The accusers became bolder; those who under other circumstances could not have been thought of were charged with the guilt, and of especial significance is the fact that those who opposed or denounced the proceedings were noted and pursued with vindictiveness by the band of girls.”²

“The magistrates entered upon their duties, the accused were examined, the assumption of guilt being at the basis of the examination.”³ “. . . Obloquy rests in large measure upon the ministers who were so active in the affair.”⁴ Most notable was the famous Boston preacher, Cotton Mather.

“Person after person was accused until it seemed that no station, calling or character was exempt from peril of accusation.”⁵ “Previous good records and useful lives went for nothing in the frenzy which paralyzed humane impulses.”⁶ “Among those who were assaulted . . . were Dorcas Good, a child between four and five years of age, Rev. Samuel Willard of the Old South Church . . . and Mrs. Hale, the wife of the minister of the First Church of Beverly . . .”⁷

Benjamin Andrews observes that “no one knew whose turn to be hanged would come next,” “a reign of terror prevailed.”⁸

By September 23 twenty souls had gone to the gallows, and eight more were under the death sentence. “The dire results of the outreach appear only partially in the executions. Hundreds were put under arrest and confined in fetters; some died in prison.”⁹ Multitudes of others were treated as public enemies because suspicion was cast upon them.

Shortly thereafter public sanity revived. On April 25, 1693 the Superior Court in Boston dismissed all charges against the survivors. King William soon vetoed the Witchcraft Act.¹⁰

“The feature of the Salem episode which is most noticeable is the epidemic of spiritual insanity.”¹¹

A Lesson For Today

The weakness, of otherwise good people, to be stampeded into persecution of innocent people still survives. Sometimes Christians and gospel preachers tend to believe the worst about fellow Christians. Rumors fly and destructive reports are passed from ear to ear without thought of verification. Even Paul was slanderously accused by false brethren (II Corinthians 10:10).

Guilt is assumed because of some personal acquaintance, or kinship with a suspected false teacher. Solemn warnings against a Christian brother in some distant town are

sounded by some preacher or journalist and all are expected to put him on their black list of rejectees.

It seems never to occur to such folks that their conduct is contrary to every principle of Christian conduct. Especially the golden rule of Jesus (Matthew 7:12). Little concern is manifested that a man's life-work for Christ can be forever damaged or destroyed by such accusations. Paul reminds us that “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor” (Romans 13:10). The very least we should do is to “prove all things” (I Thessalonians 5:21) and reject all charges not sustained by two or three honorable witnesses (I Timothy 5:19).

Of course there are some false teachers and heretics that must be marked and exposed. Scripture authorizes this (Romans 16:17). But this is no approval for reckless and irresponsible maligning of brethren.

Those who have lived long and had opportunity know our brotherhood, know that too often such attacks on preaching brethren are motivated by jealousy, and vindictiveness (James 3:16). The accusers are frequently found to have far worse problems on their own door steps than the accused.

The Holy Spirit sternly warns us “touch not mine anointed ones, and do my prophets no harm” (I Chronicles 16:22). Those who violate this warning will answer to a just God. Let us “love the brotherhood” (I Peter 2:17). “Speak not evil one of another, brethren” (James 4:11, (KJV). David tells us that “whoso privily slandereth his neighbors, him will (God) destroy” (Psalm 101:5).

May we as a people rise above the evil hysteria of old Salem. Let us not be stampeded into sins against our own brethren. Our war is with Satan and false religion. If we bite and devour one another, we all will be destroyed (Galatians 5:15).

End Notes

¹Samuel Jackson, ed. *The New Schoff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 1911, s.v. “witchcraft.”

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹E. Benjamin Andrews, *History of the United States*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 254.

¹²The New Schoff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, s.v. “witchcraft.”

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Words Of

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

—Acts 26:25

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Studies In Romans 14

(No. 3)

The "strong" brother who eats any and all meats is neither to despise nor count as unimportant the "weak" brother with scruples relative to certain meats. The "weak" brother, in turn, is neither to hold the "strong" brother in contempt, nor to count him a law-violator or moral transgressor in this troublesome matter.



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Christian love and toleration will not allow harmful attitudes toward the "weak" from the "strong" nor from the "strong" toward the "weak." God receives him (the "weak" brother) and so should you, Paul stresses to the "strong" brother. As long as these were recognized and treated as matters of indifference between the two groups, there was no scriptural ground of disfellowship involved at all. Paul sought to 'nip the problem in the bud' lest it degenerate into some such disruption as a disfellowship problem. Paul set forth a marvelous degree of Christian charity and of spiritual sympathy which should be at work.

Currently, those who count themselves "strong" treat as silly those with sensitive scruples, while the "weak" view the "strong" as reckless and headed for sure digression and ultimate apostasy. Feelings of each group must be respected. Toleration must be the order of the day inasmuch as possible. But it becomes improper hermeneutics, or an open abuse of this passage, to apply it beyond the range of this Pauline context. Paul is NOT dealing with false doctrine, nor with efforts to pervert God's plan of pardon, nor with attempts to corrupt the pure, unadulterated plan of Christian worship. Matters of indiffer-

ence are being discussed here -- not matters that touch the doctrinal purity of the church. A brother who begins to teach doctrinal error must be opposed; his false teaching must be exposed. The toleration imposed by apostolic authority here is not relative to matters right or wrong, but pertains purely to matters which are indifferent.

The "weak" brother is God's servant, and the Almighty has received him. Since he is another's (God's) servant, the "strong" brother is clearly out of place in seeking to judge or condemn the "weak" brother. To God he either stands or falls -- not to the "strong" brother. God holds him up; he provides the strength for the "weak" to stand provided the "weak" brother is faithful in matters that are essential. Succinctly and scholarly, brother Guy N. Woods again writes:

Again, let it be noted that the matter involved is something

about which God has given no law, but which a brother uninformed, entertains scruples about. Example: eating meat bought in the market place to which it had been carried from a heathen temple. Wrong to eat it? Yes, answers the weak brother; no, answers the strong brother. What has God said about it? Nothing. Is it actually wrong to eat it? No. What should we do? Act for the best interests of the weak brother (Ibid.).

As a direct result of the new "Unity Meetings" at Joplin, Tulsa, Malibu, Milligan College, and other places, between some of our brethren and Independent Christian Church preachers, some of our hedging brethren, set on compromise of the deepest dye, have begun to sing a tune that abuses this passage from center to circumference. They are advocating a docile willingness to be the "weak" brethren relative to mechanical music in worship, and are telling the Christian church preachers that they can be the "strong" brethren.

ren. Bogard never missed the significance of Mark 16:16 or Acts 2:28 more grievously than this! No sprinkling proponent of Presbyterianism or Methodism ever missed the significance of Romans 6:3-4 or Colossians 2:12 more glaringly than this! It is deplorable to think we have preachers who have sunk this low in efforts to please Independent Christian Church preachers. This MUST be the sweetest music this side of heaven, other than what is made on their pet idols -- pianos and organs, to Christian Church preachers who are not about to yield a single inch of ground in contending that mechanical machinery in Christian worship is authorized, or at least is permitted -- and hence, is acceptable. Again, I repeat that no Baptist ever abused Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; or I Peter 3:21 more than this! Again, no Methodist ever abused John 3:16 and Romans 5:1 (relative to what he deems are "faith only" passages) more than this! I find this to be inexcusable exegesis of the most reprehensible kind. The mechanical instrument corrupts worship. It is a matter that is wrong per se. In NO sense is it in the category of these indifferent matters discussed by Paul.


Brother Noel Merideth is right on target -- dead center at that -- as he warns with weight and wisdom punctuating each scholarly syllable: "Were a brother to deny the necessity of baptism, bring in instrumental music, or deny the kingdom is in existence today, we must, of course, oppose him and expose error" (Ibid., p. 217).

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

Short Sermons

Guess how I know my mother-in-law lives a stone's throw away from us.

The man who invented the eraser had the human race pretty well sized up.



Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
—Acts 26:35

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Who Will Spend Eternity In Hell?

Hell is just as real as heaven. If there is no hell, there is no heaven. The same Jesus and the same Bible that talks of heaven, also talks of hell (Matthew 5:22; 6:19-21).

"The rich man" and "Lazarus" both lived in this world, both died; one went to a place of rest, the other went to a place of punishment (Luke 16:19-31). Both these men changed worlds; and both remained conscious when they reached their respective destinations. "Lazarus" was still "Lazarus" and "the rich man" was still "the rich man." (Cf., Matthew 17:1-13).

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (John 14:1-6). Hell is a prepared place for the wicked who refuse to honor and obey the law of God. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," said Jesus (Matthew 25:41).

Who will spend eternity in hell? We shall answer the foregoing question according to the Holy Bible, and the answer may be shocking and surprising to some of our readers:

(1) Those who committed, but would not repent of, the most horrible sins listed in the Bible. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they

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A Sectarian Spirit

A sect is "a religious denomination, especially one that has broken away from an established church" (Webster's New World Dictionary). Sectarian means "devoted to some sect, narrow-minded, a member of a sect, one who is blindly devoted to a sect" (Ibid). Among our brethren the word "sectarian" carries the connotation of imbibing the unscriptural spirit common to those in sectarian denominations. Obviously it is no compliment to have a sectarian spirit. To manifest such an unholy spirit is evidence that one does not have the mind or spirit of Christ (Philippians 2:5).



John Waddey

We need to be reminded that one can be a member of the true church of Christ and yet harbor a sectarian spirit concerning Christianity. Such was the case with the Judaizing Christians who sought to bind their Jewish traditions on Gentile converts (Acts 15:10). Those misguided disciples hated Paul and opposed his every effort. Although they were baptized disciples, the great apostle called them "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18).

Everyone condemns and opposes the sectarian spirit; but not everyone seems to realize that there are two varieties of that ill.

The Sectarian Spirit of Compromise

There are some brethren who are willing to compromise on God's truth even as do worldly, liberal denominational preachers. Such men see no great wrong in the large and socially respectable denominational bodies. In fact they are willing to borrow and use denominational methods and terminology in their work and teaching. They want mutual toleration and respect with denominational churches and leaders. Men of such spirit feel that the church has been too narrow, strict, and exclusive. To them it is bad manners, out of style, and even unchristian ever to openly criticize or condemn religious error or false teachers.

Those with a sectarian spirit often view denominational preachers and churches as sweet and nice with only a little error. On the other hand, our brotherhood and preachers are considered to be so narrow and mean, and so wrong on so many points, that they can't believe there is that much difference between the two groups. One gets the distance feeling that if a choice had to be made, their sympathies would go to the denominationalists.

The sectarian spirit is embarrassed at the idea that there is only one church which belongs to Christ and is pleasing to him; and that consequently all man-made churches are sinful and without spiritual value. They shy away from preaching such a bold and exclusivist concept, and act as though such was not the case. Usually, however, it is difficult for such a man to openly confess his skepticism regarding the uniqueness of the church.

Those of this frame of mind tend to scorn the scholarship of our brethren, past and present, while adoring that of the denomi-

national world. No one objects to use of the books of great scholars, no matter what their affiliation. But when a man rejects brotherhood scholarship with a wave of the hand, while devouring that of denominationalism without question, something is wrong. Those who constantly feed at the trough of error will almost certainly reflect that error in their thinking, preaching and writing.

Those who want unity at any price hold a sectarian spirit. Unity is surely a chief concern of every faithful Christian. We pray for unity as did Christ (John 17:20-21); we diligently work to achieve and maintain it (Ephesians 4:3). Yet truth is also of concern to the righteous man (John 8:32). God wants us to hold and speak sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). We are obligated to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered" (Jude 3). A faithful brother will hold both unity and loyalty to Christ's word in proper balance. The sectarian mind puts such a low premium on truth that he can tolerate most any abuse of it except the brother who is set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:16).

There is yet another variety of this sectarian spirit that is observable. While noticeably different from those previously discussed, it has its counterpart in the sectarian world. These brethren are greatly stirred at the presence and practice of the compromising, liberals among us. They are committed to fighting them without pause. In fact, in their zeal for purity of faith and practice, they exceed the bounds of the Christian spirit, and fall into that mean and bitter sectarian spirit so common in the world of the small, narrow denominational bodies.

They reach a point where they seem to love to fight with brethren who think different than they. One of the great challenges of the Restoration fathers was how to deal with differences of opinion and yet preserve unity. They expressed their conclusion thusly: "In matters of opinion liberty." Every man of God will have to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12); he will have to "mark them that cause divisions . . . contrary to the doctrine of Christ" (Romans 16:17); but when he enjoys such and eagerly pursues this painful task he has imbibed a sectarian spirit. Paul exposed the Judaizers as enemies, but did so with weeping (Philippians 3:18).

Such brethren put a low premium on the unity of the body. Rather than heal a wound, or repair a breach, they opt to separate themselves, or to drive out offending brothers; to destroy the errant good work or project. There are times when loyal saints have no option but to come out of the Babylon of error. Such decisions to break fellowship should not be hastily made. Sectarian have a low view of the importance of oneness.

A sectarian person will insist on uniformity of opinion and conformity with his strongly-held views and practices. It never seems to occur to him that the other brother's view might possibly be right, or that his might be wrong. He works on the assumption that he is right on the mark, and any variation therefrom is wrong. Such folk can bring incredible pressure upon those with whom they disagree, to bring them into line. This the denominationalists do with their creeds and governing bodies.

The sectarian mind is suspicious of all

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Living Together: Sex Without Commitment

In Jeremiah 6:15 the prophet spoke out against an ungodly society saying, "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush." According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of people in America now co-habiting outside wedlock has more than tripled since 1970. There



Charles Cook

are now nearly two million Americans who have chosen to just "live together" rather than being legally and scripturally married. Many appear to be unashamed!

They used to refer to this practice as "shacking up;" but now we are told that phrase is not very sophisticated, and no one refers to it in that way anymore. Now it is referred to as simply "living together."

"Well, what is wrong with that? It is our lives," they say. People seem to feel that right and wrong can be determined by individual preference, or maybe by the democratic process. But the idea that God sets standards of conduct is not very popular. "Everyone is doing it" seems to carry more weight than God's position on the issue.

Back in the 1960's Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist, advocated a social change that would recognize "trial marriages." The proposal was made that people could decide after "trying it for awhile" whether they were compatible or not. From that era until now, the number of couples living together apart from a civil or religious ceremony has grown at an alarming rate. However, some recent studies confirm that there is "little correlation between living together before marriage and future happiness in marriage" (Reader's Digest, March, 1986, pp. 11-16).

Without doubt we are living in a self-

centered, pleasure-oriented age that has little regard for Christian values. Majoritively, the media seems devoted to the proposition that people were created to do as they please. The message is that people ought to be able to live as they want and not by some set of rules. The really frightening thing about all of this is the fact that people are so brazen and flippant in their attitudes about living together. The dramas and sitcoms on television no longer have the boy proposing marriage to the girl; now the script calls for the girl to suggest that the boy move in and live with her . . . and we are supposed to believe they live happily ever after.

Another frightening trend, but not a surprising one, is that liberal theology defends (?) this open lifestyle. They argue: "The Bible knows no sex ethic; it teaches only a love ethic. Christians are bound only by whatever sexual mores are applicable in any given country, or culture, or age." (Christian News Encyclopedia, p. 1553).

But this is false. The Bible teaches that true Christians live by a higher ethic than that of the world. We indeed march to the beat of a different drummer. In Romans 12:2 Paul affirms that we must not allow ourselves to be conformed to this world, but to the standards of God. In Philippians 2:15 he said: "That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

The Biblical position regarding marriage is that it is to be "held in honor among all," and that in marriage "the bed is undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4). In this context the inspired writer assures that "God will judge the immoral and adulterous." When a man and woman are joined in matrimony according to God's laws, he sees them "as one flesh" (Matthew 19:5; Genesis 2:24). Furthermore, Paul said, "It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God" (I Thessalonians 4:3-5).

The New Testament clearly states that "fornication" (sexual intercourse between un-

married persons) and "adultery" (sexual intercourse with someone other than your spouse) are acts of sin which, if not repented of and put away, will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven (see I Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 5:19-21).

The church today is under tremendous pressure to give in to the changes in the public's attitude about people living together outside of marriage. Loving concern and Biblical counseling are certainly in order; but to fellowship sin is another question altogether. As in New Testament times, we must call on people to "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," and encourage only the standards of behavior sanctioned by God before we extend our hand of fellowship.

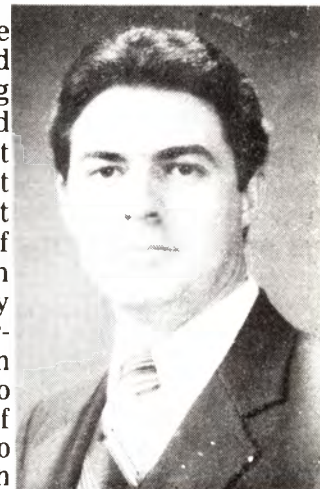
Even the most wordly-minded people admit that sex without commitment cheapens a relationship. In their hearts they know there is a difference between love and lust. To all those caught-up in intimacy outside of marriage, we want to communicate the message that God will forgive and receive you upon his specified terms (Ephesians 2:8-10; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), if you so desire. But all must submit to his standard of morality. And the church must always stand with God.

—Kona Church of Christ, P.O. Box 803, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96745.

The Foundation Of God

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Timothy 2:19). Paul's reference to the foundation of God refers not to the base or footing of God himself, but to the foundation which he laid. Men, whose hope is in the Savior, have the blessings of that "sure foundation" (Isaiah 28:16). The lesson from the Lord recorded in Matthew 7:24-27 is the necessity of a solid foundation. Wise men still build on the rock, while fools' fortunes founder on the sand. Paul presents to Timothy the cause for hope and security that the young preacher needs, especially in view of others mentioned by Paul who had left and who would leave the faith.

Christians need not despair though others become unfaithful. The foundation standeth sure! It is firm, solid, steady. The foundation of the church is "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief" stone of the corner (Ephesians 2:20). Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Paul said, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). Though error may rage and brethren



Bobby Liddell

A Sectarian Spirit

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brethren outside of their immediate circle of friends. Others are presumed to be of doubtful soundness until they prove their loyalty to the satisfaction of these brethren. They tend to believe the worst about a brother's life and work when gossip circulates. Sooner or later this suspicion boomerangs upon them, for other sectarian spirited folks believe the evil report about them.

The sectarian-saint develops a bitter, hateful spirit toward those not of their clique. Such is seen in the way they refer to them, often omitting endearing terms (such as "brother"). They attack brethren not of their camp with a sarcastic and hateful spirit. They ridicule their reasoning and cast dispersion on their work. Such is not the spirit of our Lord. The AGAPE love he commands will treat even our enemies with kindness and courtesy (Romans 12:14, 20).

The sectarian man preaches God's gospel in

a hateful, belligerent way. He may call it "sound preaching," or "standing for the truth," but really it is a rude, and hateful presentation. To speak the truth in love would be considered "weak preaching" of no merit (Ephesians 4:15).

A sectarian mind assumes that every new or different method of doing God's work is unscriptural and therefore wrong. Without asking: Is it just another acceptable way to fulfill a given command, he attacks it and (those who use it) as "unsound." He shoots first, and asks his questions later. Thus he is often forced to do his work in ways that are outmoded and ineffective. If he prevails, all have to do so.

Let all brothers and sisters try themselves to see if they truly have the mind of Christ or that of a sectarian (II Corinthians 13:5). May God deliver us from a sectarian spirit.

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The Foundation Of God

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may apostatize; though all else may be shaken -- the foundation of God standeth sure! The kingdom cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:26-29, A.S.V.).

Inscribed upon that foundation are two principles. The first is: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Through time and eternity, that inscription shall be found, never removed. The Lord knows his children. How foolish to think that we could deceive God and have him believe we are one of his when we are not (Galatians 6:7). The Lord knows whom to add to the church (Acts 2:47), and none shall sneak in. Jesus said that he knows his sheep (John 10:27). As the Lord knows them that are his, he also knows them that are NOT his. Such shall be punished with everlasting punishment, banished from God and his presence eternally (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Though men might cry, "Lord, Lord,"

and do many good things; yet if they fail to do the will of the Father, Christ will say: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

The second inscription upon that sure foundation is, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Not a few, but "every one that nameth the name of Christ." While some leave the truth and the cause of Christ, Christians are to leave sin and the service of Satan. They are to abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22); resist Satan (James 4:7); flee lust (II Timothy 2:22); lay aside every weight and besetting sin (Hebrews 12:1); and abhor evil and cleave to that which is good (Romans 12:9).

Though grieved by the falling away of those formerly numbered among the faithful, let every Christian know that he can stand, by

the grace of God, though every other person on the earth embrace error and submit to Satan! Brethren, the foundation is sure! It is solid, firm and steady. Our God is able to save, and that eternally, all those who will trust and obey him. Let us determine anew to take our stand with God and his people, come what may!

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Who Will Spend Eternity In Hell?

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which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 6:19-21). These words were addressed to people who were already members of the Lord's church (Galatians 1:1-2; 3:26-27).

Again hear the word of God: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

(2) Among those destined to spend eternity in hell are thousands of preachers . . . men who should have known better. Have you ever listened to the conflicting voices of preachers? Their messages are contradictory. One preaches one gospel while other preachers are declaring an entirely different 'gospel'(?). It will be well to read Galatians 1:6-10. Not all preaching is the same (Philippians 1:15-18). Verily, Satan has his own doctrines, his own preachers, his own churches (I Timothy 4:1-4; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Revelation 2:9; 3:9). There were 12 original apostles: but these men did NOT preach 12 different gospels. All apostolic preachers preached one and the same gospel (I Peter 4:11; II John 9-11; Jude 3).

(3) There will be many religious people in hell. Jesus warns of many who shall claim they did many mighty works in his name, even to casting out devils; but Jesus will declare he never approved of them (Matthew 7:21-23). Some believed on him but would not confess him lest they be put out of the synagogue (John 12:42-43). Can such be saved? (Matthew 10:32-33).

(4) Those who are selfish and unconcerned for the welfare of others are sure to be lost (Matthew 25:31-46). To refuse others is to be unlike Christ. James 1:27; Galatians 6:10 and II Corinthians 9:13-15 teach that Christians are required to help others, whether they be in the church or out of it. We serve Christ by serving our fellowman (Galatians 5:13).

(5) Luke-warm church members are certain to be in hell unless they come to repentance. The Laodicean church was made up of members who were neither hot nor cold (Revelation 3:14-22). Luke-warm members accomplish very little. All such members

are sure to be spued out.

(6) Good moral people who rely on their moral goodness to save them are among those who will be lost in hell. Cornelius was a good man, but an unsaved man (Acts 10:1-2; Cf. 11:13-14). Cornelius, although a good moral man, was not saved from his sins until he heard and obeyed the gospel (Acts 10:47-48). If a sinner could be saved by his moral goodness, Jesus Christ came into the world, lived and died in vain (Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 2:9; I John 1:6-7; 2:1-2). Many honest people never lie, never steal, never commit adultery, never murder, but they remain sinners because they have rebelled against Mark 16:16, Acts 2:36-38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3-4, I Peter 3:20-21, and other passages. God has moral laws which must be obeyed; but God also has some positive divine laws which must be obeyed too.

(7) Another classification of those who shall be lost in hell are the backsliders. Who are they? They are those who have been faithful children of God, but who have gone "backward, and not forward" (Jeremiah 7:24). They "have turned their back unto me, and not their face," is Jeremiah's description of "backsliding" (Jeremiah 2:27).

Peter's description of backsliding is as follows: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:20-22). Backsliders, be zealous, and repent (Luke 13:3, 5)!

--Who can be saved? By God's wondrous grace, those who hear, believe, repent, confess Jesus' name, and are baptized in his name for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 6:3-4; Revelation 2:10).

—P.O. Box Parrish, AL 35580.

PSALM 100

A Psalm of Praise.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

2Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.

3Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 22

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NUMBER 49

Studies In Romans 14

(No. 4)

After discussing the indifferent matter of meats, Paul next turns apostolic attention to day-keeping; but he still injects the matter of meats also, for they both fall into the same category. He writes:

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth the day, regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Romans 14:5-6).

Day-keeping was a matter similar to what the apostle had just discussed in relationship to meats. Christians from a Jewish background had kept a number of days. Evidently, they brought some of these feelings for day-keeping into the church with them, and sought to compel the Gentiles to do the same. Two warnings seem to be appropriate here. (1) I do not believe Paul is advocating that it is all right for them to keep HOLY the sabbath, the new moons, the days belonging to Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, etc. He warned the Colossians about such relics that belonged to the shadow (Judaism) and not the substance (Christianity) in Colossians 14-17. Romans is only three to five years earlier in literary composition than is Colossians. About the same time he wrote Romans, Paul penned Galatians. To these Saints he wrote, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

labor in vain" (Galatians 4:11-12). This severe Galatian warning does not sound like Pauline approval for keeping as religious (or holy) special days from Judaism under Christianity. Furthermore, Paul taught that observing one part of the law (circumcision) made it incumbent to observe it all (Galatians 5:3). The same principle would apply to day-keeping if done to honor Moses and keep intact his system of religion. Evidently, Paul is talking about a type of day-keeping that was within the worshipper's own choice and did not negate any obligation he owes God under Christ. One may set aside a day when he is going to spend the whole day in personal work, in an all day study period of some Biblical topic, or some other religious endeavor. He has that right. But no man has the right to sit in judgment of his brother and deem him as less than religious because he spends that day on the job making a living for his family. Brother Merideth says on this text,

The days were special days of people's own choosing. A man may keep a day if he wishes; but he must not make it a law of faith and demand that others follow his bidding. Let each satisfy his own mind in the matter.

If a person chooses to devote an extra day to the Lord each week he may do so; he has the right to give it to the Lord. Another, though not doing as the former, still serves God in his activities, and gives God thanks; and God is pleased with both (Ibid., p. 218).

(2) The second warning is lest a person think that the Lord's day is in the scope of Paul's reasoning. No, it is not!! The Lord has set apart the first day of the week for Christian worship. Activities to be done therein are neither matters of opinion, nor of indifference.

But relative to the days Paul has in mind, each Christian must be fully persuaded in his own mind. Leeway was allowed. The one who regarded the day, regarded it to the Lord.

The one who did not regard the day as being special, did not regard it to the Lord. The one who ate (meat), gave God thanks; the one who ate not, (remained with a diet of herbs or vegetables) gave God thanks. God received both. For that fact: the one group (the "strong") should not despise the other (the "weak") and the other (the "weak") should not accuse those in the opposing category (the "strong") as being digressive or bent on sure apostasy.

Brother Woods well states,

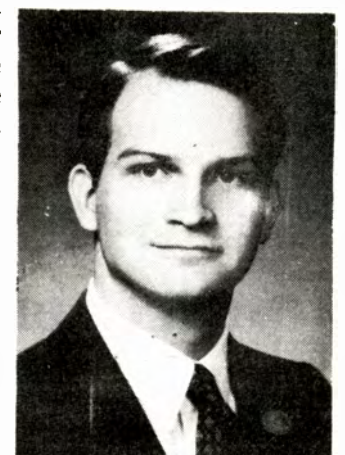
If such an one chooses to devote an extra day to the Lord each week, and participate in special religious activity thereon, let him do so; he has the right to dedicate it to the Lord; another, though not doing as the former, still serves God in his activities and gives God thanks, and God is pleased with both (Woods, op. cit., p. 52).

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

Big Daddy? Or Little Daddy?

We may as well admit it: Our children learn more from what they see in us than by what they hear from us. Or, to put it another way: Actions speak louder than words.

One young couple was experiencing difficulty in freeing their two-year-old daughter from the thumb-sucking habit. Finally the husband hit upon an idea. He



Dalton Key

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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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Big Daddy? Or Little Daddy?

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leaned down, looked into her small, innocent eyes, and asked, "Big girl? or little girl?" The small one immediately replied, "Big girl!" --and out came the thumb. A few hours later, daddy reached for a cigarette and began to light up. The little girl looked up, peered into his eyes, and asked: "Big daddy? or little daddy?"

Our children are not as naive as we might suppose. They can detect duplicity and hypocrisy with marvelous accuracy. It's not easy to fool a child!

Solomon's sage advice to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6), involves more than mere verbal instruction; it requires a living demonstration, a good example, as well. Albert Einstein, the great thinker of yesteryear, was once asked a question concerning the rearing of children. Einstein answered by saying, "Well, there are three principles in child rearing: Example, example, and example."

Parents, your children are wonderful gifts from a loving God (Psalms 127:3). Handle them with care and prayer. And remember: They learn both by hearing and by seeing. Don't stop with telling well; -- live well.

--And one last thought: could there be some subconscious connection between thumb sucking, and cigarette smoking? (Just a thought)!

--P.O. Box 13, Liberal, KS 67901-0563.

Short Sermons

When money talks these days it is probably asking, "What happened?"

The world is moving so fast these days that the man who says it can't be done is usually interrupted by someone doing it.

Justification Is By Faith, But Not By Faith Alone

Paul affirmed, "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Romans 3:28). This is the dominant theme of the new covenant's doctrine of salvation. We should boldly preach this grand truth, even as did Paul.

Protestant theologians have erred, however, by teaching justification by faith ALONE. Prior to 1910, the Methodist Discipline stated: "wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." The Baptist Manual declares, "... that justification ... is bestowed ... solely through faith in Christ ..."

To teach this concept, one must twist or ignore the clear declaration of the inspired author, James. The last half of the second chapter of his epistle is devoted to establishing the fact that "by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" (James 2:24, A.S.V). He cites two examples of Old Testament worthies who were said to be blessed of God because of their faith. "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness" (James 2:23); yet Abraham obeyed God even when told to sacrifice his own son. Thus, his "faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ..." (James 2:22). Bloomfield renders this passage, "... by works his faith was rendered complete. ..." So also was the case of Rahab: she was justified when her faith led her to obey God in the matter of assisting the Hebrew messengers (James 2:25). Thus he concludes that "by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" (James 2:24).

The same truth obtains today: the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Only a faith that works through love avails anything, said Paul (Galatians 5:6). It should be no marvel then that God placed repentance and baptism along with faith as prerequisites for justification. The Holy Spirit led Peter to tell the believing Jews to "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ..." (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly received his word were baptized and their sins were forgiven (Acts 2:41). In so doing their faith wrought with their works and was rendered complete.

This principle can also be seen in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 22:1-16). His faith, strong as it was, and great as were its effects upon his inner man, was not imputed to him for righteousness, so as to give him peace with God, until he arose and was baptized. When his faith worked with his works in baptism, by the works the faith was made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which says: "He believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness."

Paul himself preached this truth in his



John Waddey

ministry. To the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia he said: "... through this man [Jesus] is proclaimed unto you remission of sins; and by him every one that believeth is justified. ..." (Acts 13:38-39). Now, when does one receive remission of sins? Peter answers for us: "Repent ye, and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). When the sinner does so, Paul depicts him as a believer who is justified.

J. M. Furness comments that "Justification is a 'free gift' (Romans 5:16, 18), and is not a future hope, but a present privilege: we ARE justified (Romans 3:28); HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED (Romans 5:1, 9, NEB)."

W. E. Vine tells us that "being justified freely by his grace" (Romans 3:24) "is in the present continuous tense, indicating the constant process of justification in the succession of those who believe and are justified." This reflects John's teaching that the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing those who keep on walking in the light and confessing their sins (I John 1:7-9).

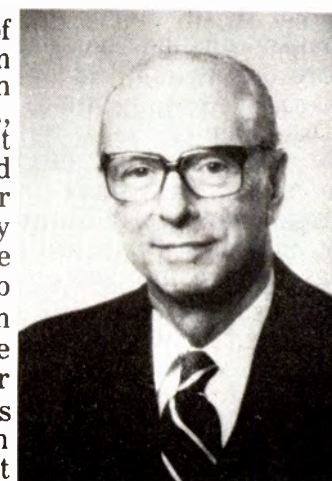
In ancient times when persons were charged with a crime they were arraigned before judges, who having heard the case, announced their judgment by placing small stones in an urn. If they judged him innocent, they deposited a white stone; a black one if guilty. "... the ceremony of putting white pebbles into an urn did not MAKE the accused individual either just or innocent, but it FORMALLY DECLARED him just and innocent. It was a judicial announcement of acquittal." So when we come to Christ on the terms of the gospel, God justified us, although we are neither just nor innocent. But because Christ died in our place, he can justify the ungodly (Romans 4:5).

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A Unique Pioneer Restorationist

Many members of the church possess an acquaintance with Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb and other faithful early preachers. Few have knowledge of Jacob Creath, Jr. Although his life ended at the age of 87 in the year 1886 there are lessons to be learned from this devoted servant of the Lord. His deep faith in God, coupled with a determination to follow his will, was profound.

Two years prior to his death Creath wrote his own obituary. He had no funeral since there is no record of Christ and the apostles' having a funeral. It was his desire to be buried



Dabney Phillips

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A Unique Pioneer Restorationist

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in a plain coffin, with a pocket Bible under his head, and a copy of Campbell's Living Oracles under the pocket Bible. His devoted wife carried out his wishes relative to these matters. John Rowe gave Creath the titles of "Iron Duke of the Restoration," and "John Knox of the Restoration." Rowe further commented that Creath "would neither be bought nor sold, and was of the 'stuff' of which martyrs were made." Along with other faithful gospel proclaimers Jacob Creath, Jr., was persecuted by his former religious friends, and often by his relatives in the flesh. However, Creath and others went out into new fields to plant New Testament churches.

Early in life Creath briefly turned to infidelity due to the experimental religion of his day. Later he was expelled from the Baptist church along with "Raccoon" John Smith, Jacob Creath, Sr., and an uncle. Jacob Creath, Jr., learned Restoration truths by reading the Christian Baptist. Jacob was immersed by Silas Shelburne in 1817 and began preaching within a few months. His studies carried him to the University of North Carolina and Columbia College in Washington, D.C.

Creath stated, "I tried to get to Calvary through Sinai." Thousands today attempt salvation through the law of Moses. In 1835 with the assistance of John T. Johnson a

gospel meeting was conducted at Versailles, Kentucky. The results were that 140 were baptized for the remission of sins. After his first sermon (on Galatians 3:10), a woman told him that "he could word a good prayer, but that he would never make a preacher." Creath violently opposed instrumental music in worship, and the missionary society as a medium of preaching the gospel. Creath charged that Alexander Campbell had changed his position relative to the society issue.

Each morning Creath walked a mile to a grove where he concentrated on oratory, and prayed for twenty minutes. In 1843 he had to cut the ice to baptize in Lewis County, Missouri. For this ten day meeting Jacob was paid \$3.00. A deist of Creath's acquaintance once remarked, "There are but two things that could make me cry: one was shaving with a dull razor; the other was hearing Jacob Creath, Jr., preach!" A member of congress stated that Creath was the only man that he ever heard preach who could deliver a three-hour sermon, without saying something not worth hearing. Jacob wrote a little poem which he often enjoyed quoting,

"Tobacco is an Indian weed.

It was the devil who sowed the seed.

It drains your pocket, stains your clothes,

God Is Unlike Man

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

Man has from time immemorial tried to make God in his own image: "...Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes,"

says Jehovah (Psalms 50:21). "For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods" (Psalms 97:9; Cf. Psalms 115:5).

We would respectfully suggest to our readers some thoughts that need to be considered: God is omnipresent (everywhere present at once); God is omniscient (possesses universal or complete knowledge); God is omnipotent (has unlimited power or authority). Here we suggest that I Timothy 6:14-16 be read with great reverence. Just because God cannot be seen is no reason to claim that he does not exist. For example, radio waves cannot be seen; but they are all around us.

We shall now point out some dissimilarities between God and man--

(1) Man can lie, but God cannot: "That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us . . ." (Hebrews 6:17-20). The "two immutable things" mentioned in the foregoing quotation



W. A. Holley

are God's promise and his oath. While man often lies, God never does!

(2) Man often becomes tired and weary, but God never does. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:28). Jesus calls the weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest (Matthew 11:28-30).

(3) Man was created (Genesis 1:26-27), but God was not. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1-2). "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 90:2; Cf. Proverbs 8:25-29). Hence, by faith we understand these marvelous acts of God Almighty (Hebrews 11:3).

(4) Man is dependent, but God is not. From Paul's marvelous sermon on Mars' hill (Acts 17:22-31), we quote verses 24 and 25: "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 that he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. . ."

God is not greater for our being; nor would he be any less if we did not exist. To believe and obey him adds nothing to his greatness or perfection; to doubt him does not diminish his power and character in any sense. God is WHAT he is, whether we exist or not.

(5) Man must account for his actions (Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10), but God accounts to no one. Since God is sovereign and

And makes a chimney of your nose."

Jacob Creath, Jr., followed a Bible reading plan that would be good for us today: "I have long been in the habit for my own improvement, of reading the first chapter of Genesis on the first day of every January, and of reaching the last verse in the book of revelation by the time old Mother Terra has finished her annual round. Acting on this plan I have read the whole divine book through more than fifty times." His work philosophy was summed up in this quotation, "Though often weary in my work, I was never weary of it." The church of the Lord continues to need men of the moral fiber that characterized the life of Jacob Creath, Jr.

—100 Carlton Place, Gadsden, AL 35901.

Justification Is By Faith, But Not By Faith Alone

Continued from page 2

The soul thus justified must never feel 'proud' of his attainments or boast of his righteousness. Our salvation is by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). "Let any man that ever lived appear before the bar of God stripped of the mantle which God's mercy has thrown over him, and he must be condemned as a sinner."

"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God. . ." (Romans 5:1). Was there ever a grander theme? Is there any message more needed in a sin-cursed world? Can we ever exhaust its meaning?

Let every disciple of Jesus shout it from the house tops and take the glad news to every soul on planet Earth. God will justify the sinner who believes in Jesus and obeys his blessed gospel! May we never, never, never abandon such a glorious theme to those who pervert its message and destroy its power.

—6608 Beaver Ridge Rd., Knoxville, TN 37931-9599.

Did Your Baptism "Take?"

Those who missed hearing the late E. R. Harper's classic based on the challenging question, "Did Your Baptism Take?" are the poorer for it. No other man could challenge his audience to "examine themselves whether they were in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:5) as could this great preacher.

There is no intention in this article to duplicate brother Harper's masterpiece, even if such were possible. But I do borrow his title for examination of a serious matter that is at



R. W. Gray

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Did Your Baptism "Take?"

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the core of many spiritual ills in the church of the Lord.

That something is missing in the area of submissiveness, humility, and in "preferring one another" within our ranks perhaps few would deny (Ephesians 5:21; Romans 12:10). Too much of the "wisdom" that is from beneath shows itself in our discussions with one another (James 3:14-18). There are too few tears of sorrow regarding those who keep not God's law, and far too many "Aha! I caught you at it!" dispositions demonstrated (Psalms 119:136). Some may feel that one must be sarcastic in order to be sound; but there is reason to fear that this is not the only source of this problem. The diagnosis appears to be a serious heart ailment. The symptom is a rapid "beat" from the "excitement" of nailing to the wall someone who has been tried and found wanting on some important issue. The norm for the converted heart is a serious ache and throb when a brother falls from the path of steadfastness.

In far too many instances the acceptance of worldliness as a part of Christian "liberty" is showing up in the twentieth century church as it did in the first (Jude 10, 11, 12, 13). With the exception of occasional "church going," many who are identified with God's people are no different in life style and vocabulary from those living in the world. There is a great deal of the dog-eat-dog philosophy among those who are supposed to be examples and feeders of the flock. Competition, suspicion, distaste, and rancor are prevalent among those who propose to follow him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28).

There are exceptions to the problems herein outlined, to be sure; but any amount of worldliness and worldly attitudes is too much to be acceptable within the body of our Lord. That the problems are multiplying, even the casual observer can confirm. There must be a serious, underlying problem at the bottom of the inconsistencies and turmoil witnessed among us.

Are we correct in assuming that an unregenerated heart is at the root of all evils within and among us? Is it not true that if our hearts are right, so will be our actions? (Matthew 12:34-37). How is it that so many seemingly enter the fellowship of the saints who show little evidence of a changed life? How are we encouraging this trend?

It is self-evident that no simplistic answer will suffice in assessing our problems. Many factors contribute to this trend of bringing unrepentant souls into the circle with the saints. But one of the greatest problems is our own lack of emphasis upon Bible repentance. Not that we exclude it from the "plan," or omit reference to it in our teaching and preaching emphasis. But we have failed somewhere to make it "take" with our would-be converts. Perhaps it is in our failure to define it. Have we inadvertently left the impression that those coming to baptism come only with some degree of regret that they were caught in their sins, and a little resolve to "try a little" to improve as time goes on? In short, have we actually impressed upon our hearers the fact that their repentance is toward God, brought on by Godly sorrow, and followed by a revolutionary change of life? Do they understand what it means to be "born again?" Can they properly appreciate what is involved in "walking in newness of life" (Romans 6:4-5).

Do men actually see themselves as sinners in the hands of an angry God prior to their obedience of faith? (Psalms 7:11; Romans 1:4; Acts 2:38). Has the preaching of the cross melted their stony hearts to make of them hearts of clay? (Romans 2:4-11). Do they then come to baptism "calling on the name of the Lord" that he might be merciful to them as sinners in his sight? (Acts 22:16).

We must somehow learn to impress upon sinners that they need more than a little moral reform and ethical varnish to have their sins blotted out! They must "repent, and be converted" (Acts 3:19). They must "repent in view of a coming judgment." "They must repent and be baptized, . . . for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 17:30; 2:38). The "repentance" of which the Bible so clearly speaks involves restitution of wrongs done, when such is possible. All stolen goods, including a stolen wife, must be returned (Luke 19:8; II Samuel 12:6). The blood of Christ does not take away sins of the impenitent, unchanged soul. Baptism is a washing of regeneration, not a

body bath in order to be "identified" with good people (Titus 3:5; I Peter 3:21). It is not enough to have some vague idea that baptism is somehow important. We must come to understand it as the place where God operates upon our sinful souls and brings us forth a people after his own possession (Colossians 2:12-13; 3:1; Titus 2:11-14).

In our competition with the sects and one another we have actually encouraged the impenitent to change their relationship before they changed their hearts and corrected their lives. While this in reality is a spiritual impossibility, it is the message far too frequently "heard" by those we are hoping to win to the Lord. May we come to see once more that it is our task to "convict and convert," and not to convince and cajole. Only then will converts understand that having died to sin they are alive unto righteousness (Romans 6:1-23).

What about it, my friend; did your baptism "take?"

—Rt. 3 Box 306, Bremen, GA 30110.

God Is Unlike Man

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his commands are arbitrary he offers no explanations for what he does or does not do (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

(6) Man learns through the teaching process, by his experiences and observations, but where is the person who can instruct God Almighty?? "Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high" (Job 21:22). "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?" (Romans 11:34). Isaiah the prophet has a wonderful statement regarding God's power and wisdom: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? or being his counselor, taught him? with whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the paths of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" (Isaiah 40:13-14).

(7) With man many things are impossible; but God is limited only by his own will. God is able, whatsoever he wills, to accomplish. "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). ". . . God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham; but he did not so do (See Matthew 3:9). Hence, God "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them;" but

God does not save those who steadfastly rebel against his will (Hebrews 7:25; 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21-27).

It is impossible for man to devise a means by which he can save himself (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; 21:2; Isaiah 55:8-9). Man must rely upon God to provide that plan of salvation by which he (man) can be saved. God's side of salvation involves His grace; man's side of salvation involves his faith. God's side of our salvation is wholly of grace, for he receives no pay for saving us; but, our side of salvation is wholly a matter of works of faith for we can provide no grace (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 6:28-29; James 2:14-26; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4).

(8) Man can hide from man, but not from God. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). Dear Readers, God is our Judge, and is well qualified to be so, as all our hearts and actions are naked and open to him.

—P.O. Box, Parrish, AL 35580.

"You Can Have It All"

Bill Jackson

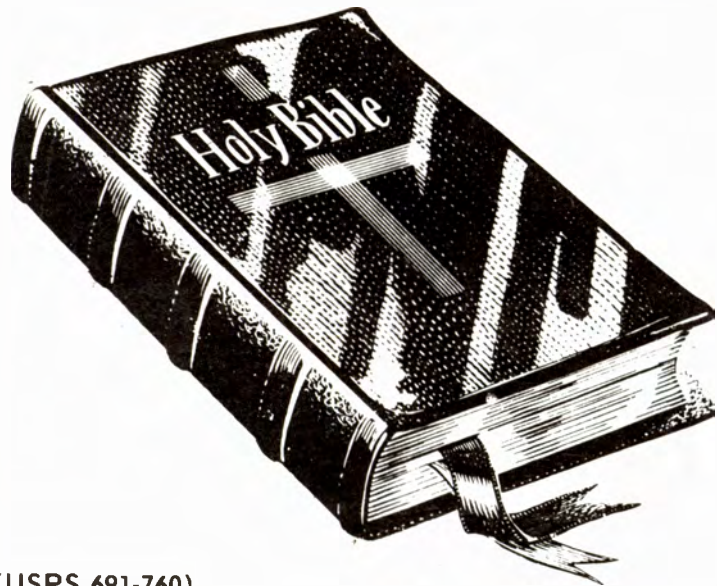
We have noted the above slogan used by a beer manufacturer. Drink that product, and "You can have it all!" Thinking of that, just what might be involved in "having it all?" You can have. . .

1. A broken home
2. Scattered children
3. Loss of job
4. A blemished character
5. Tragic auto accidents
6. Loss of your health

7. A Life of crime
8. Access into further immorality
9. The worse possible influence
10. The loss of your eternal soul.

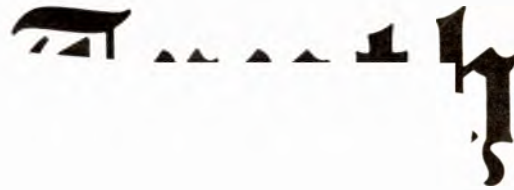
Yes, the beer manufacturer was right! "You can HAVE IT ALL!" But, the question remains: considering the preceding list, "Who would want it?"

God's word still says: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright" (Proverbs 23:31).



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 50

Studies In Romans 14

(No. 5)

A serious consideration of Jesus as Lord and Judge would go a long, long way toward clearing up these troublesome problems relative to matters of opinion or of indifference. Paul supplies sweeping solutions in the next segment of our study by writing:



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

It was for this very precise purpose that Christ died, that he revived, that he arose from the dead, triumphant over the gloom of the tomb. Outside the defeated tomb he planted the blooming rose of victorious immortality, and that flagrant flower sends its unending smell of sweetness to all of us as God's redeemed sons and daughters. It is imperative that the Mighty Messiah do this in order that he might be Lord of the living and Ruler of the dead.

With these powerful considerations couched in Paul's irresistible brand of scriptural logic how could they, the "weak," judge their "strong" brethren and condemn them as "digressives" (or apostates in the making) due to these matters of indifference? How could they, the "strong," set at nought (consider them as nothing, or of very little value in the realm of the redeemed) their "weak" brethren? The Lord is Lord of the "strong;" he is just as much the Lord of the "weak."

Another cogent reason for dissolving these persisting problems and beginning to show true toleration for each other is the sobering factor of a sure judgment to come. All, both "strong" and "weak," are to make an appearance before the judgment seat of the Great Judge of all. A cardinal teaching of the Bible is that God Almighty through his Son on that day will judge all mankind. These scriptures so attest and form kindred links of proof to Romans 14:10-12,

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man . . . 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 . . . 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 . . . I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; . . . (John 5:22, 27; 12:48; Acts 17:31; II Timothy 4:1).

The precious passage in II Corinthians 5:10-11 is a powerful parallel to Romans 14:10-12. Paul penned both Romans and II Corinthians while on his third missionary journey. The Corinthian passage reads,

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. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . .


Just how sure is judgment? Just as sure as the fundamental fact that God lives. In verse 11 Paul quotes a passage from Isaiah 45:23 supportive of his premises that every knee shall bow before Deity, that every tongue shall confess to God. A willing confession now, with other things being equal, produces a beautiful blessing in this world and ultimately results in one's being confessed by Jesus to the heavenly Father at judgment. A compelled confession at judgment will only add up to eternal condemnation. Phillipians 2:10-11 is a precious parallel to Romans 14:11, and reads:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Without quibble or question we shall all give account to God (Jesus Christ) in judgment. Reflections of this sure-to-come judgment should do much to settle the troublesome difficulties between "strong" brethren and "weak" brethren.

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The solemn consideration of life's gravity and death's seriousness should be sufficient to dissolve the troublesome rupture that had developed between the "weak" and the "strong." Life and death are common denominators for all of us. No man is an island to himself. No one lives entirely to himself; no one dies entirely to himself. In life we, as Christians, whether "strong" or "weak," belong to the Lord. In death we, as Christians, whether "strong" or "weak," are the Lord's. Death does not eliminate that relationship; it enhances it for the faithful child of God.



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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Will My Lodge Save Me?

Many have turned to fraternal lodges to seek a proper relationship with God and man. The most prominent lodge of all professes to be "a religion," and even offers an eternal reward in heaven to all who faithfully fulfill their vows. Since this will be questioned by many, I offer the PROOF:



John Waddey

"It (Masonry) is the universal, eternal, immutable religion such as God planted it in the heart of universal humanity" **Morals and Dogmas of Freemasonry**, Albert Pike, page 219). Upon receiving the Masonic apron the recipient is told, "If you wear it without soil or blemish, you will be received at the pearly gates of heaven and there be presented with the pure white robe of righteousness" (Tennessee Craftman, page 62).

To the honest, God-fearing soul who has become involved in such an institution, I offer the following truths from God's word:

1. "For neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Salvation is only in Christ. . . . is excludes all lodges.

2. Speaking of religious institutions which God had not planted, Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13). This would include "religious" lodges.

3. "Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the "savior" of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). That body is Christ's church (Ephesians 1:22). Christ saves the body; but

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Following The Apostle Paul

Nowhere on record has been a greater Christian than the Peerless Apostle. Paul admonished Christians to follow him, not as a mere man, but as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). It is good to follow examples of the right kind, but nobody should follow parents, friends or preacher, except as they follow Christ. To follow Paul is to follow an inspired example



Roy J. Hearn

(Galatians 1:11-12). He commanded, "Those things, which ye have both things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me do; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 2:9). Note some ways in which to follow Paul.

1. Paul was honest. In making his defence, he said he had lived in all good conscience until that day (Acts 23:1), and that he purposed to be void of offence toward God and man (Acts 24:16). In Acts 26:9-11 he said that he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Christ; but he was wrong. Here is a man honestly mistaken, ready to admit it, and ready to change from error to truth. Any honest mind is always open to truth.

2. Paul changed from Judaism to true religion. He had been reared a Pharisee and clung to human traditions (Galatians 1:13-14). Just as Paul set an example, every person in religious error should turn therefrom and embrace the true religion in obedience to the gospel of Christ. Many who yet live have done so.

"But," some say, "I don't believe in changing. My parents believed thus and so." Your parents or grandparents may have ridden in a buggy over dusty roads, and had nothing but kerosene lamps by which to read, carried water from the well, boiled clothes in a black pot over a wood fire in the back yard; but do you? Why be glad to change from antiquated modes of living, but not from religious error? Each one shall give account for himself to God (Romans 14:1-2). Paul forsook his people, friends and former religion and turned to Christ. So must we (Luke 14:26; Philippians 3:9-11).

3. Paul was a man of great faith. True faith is always expressed in obedience. Read Hebrews 11, and note that in every case faith was expressed by a verb of action. Faith without obedience does not save (James 2:24-26). Paul did not argue with the Lord, but obeyed unquestioningly (Acts 26:19). He was told, "Arise, be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The "calling" was done in obedience to Christ's command to be baptized. At the time his body was washed in water, his heart or soul was cleansed by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:22).

4. Paul became a Christian only. When he obeyed the gospel there were no different churches as exist today, having different creeds, names, organizations and practices. Later, in the Corinthian letter the Holy Spirit through him condemned sectarian division

(I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4).

Paul was simply a member of the Lord's church, which Christ purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). Colossians 1:18 says the "church" is the "body" of Christ. Ephesians 4:5 states that there is only "one" body; therefore there is only one church. It is the body in which all may be reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:16). Paul was not a Catholic-Christian, nor a Protestant-Christian, but just a Christian. God promised to give his people a new name, given by the mouth of the Lord, in his house, which is the church (Isaiah 56:5; 62:2; I Timothy 3:15). After the church was established "they were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). What kind of Christians? No particular brand; but just "Christians." The name was divinely given, not by enemies as some suppose, but by God Almighty.

5. Paul had great strength of character. He could not be hindered from his duty (Acts 20:24). He left all to follow Christ (Philippians 3:1-14). Read about the great trials and persecutions he endured for the cause of Christ (II Corinthians 11:23-28), and be encouraged to be just a Christian, regardless of the cost. Loyalty to God is a test of character.

6. Paul's life was centered in one thing: He did not revel in the past. He forgot all things that man today glories in, such as power, popularity, prestige, worldly honor and self-promotion. He was interested in the promotion of the cause of Christ to the glory of God. There were some who loved the praise of men in Christ's day on earth (John 12:42-43). Verily, they have their reward (Matthew 6:2). Paul looked to Jesus the author and perfecter of his faith (Hebrews 12:1-3). The result is that he received the crown of life laid up for him, and for all those who follow Christ. Do we have that kind of courage and humility (II Timothy 4:6-8)?

To be saved one must follow Paul as he followed Christ, in obedience, and in purity of life. If you have not done so, begin now by obeying the gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

—4035 Barron Ave., Memphis, TN 38111.

David's Example

Ken Tyler

"... A man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will" are the words God used to describe David when he raised him up to be king over Israel (Acts 13:22; I Samuel 13:14). I want to draw your attention to one of the great characteristics of David's life. This characteristic is found in a prayer of David's in Psalm 17:3. David said, ". . . I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." What a wonderful statement! To "purpose" means to "determine; resolve" (American Heritage Dictionary). David was determined not to sin with his mouth.

It is easy for us to say wrong things. We may be unkind and hateful to our mates or children. At times we are the ugliest to those we love most. Sometimes we fly off the handle and say things that we later deeply regret. Some seem to take pleasure in

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"The Truth, The Whole Truth, And Nothing But The Truth"

Nothing is so dangerous to truth as partial truth received and accepted as complete truth. Our courts, realizing this danger, require each witness to promise to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The church should be no less interested in the whole truth as well. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders of how he had kept back nothing that was profitable unto them. He further stated, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:20, 27). Paul was concerned, as we all should be, with preaching the whole truth of God's Counsel. He charged Timothy to "preach the word" -- not a part or portion of the word to the neglect of the whole of scripture, but "the word" (II Timothy 4:2). We must not confuse partial truth with the whole truth.



Dalton Key

We are beginning to hear distant rumblings of a distorted and partial truth concerning Jesus Christ. We are being urged by some among us to minimize doctrine, to speak less about the church, to lay less emphasis upon the plan of salvation, and "just preach Jesus." Faithful preachers of yesteryear are chided for placing such importance on doctrine as the basis for religious unity. "Just stress the spirit of Christ," we are told, "and accept the fact that religious unity must always be a 'unity in diversity.'"

On the surface, this current thrust may seem plausible. Without a doubt, Christ is the very foundation undergirding the Christian system (I Corinthians 3:11). Our Lord is truly "before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). We must stress Jesus. We must emphasize the Lord. We must preach Christ!

And yet a Christ stripped of his doctrine, his church, and his plan of salvation is left with no voice, no authority, and no power to save. Christ and his word -- his teaching -- his gospel -- must not be severed one from the other. Jesus placed rejection of his word on the same plane as rejection of him: "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). Fellowship with the Father and the Son depends upon our abiding

"in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9). Moreover, Christ's doctrine is not limited to the red-lettered words in the four gospel accounts. Paul "certified" his gospel as having been received "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," and affirmed his writings to be "the commandments of the Lord" (Galatians 1:11-12; I Corinthians 14:37). We simply can not honestly preach a subjective, experiential Jesus void of voice. To stress Jesus while minimizing his doctrine is not to preach the whole truth!

Neither should Christ be separated from his church. Our Lord preached incessantly concerning the kingdom -- the church (Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 13; 16:18; John 18:36; Acts 1:3). The church is his spiritual body over which he rules as head (Colossians 1:24; Ephesians 1:22-23). The church of Christ is built upon the foundation of Christ's deity, has been purchased by Christ's blood, and is continually cleansed by Christ "with the washing of water by the word" (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:26). There is but one

body -- one church -- and she belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ. We can not speak more about Christ and less about his church and still claim to preach the whole truth!

And what of Christ's plan of salvation? Is it not also inseparably linked to the Lord? When Philip preached to the Ethiopian from Isaiah 53, he "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). And yet after hearing about Jesus, the nobleman knew HOW Jesus saves a man; for he asked, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). To speak of Christ while remaining silent concerning his plan for saving man is dishonest at best.

Yes, we must stress Christ. We must preach Jesus. But let us be completely honest in our presentation. May we never become content to publish a partial Lord void of voice, stripped of church, and with no power to save. Let us preach "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

—Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901-0563.

Covetousness Destroyed Achan

ACHAN'S COVETOUS ACT ANGERED GOD AGAINST ISRAEL.

READ ALL OF JOSHUA 7. "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing; for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel" (Joshua 7:1).

Joshua sent spies to Ai, and they advised Joshua to send three thousand soldiers against that city. The men of Ai chased Israel away, smiting thirty-six of them (Joshua 7:2-5). "Joshua rent his clothes, fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord. . . he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads (Joshua 7:6-9).

The Lord told Joshua to get up, saying, "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded thee: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dis-



Hoyt Bailey

sembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel. There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee. O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you" (Joshua 7:10-13).

The report of the spies is acted upon at once. The siege of Ai seems to have been undertaken relying upon human means alone. But the Israelites learned how dependent they were upon divine aid. We need this lesson as much as they. In cases of difficulty we go to God, but in ordinary affairs we trust to ourselves. We need his aid as much in the one as in the other.

THE EXCEEDING SINFULNESS OF SIN.

Only two precepts had been issued at the sacking of Jericho; one, to spare Rahab and her family; another, to "keep from the accursed thing." The latter precept was broken. It was ruin to the Israelites' campaign. It brought disgrace, not only to the sinner, but to the cause. So now, the sin of the individual falls on the community. Religion suffers severely for the shortcomings of its professors. The church is cruelly injured by the faults of its members. Even the great conflict against evil itself has failed of complete success as yet, solely from the sins of those who have been carrying it on.

THE DEFEATS OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD IN THE GREAT STRUGGLE AGAINST SATAN ARE TO BE EXPLAINED ON THE SAME PRINCIPLE AS THE DEFEAT AT AI. THERE NEEDS TO BE A HUMILIATION, AN AWAKENING, A CASTING-OUT OF THE OFFENDING MEMBER, BEFORE ANY NEW SUCCESS CAN BE ACHIEVED.

The conflict against sin within the individual

Will My Lodge Save Me?

Continued From Page 2

there is one body (Ephesians 4:5). That body is the church. If he saves only the one body/church, then he will not save the lodge.

Jesus said, "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Again he said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). In judgment, lodge membership and doctrines will be of no value, you will be judged by the New Testament of Jesus. Even more, since

the lodge claims to be what it is not (i.e., the true religion that can save man) it shall be rooted up by God. Jesus said, "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Matthew 15:14). The lodge cannot save you! But it can cost you your soul:

Christ alone, can save. The church of Christ is the family of the saved (I Timothy 3:15). Only the TRUTH of the BIBLE can enlighten and free men from sin (John 8:32; 17:17). Why not be simply a Christian?

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Covetousness Destroyed Achan

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is subject to the same laws. We cannot subdue our evil passions, or tempers, or habits. It is because there is some hidden sin indulged secretly, which mars all our efforts. We have some "Achan" within, some master passion which hugs a secret unlawful indulgence to itself, perhaps unperceived even by ourselves. Our defeats ought to teach us to institute the inquiry, bring the offender to light, and cast him out without mercy.

Sin is often the effect of covetous desires. Achan (1) saw, (2) coveted, and (3) took. Achan said, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; . . ." (Joshua 7:21). The "seeing" was innocent; the dwelling on the object of sight with desire was sinful. "Coveted" is from the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 3:6, "Saw . . . a tree to be desired." "When lust (desire) hath conceived it bringeth forth sin" (James 1:15). The outward object has no power to make us fall except as it corresponds to an inward affection. If the object be gazed upon long, the affection may be inordinately excited, and desire produces sinful action. The wise man said regarding "the path of the wicked:" "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Proverbs 4:15). Our affection must be set on things above (Colossians 3:1-2). This is the best preservation against the influence of unholy passions; for where the heart is occupied, there evil finds it hard to effect a lodgment.

THE DANGER OF DISOBEDIENCE AND COVETOUSNESS. God had given no reasons for his command about Jericho and its spoils. It is true that they were obvious enough to an inquiring mind. But some minds will not inquire, except to find reasons (?) for disobedience. Of such a disposition was Achan: "Why should such a command be given?" "To what purpose is this waste?" "What is the good of it all?"

The promptings of self-interest were sufficient to outweigh the obvious reason that this solemn ban upon Jericho and all that was therein was to impress upon the minds of the Israelites the awful and irrevocable nature of the sentence God had pronounced against the inhabitants of the land. To him, such "abstract" considerations had little weight beside the concrete fact of a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment! The welfare of society, the necessity of God's moral laws for society's well-being, are cobwebs easily brushed aside when selfish interest, or passion, impel us to break those laws.

Look again at the temptation. Let the idea gain possession of your mind: "Where is the harm?" we cry -- and then we commit the sin. Sin involves man in its terrible consequences. Even upon repentance, sin's consequences are, to a certain extent, irremediable. Though our "Joshua" (Jesus) has redeemed us from the most extreme penalty of his outraged law, yet must he bring us to detection, shame, and consequent punishment. "The valley of Achor" (Joshua 7:24-26) may be given us "for a door of hope" (Hosea 2:15); but anguish must come before peace, to which, by his mercy, it is destined to lead.

One lesson from Achan's sin is that no one can disobey God's laws and come off without injury. Not for nought does he say: "Thou shalt not do this thing." He who in wilful folly transgresses his commands must bear

his burden -- whosoever he be.

It may have seemed a "light thing" (I Kings 16:31) to Achan when he coveted and took the forbidden spoils. Almost all sin seems light when committed.

A little deceit or lying, a little indulgence in impure imaginations or actions, a little compliance with the customs of an evil world, a little yielding to the promptings of anger, seem slight matters when they occur. But they often bring serious consequences.

Repeated acts become habits; and habits are not easily broken. We are their captives before we are aware. Then we may wish, and wish, and wish in vain, that we had never made ourselves their slave.

Achan set up self in opposition to God. Sin deprives God not only of gold, but of honor, love, obedience, and the use of those talents committed to men that they may be faithful servants and stewards of God. From the sinner's heart ascends no sweet incense of faith and love. In the household of the worldling there is no family altar with its grateful offering of prayer and praise. The body of the unbeliever, instead of being a temple of God, is part of the kingdom of

darkness.

The cause of Achan's sin was covetousness born of the selfishness which led to rebellion. The unhappy Achan could not (or, did not), resist the desire to secure for himself a share of the booty. He sought his own selfish ends. The cause of God requires that we serve with complete self-devotion, and with an eye to God alone. Achan thought first of satisfying his own desires. A holy war must be waged in a holy way. From the moment when the base passion of selfishness creeps in, it ceases to be a holy war. It is then even worse than any other war; for God will not suffer his name to be profaned.

Whenever the so-called defenders of the church have sought their own glory, when they have aimed at securing power of fortune for themselves, they have paved the way for defeat. This is equally true of individuals. To make use of the cause of God for one's own ends is not only to dishonor, but fatally to compromise it; for it is then no longer the cause of God, but the cause of the devil.

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Entering The New Year Guided

By Old Truths

Ronnie A. Missildine

The New Year is always a time when we can take the opportunity to be better people, to make a new start, to recommit ourselves to those things that we need to do, and to that which we need to be. We are not wise people if we don't seize the opportunity. For who doesn't want to be better and do more with his life, especially when it comes to doing the will of God?

Psalms 100 offers some good ideas.

First, determine to be more earnest in your **WORSHIP** to **THE LORD**. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. . . come before his presence with singing. . . enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise" (verses 1, 2, and 4). Nothing draws us closer to the Lord and his children as does worship.

Second, determine to **SERVE THE LORD**. "Serve the Lord with gladness . . ." (verse 2). Our service should be with gladness out of a happy heart.

Third, remember that as Christians, **WE ARE THE LORD'S**. "Know ye that the Lord, he is God. It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (verse 3). Since we have given ourselves to God, and Jesus has purchased us with his blood, we need not to forget that ownership or possession of us, and live accordingly.

Fourth, don't forget to **BE THANKFUL**. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving. . . be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good, . . ." (verses 4-5). He gives us **SO** much. But we too often take it for granted. A thankful heart ought to be the goal of this New Year.

Fifth, learn to **TRUST THE LORD**. "For

the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations" (verse 5). A trust and confidence that God will be good and merciful to us will comfort us throughout the year.

Consider these five thoughts from Psalms 100 for the New Year. How happy it can be!

—Warrington Church of Christ, P.O. Box 4171, Pensacola, FL 32507-4171.

David's Example

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gossip, filthy talk, and stirring up trouble. This violates Ephesians 4:29 and Colossians 3:8. And then there are those who are untruthful, in violation of Ephesians 4:25. The majority of people speak, and then think. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5:2-3, "Be not rash with thy mouth. . . and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words."

How is your mouth doing? Are you like David, purposed so you will not transgress? What we **SAY** is serious business. Jesus said, ". . . 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). James further stated, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:12). May we all listen to the man after God's own heart, and be purposed not to sin with our mouths.

—P.O. Box 367, Arab, AL 35106.



Words Of Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 51

Studies In Romans 14

(No. 6)

We continue our studies in Romans 14 by noting the next Pauline section of sacred scripture. It still concerns the "strong" and the "weak," and very appropriately can be designated as:

THE STRONG AND WEAK: MUTUAL CONCERN

In another quartet of verses the concerned apostle penned these words of weight and wisdom:



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: . . . (14:13-16).

Since both "strong" and "weak" are answerable or amenable to the one God, and since one day all shall give account to him in judgment, it behooves all of us to cease the judgmental practices of where the "strong" holds at nought the "weak," and when the "weak" deems the "strong" to be in deep digression and surely headed for certain apostasy. Is the apostolic penman forbidding all judgment which we are enjoined to do, such as in John 7:24? Note what would logically follow: We could not judge an erring teacher by his fruits of falsehood, which we are charged most solemnly to do in Matthew 7:15-20. No church could ever practice discipline (I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3) without

some prior judgments made relative to persistent practioners of error (Romans 16:17-18) or immorality. Paul's apostolic edict here against "judging" is what is in the context -- the "weak" against the "strong" and the "strong" against the "weak" in matters of opinion, in optional (or indifferent) concerns. Instead of engaging in the type of judging he has just prohibited, Paul presses them to pursue the following judgmental practice -- let every one of you make doubly sure and absolutely certain that he will place neither hindrance nor obstacle in a brother's pathway. To pursue any course other than this is an abject failure to walk the way of Christian charity, of toleration in truth.

Paul knew that distinctions between clean and unclean meats were all removed at Calvary when Judaism was forever cancelled or blotted out as God's law for his people. The Gentiles knew this. As the "stronger" brethren, along with the more knowledgeable Jews who knew the same, the Gentiles were right in these matters; and the Jews, as "weaker" brethren still clinging to those clean and unclean meat scruples, were wrong. Ceremonially speaking, there now is no such thing as 'clean' and 'unclean' meats. Yet Paul, sympathetically concerned with the "weak" brother's viewpoint and retained (or residual) feelings, recognized that if the "weak" brother deemed a certain meat to be 'unclean' (or, was off limits to him because it had been offered to idols before being taken to the market for sale), then it became 'unclean' to him. For the "weak" brother to eat such would have been going against his convictions; such would have been going against his conscience.

Verse 15 is Paul's charge to the "strong" brother, who well recognized that there is no longer any distinction of 'clean' and 'unclean' meats. Yet if his "weak" brother be grieved with the "strong" brother's partaking of such, the "strong" brother abjectly fails to walk the way of charity if he persists with his eating. Remember that he is NOT talking about the

"strong" brother's doing something authorized as essential or right. He is speaking of things indifferent. This further refutes our naive brethren now who call those who use the piano the "strong" brethren, for they (Christian Church preachers) are not the advocates of what is authorized! Paul counsels the "strong" brother to think enough of the "weak" brother to forego his pursuance of an indifferent matter (meat-eating) lest he aid or be a deciding factor in the spiritual destruction of his "weak" brother -- a person for whom the Christ died. If the "weak" brother is influenced to violate his conscience out of deference for his "strong" brother in a matter really indifferent, the next step could be the "weak" brother's committing something really wrong, and which well could damn his immortal soul.

The good in verse 16 that the "strong" are allowed to do in a matter of indifference (eating of all meats), could become, if persisted in to the degree of damaging an observing "weak" brother, the very means of destroying that same "weak" brother. Brother Noel Merideth well states: "But they [the "strong"] are to deny themselves the pleasure of doing it lest the "weak" be destroyed" (Op. cit., p. 220).

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





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

—Acts 26:35

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Did The Gentiles Have A Law?

The promoters of the "all grace -- no law" theory would have us to believe that the Gentiles were a people without law. They refer to them as a "non-law keeping people" or as "nations which had no law to keep." Their reasoning appears to be that if the Gentiles were a people without a law, their acceptance into the New Covenant would imply that it (the new Covenant) is not a word of law. Is it true that the Gentiles were without law? or did they have a law? We hope to answer these questions in the course of this article.

The question which is most important to this discussion is: "Did the Gentiles ever commit sin?" According to the apostle Paul, they did: "What then are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9). In Romans 1 Paul lists some of the sins the Gentiles committed. They ranged from idolatry to being unmerciful. What is sin? Isn't it the transgression of "law?" Certainly it is. "Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). If the Gentiles sinned, they were under law. The Gentiles did sin. Therefore, they were under a law.

This answers the question which is the title of this article; but now others seem to come to mind. "From whence did this law come?" The answer to this is simple. It came from God. Again, we turn to the Roman epistle.



Victor M. Eskew

Continued On Page 3

Doctrines Of Devils

W. Gaddys Roy

Paul affirmed that some would give heed to "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). "Doctrines of devils" is plural. Therefore, we can expect such doctrines to take many forms. Paul names two of these doctrines. One is "forbidding to marry," and the other is "commanding to abstain from meats" (I Timothy 1:3). One is not compelled to marry, nor to eat meats. However, when laws are made forbidding such, they are "doctrines of devils." Any time we make laws for God, we have gone "beyond that which is written;" therefore, we do not have God, and we are teaching "doctrines of devils" (II John 9; I Timothy 4:1-3).

Most members of the church recognize that God has commanded us to teach all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). They understand that the church "is the pillar

and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). They realize that all should teach; and, that the church should support its chosen teachers' (Hebrews 5:12-14; Galatians 6:6; I Corinthians 9:14). Many -- some intentionally and some unintentionally -- teach "doctrines of devils" by making laws where God has made none.

We must obey God; but we must not make laws for God (Romans 2:8; II John 9). Those who bind, regulate, and speak where God has not spoken, are making their own laws. They have added to God's word; and their worship is vain (Revelation 22:18-19; Matthew 15:9). We must do what God has commanded; and it must be done the way God has commanded it (Matthew 28:20).

Continued On Page 3

"Preacher's Rights"

You have probably heard of "State's Rights" on the political scene. I'm sure you have heard of "Civil Rights," and of "Equal Rights for Women." Question: have you ever heard of "Preachers' Rights"? Do they have any, and what might they be?

Everyone knows preachers are strange creatures in the first place. We wonder: What would cause a man to want to be a preacher? I do not know of any other profession where one is called by his profession instead of by name. Sometimes members of the church forget the name of their preacher, so they naturally just call him "preacher." I have never heard them call someone "plumber," or "truck driver" for a name. Even so -- strange as he may be -- he should have some of the ordinary "rights" like "normal people."

First of all, he has the "right" to make a comfortable living, like other Christians. Some brethren seem to follow the old idea that, "A preacher should be both poor and we will keep him poor!" I once heard a brother say, "If we give the preacher a raise in pay, he will be making as much as I do!" Another said, "I think I'll quit my job and go to preaching -- for preachers get paid so much for so little work." Every preacher has heard similar things. Many a preacher has been forced into financial binds by stingy brethren, and then he has been criticized for not paying his bills. Things are much better now than in past times; but some brethren have a long way to go in learning about fair pay for their preachers. God ordained that "the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7), and that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:14).

There has always been a tendency among some to measure the preacher and his family by a different standard from other members of the church. We have often heard



Douglas Sims

people expressing their disgust over something a man has done, followed by the statement, "And he's a PREACHER!!!" Some seem to think the preacher is supposed to be sinlessly perfect and not human. The truth is, if he were without sin or fault, they would despise him!

The preacher is first a Christian, a member of the church. As a child of God, he must not be "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). However there are many things considered "acceptable" for other members of the church in general, that are taboo for the preacher and his family. Consider this partial list:

If any member can DRINK, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can SMOKE, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can GAMBLE, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can SWEAR, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can DANCE, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can participate in MIXED SWIMMING, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can attend the MOVIES, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can commit ADULTERY, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLY, so can the preacher and his family.

If any member can ROB GOD, by unscriptural giving, so can the preacher and his family.

ANYTHING the other women of the church can do, the preacher's wife can do.

ANYTHING the members' children can do, the preacher's 'kids' can do.

I am in no way suggesting anyone who serves God would have the slightest desire to do such things; but when members of the church think they have the right to do anything the preacher can't do, they have established a double standard that is straight from Satan himself.

—330 Est Ave., Cedartown, GA 30125.

Doctrines Of Devils

Continued From Page 2

When God commands a thing to be done, and does not legislate as to how, it is left to human judgment. "Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). God commanded Noah to build an ark. He specified the kind of wood, and the size of the ark; but Noah was at liberty to use the tools he desired, and he was at liberty to select the size of trees with which to build. So it is with us today. We must do all that God has commanded us; and when the way is specified, that is also binding. But when he has not specified how to do a thing, we are at liberty to use our own judgment (Romans 4:15). We must respect the silence of the scriptures, just as we must respect what the scriptures say (I Peter 4:11). When we make laws, we are not speaking as the oracles of God, and we are not abiding in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9). When we fail to abide in the doctrine of Christ, we are making our own doctrine, which Paul describes as "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

The Principle Applied to Baptism

Jesus commands us to baptize believers that they may be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Baptism is a burial in water (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). People who have been taught that they are saved before baptism are obeying "doctrines of devils." The doctrine of infant baptism is a "doctrine of devils," for all who were baptized in the New Testament were old enough to believe (Mark 16:16; Acts 18:8; 8:12).

I met one man who said his church immersed

people face forward, because Christianity is a "forward" movement. According to his own logic (?), he raised them up backward -- and started them off backward! The truth is: God has not legislated as to what position the body is to be in when baptized. Therefore, that church had made its own human law, and was teaching "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

The Principle Applied to Apostasy

"If ye live after the flesh ye shall die" (Romans 8:13). Paul was writing to children of God, and the "death" is the "second death" (Revelation 21:8). When people teach that it is impossible for a child of God to so sin as to be lost in hell, they are preaching "doctrines of devils." In fact, those who teach the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy are teaching exactly the same thing that the devil taught in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:4). Paul said, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die" (Romans 8:13). Baptists teach, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall NOT die, if you are a child of God." God said to Adam, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). The serpent said to Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Therefore, there is no difference in what the devil taught in the garden of Eden and what the Baptists teach today on the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy.

The Principle Applied to Teaching

Christ commanded that we teach all

nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). He did not regulate the method to be used in teaching. When we teach in classes, over radio, television, and use visual aids, we are not adding to God's word; we are only doing what he commanded. The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). Those who make laws on the methods of teaching, are teaching "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

The Principle Applied to Benevolence

The church, and individual Christians, are required to help the needy, and therefore, practice pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10; I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 9:12-13). God did not prescribe the type of home that widows and orphans are to be put into when the natural home is broken. To make a law demanding that they be taken into a certain type home, or forbidding a certain type home, would be "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

The Principle Applied to Church Cooperation

Churches in the New Testament cooperated. The church at Antioch cooperated with the church in Jerusalem in benevolence (Acts 11:27-30). The churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia cooperated with the churches of Judea (I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 8:1-5). What ever cooperation can be done in benevolence can be done in spiritual matters (Romans 15:26-27). The church at Jerusalem cooperated with the church at Antioch in edification (Acts 11:19-24; 15:22-29). Other churches cooperated in sending the gospel to Corinth (II Corinthians 11:8). Therefore, churches may cooperate today when they see fit to do so. Churches must not become an "ecclesiasticism" as the Missionary Society. Churches must remain autonomous; and each congregation may cooperate with another or others when it sees fit to do so. To either forbid, or to force, cooperation would be like forbidding to marry, or commanding to abstain from meats. It would be teaching "doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

Conclusion

When God gives a command, it must be obeyed. When God tells us how to carry out the command, let us be diligent to do all he says. On the other hand, do not make laws where God has made none. Such are "doctrines of devils." The silence of the scriptures must be respected. Speak only as "the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

—Rt. 3 Box 680, Dora, AL 35062.

The Foolishness Of Preaching

W. Edwin Kearley

Imparting the will of God to man is the greatest work man can do for another. Without faith in Christ all humanity is lost eternally in a devil's hell. Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). In Jesus' preview of the judgment, he said of the wicked, "... depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:40). Concerning the duration of punishment, Jesus said, "And these shall go away into eternal punishment. . ." (Matthew 25:46, A.S.V.).

Continued on page 4

Did The Gentiles Have A Law?

Continued from page 2

In Romans 1:21 the apostle informs us of a time when the Gentiles knew God. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Prior to Moses' law, mankind was under patriarchy. God revealed himself to the heads of the families. When Moses' law was given, it was given only to the Jews (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 5:2-3). It separated them from the rest of humanity. The Jews became God's chosen people. Through them the Messiah would be brought into the world. We suppose that the rest of the world remained subject to the law of patriarchy. If not, why not? And if patriarchy did cease, please list the passages which indicate that it ceased at a certain time. This cannot be done. Therefore, we conclude that the patriarchal system given by God was the law in effect for the Gentiles.

Another question which some might have at this time is: "Of what did this law consist?" We offer the following as some of the components of the law of the Gentiles. First, there were sacrifices which had to be offered. In Genesis three, Abel offered a sacrifice from the flocks which was pleasing to God. In Hebrews 11:4, the writer tells us that it was offered "by faith." Faith come by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Thus, God commanded what was to be done (again showing that God gave this law), and Abel carried it out. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob offered sacrifices also. In Job 1:5, the man of patience offered animal sacrifices for himself and his family. Undoubtedly, Job's sacrifice was for the purpose of atonement, as well as the sacrifices of the

others who lived before the law of Moses (Hebrews 9:22).

Another part of this law dealt with a priesthood. In Genesis 14:17-20 we read of Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek. In verse 18 we are specifically told that "he was the priest of the most high God." Abraham respected this man's high office, and paid tithes unto him. The priest recognizing his superiority, and accepting Abraham, blessed him. Although we do not know the details of the priesthood, we do know one existed.

Other aspects of this law included: (1) no murder (Genesis 9:4-6); (2) the works of the law of Moses after it was instituted (Romans 2:14-15); and (3) the words of such prophets as Obadiah and Jonah. There may have been other aspects of this law which have not been revealed unto us. But these are enough to prove that the Gentiles did have a law.

We are not saying that the Gentiles had a law equal to, nor superior to, the law of Moses. They did not. This is evident when we note that the Jews' rejection of the law resulted in a greater condemnation (Romans 2). But the Gentiles did have a law. They transgressed that law. They became sinners (Romans 3:23). The blood of bulls and goats had no power to take away sin, just as it had no power to take away sin under Judaism (Hebrews 10:1-4). Therefore, the Gentiles stood in desperate need of the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17), that law which can make them free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2).

—P.O. Box 126, Belmont, MS 38827.

The Foolishness Of Preaching

Continued from page 3

Many people have greater trust in human tradition, or human intellect, than in God and his word. To them, the gospel of Christ is an insult. Paul wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness . . ." (I Corinthians 1:18). Therefore many people reject the sacrifice of God's Son, thereby rejecting the only hope of eternal life with God.

The worldly wise and those prudent in their own eyes will have their wisdom destroyed, and their prudence brought to nothing (I Corinthians 1:19). 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). Puny finite man's wisdom cannot compare to the wisdom of the eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, all-powerful God. The scribes and philosophers had nothing to compare to the message authored by the Holy Spirit through inspired men (I Corinthians 1:20).

The preaching of the crucified Christ was a stumbling block to the Jews. The Jewish tradition had conditioned them to expect a king to come to Jerusalem and establish an earthly throne and throw off the Roman yoke. The lowly Jesus from the insignificant city of Nazareth was rejected as being the anointed one. Peter said, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:11). The Jews looked upon Jesus as being nothing.

Even the apostles gave up on their hope in Christ. After his arrest in the garden, we read: "And they all forsook him and fled" (Mark 14:50). Until they knew his resurrection was a fact, they thought all of their time spent with Jesus was lost.

The Greeks looked upon the preaching of Christ as foolishness. They were trusting in the philosophers of their day, such as Aristotle, Plato, Epicurius, Stoics, etc. They felt satisfaction in the culture of their time.

But there were some who were truly wise.

"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:24). The reason given: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:25).

God does not want man to glory in his presence. He uses what the world calls "foolishness" to confound the wise, and what the world calls "weakness" to confound the

things which are mighty (I Corinthians 1:27-30).

The gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). It furnishes man "completely unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17). It reveals "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (I Peter 1:3).

Demand of those who preach that they preach God's word without addition or subtraction.

—103 E. Lena Ct., Bay St. Louis, MS 39520.

THE FORT WORTH LECTURES

Theme: "QUESTIONS MEN ASK ABOUT GOD"

January 11-15, 1987

<p>LEADERSHIP DINNER For all elders, preachers, deacons, Bible School teachers, and their wives. Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. Speaker: George DeHoff</p>	<p>DISPLAYS Publishers, authors, dealers, children's homes, Christian schools, homes for aged, etc. Located in the meetinghouse.</p>	<p>BOOKS & TAPES Lectures will be put into book form and will be available for purchase during the lectureship. Video and audio cassette recordings will be made of each lecture and may be purchased at the lectures.</p>	<p>MEALS No meals will be served at the building this year except on Tuesday evening (Leadership Dinner) and Wednesday noon ("Honor to Whom Honor is Due"). A list of nearby restaurants and cafeterias will be available.</p>
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Sunday, January 11

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
9:00 a.m.	"Does God Hear Prayer? Whose?"	Eddie Whitten
10:00 a.m.	"The Love of God"	David Roper
5:00 p.m.	"How Is Man the Image of God?"	Tom Wacaster
6:00 p.m.	"Is the Bible From God, or Men?"	Perry Cotham
7:00 p.m.	"Can the Church Survive Until Jesus Comes Again?"	Norman Gipson

• 8:00 a.m. daily: HUGO McCORD
SPECIAL GREEK & HEBREW WORD STUDIES

Monday, January 12

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
8:00 a.m.	Special Greek and Hebrew Word Studies	Hugo McCord
9:00 a.m.	"Are All Denominations a Part of the Church Universal?"	Tommy Haynes
10:00 a.m.	"Was Jesus God While in the Flesh?"	Mike Wyatt
10:00 a.m.	"How Did Godly Women Work to Receive God's Favor in the Old Testament?"	Nelda Clark
11:00 a.m.	"Is the Church of Christ a Cult?"	James Willcutt
— Noon Break —		
2:00 p.m.	"Does the Covenant of God Apply to All Men Today?"	Dub McClish
3:00 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Hugo McCord
— Evening Break —		
4:30 p.m.	Singing	
6:00 p.m.	"How Can the Goodness of God and the Existence of Evil Be Reconciled?"	Gary Workman
7:00 p.m.	"Does the Genesis Account of Creation Allow for Theistic Evolution?"	Wayne Jackson

Tuesday, January 13

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
8:00 a.m.	Special Greek and Hebrew Word Studies	Hugo McCord
9:00 a.m.	"Does God Make Special Allowances for Divorce and Remarriage?"	Ernie Christie
10:00 a.m.	"Can God Change If He Is Unchangeable?"	David Brown
10:00 a.m.	"How Can Godly Women Work in the Church?"	Irene Taylor
11:00 a.m.	"How Can We Know That God Exists?"	Dick Sztanyo
— Noon Break —		
2:00 p.m.	"What Is Meant by 'The Fatherhood of God'?"	Joe Gilmore
3:00 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	Robert Taylor
— Evening Break —		
4:30 p.m.	Singing	
5:00 p.m.	"What Does God Expect in Leadership?" (Leadership Dinner)	George DeHoff
7:00 p.m.	"Does God Manifest Himself Miraculously, or in Special Form, Today?"	Bill Jackson
8:00 p.m.	"Did God Predestine Sin Before the Foundation of the World?"	Robert Taylor

Wednesday, January 14

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
8:00 a.m.	Special Greek and Hebrew Word Studies	Hugo McCord
9:00 a.m.	"How Does God Limit Himself If He Is All-Powerful and All-Wise?"	Roger Johnson
10:00 a.m.	"Will a Man Rob God? How?"	Bob Milligan
10:00 a.m.	"How Can Godly Women Work in the World?"	Pat Surles
11:00 a.m.	"Was the Judgment Day in A.D. 70?"	Goebel Music
12:00 p.m.	"Honor To Whom Honor" Luncheon Honoring: W. B. West, Jr.	
— Noon Break —		
2:00 p.m.	"Are There Contradictions in the Word of God?"	Oran Rhodes
3:00 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	
— Evening Break —		
4:30 p.m.	Singing	
6:00 p.m.	"What Happens to Man When He Dies?"	Tommy Hicks
7:00 p.m.	"Are There Multiple Purposes for Baptism?"	Jerry Moffitt

Thursday, January 15

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
8:00 a.m.	Special Greek and Hebrew Word Studies	Hugo McCord
9:00 a.m.	"Can We Prove the Historicity of Genesis 1-11?"	Don Simpson
10:00 a.m.	"How Did, or Does, God Work through the Holy Spirit?"	J. T. Marlin
10:00 a.m.	"The Continuing Challenge of Godly Women"	Pat Suba
11:00 a.m.	"What Is the Triune Nature of God?"	Mike Vestal
— Noon Break —		
2:00 p.m.	"How Far Does the Grace of God Go in Covering the Sins of Man?"	Rusty Peterman
3:00 p.m.	OPEN FORUM	
— Evening Break —		
4:30 p.m.	Singing	
6:00 p.m.	"Does God Work Provisionally Today?"	John Waddey
7:00 p.m.	"Did God Forgive Sin Under the Old Testament Covenant?"	Roy Lanier, Jr.

Special Classes For Ladies

Theme: "Godly Women Working in Godly Ways" • 10:00-11:00 daily

TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
10:00 a.m.	"How Did Godly Women Work to Receive God's Favor in the Old Testament?"	Nelda Clark
10:00 a.m.	"How Can Godly Women Work in the Church?"	Irene Taylor
10:00 a.m.	"How Can Godly Women Work in the World?"	Pat Surles
10:00 a.m.	"The Continuing Challenge of Godly Women"	Pat Suba

Participants in the Fort Worth Lectures Include:

David Brown	Ernie Christie	Perry Cotham	George DeHoff
Joe Gilmore	Norman Gipson	Tommy Haynes	Tommy Hicks
Bill Jackson	Wayne Jackson	Roger Johnson	Roy H. Lanier, Jr.
J. T. Marlin	Dub McClish	Hugo McCord	Bob Milligan
Jerry Moffitt	Goebel Music	Rusty Peterman	Oran Rhodes
David Roper	Don Simpson	Dick Sztanyo	Robert Taylor, Jr.
Mike Vestal	Tom Wacaster	John Waddey	Eddie Whitten
James Willcutt	Gary Workman	Mike Wyatt	Nelda Clark
Irene Taylor	Pat Suba	Pat Surles	
	W. B. West, Jr.	Bill Flatt	

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On Throughout
The New Year.

The Editor



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Words Of



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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 23

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1986

NUMBER 52

Studies In Romans 14

(No. 7)

In another quartet of powerful and penetrating passages the ardent apostle wrote:

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense (Romans 14:17-20).

Both the "strong" and "weak" should readily recognize that the kingdom of God does not consist of such things as the eating of 'clean' or 'unclean' meats, as each group contemplated these matters. God's kingdom is spiritual -- not fleshly, not earthly, not materialistic. With that needed negative injected, Paul turns the coin over to the positive side and describes some beautiful basics of the kingdom. It is righteousness. That is right-doing. It calls for the "strong" to do right toward the weak; it enjoins for the weak to do right toward the strong in these indifferent matters. How could any of our naive brethren consider Independent Christian Church preachers to be "strong" brethren, when they are adamant in contending for the acceptability of pianos, organs, ten-piece brass bands, etc., in Christian worship? This is faulty exegesis personified. Such is surely a deceitful handling of sacred scripture if I ever, Ever, EVER observed such!!
God's kingdom, in the second place, is peace.

This is precious peace and active good-will among all brethren, and especially between the "strong" brother and the "weak" brother in these matters of indifference. Let all, of both groups, major in peaceful pursuits, Paul enjoins. Let each be a peacemaker -- not a peacebreaker. That beautiful beatitude of Jesus says so appropriately, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5:8).

God's kingdom, in the third place, is joy. When righteousness (right-doing) and peace (good-will among brethren and serenity between the "strong" and "weak") prevail, there will be a noticeable absence of malice, frustration, grumbling, murmuring, complaining, faultfinding, etc. There will prevail joy, happiness and contentment. All these are in the Holy Spirit. He -- the divine Spirit -- produces such by the marvelous medium of the heavenly will (God's great, good, and glorious gospel) which he -- the Holy Spirit -- has revealed by the selected scribes of the New Testament, one of whom was the princely Paul.

The person who majors in these important endeavors (righteousness, peace, and joy) serves Christ; he finds ardent acceptance with God; and he also stands approved in the sight of good men everywhere. Even evil men, as a rule, respect such godly people as herein envisioned. Here was -- and is -- the solution to problems between "strong" and "weak" brethren.

In verse 19 Paul gives a twofold challenge. (1) We are enjoined by apostolic authority to pursue (seek it intently and persistently) peace. (2) We are to follow the things by which we may edify each other. To "edify" means to strengthen, to solidify, to build up. I like brother Whiteside's comments on "edify." He wrote in his par excellent commentary on Romans: "To edify is to build up -- to build up in knowledge, faith, and right living. Confusion does not edify any

one; it builds up nothing but strife and parties in the church" (p. 274). But please keep in mind Paul in the context is discussing indifferent matters. Relative to truth, when it is at stake, we are to "contend earnestly" for it (Jude 3) and not to rest till all opposition to it has been eradicated fully.

But in any matters of indifference (such as meat-eating) the "strong" brother is not to persist in such, nor insist on his rights, if (by so doing) he leads the "weak" brother down the primrose path to spiritual destruction. Paul knew that "all things are pure." By context he means that all meats are 'clean;' none are ceremonially 'unclean.' But for the "weak" brother to eat such, believing he is eating something 'unclean,' it becomes an offense to him. Such actions may lead him ultimately to do that which in reality is wrong in and of itself. Then, he is in real jeopardy of soul. The "strong" brother is forbidden, in the name of Christian charity, from becoming a willing accessory to such a destructive route of treacherous travel for the "weak" brother.

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—Acts 26:35

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Who's Watching The Children

Bud Causey

All across this great land mothers and fathers alike are throwing up their hands in despair, and asking the question: "What has happened to our kids?" or, "Where did we go wrong?" I am a firm believer in the scriptures. Proverbs 22:6 states: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." I can confidently say that our children are exactly what we have trained them to be.

An article in the U.S. News and World Report (October 27, 1986), states that working mothers spend an average of eleven minutes per day (quality time) with their children on week-days, and thirty minutes per day on the week-ends. It also stated that fathers spend an average of eight minutes per day (quality time) with their children on week-days, and fourteen minutes per day on the week-ends.

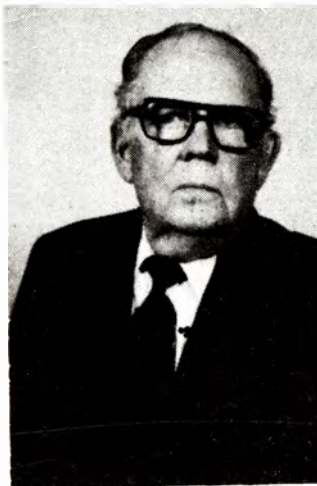
Many parents, in their striving to obtain material possessions for themselves and their children, have neglected the most important aspect of their children: their souls, and their spiritual well-being. It was stated in the above article that parents are pushing their children too hard, too fast, academically. Think for a moment about how much work could be accomplished in the Lord's church if parents would push their children in spiritual matters as much as they do in worldly matters!

Too many parents have the misconception that if their babies don't have the right type strollers, they are not good parents. They imagine that if their children don't wear clothes with certain labels, then they are not good parents. Or, if their children don't attend a certain school, they are not acceptable parents. Even citizens of the Lord's kingdom push their children to be "successful," to have the best-paying jobs, to drive certain types of

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The Folly Of Home — Made Scriptures

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Peter 4:11). "But if they" (false prophets, W.A.H.) "had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jeremiah 23:22). We suggest to our readers that the entire 23rd chapter of Jeremiah be read.



W. A. Holley

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). Hosea shows that God honors and respects his word, and those who reject God's word for "home-made scriptures" are certain to be lost.

Jesus teaches that men must know the truth (John 8:30-32), and that men are sanctified by the truth (John 17:17), when they believe and obey it (I Peter 1:22-25). God draws men and women unto him, when they hear, learn, understand, and obey the truth of God (John 6:44-45; Ephesians 3:2-3; 5:17). Thus, home-made scriptures blind men to the truth (Matthew 15:13-14; Mark 7:6-13).

God's scriptures are special: they were given by the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5). We shall note some asserted scriptures which cannot be found in the Holy Bible:

(1) "Before the end of time one cannot tell winter from summer except by the budding of the trees." Genesis 8:22 denies the foregoing quotation. Leaves appearing on trees indicate that summer is nigh (Luke 21:29-33; Matthew 24:32-33), not the end of the world.

(2) "Once in grace always in grace," is another home-made scripture. The sacred scriptures teach emphatically that it is possible for a child of God to fall from grace (Luke 8:13; I Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 5:4; II Peter 1:5-11; 2:20-22). This writer has actually had honest and sincere people who believed in "once in grace always in grace," searching diligently for such a passage; but they never found it -- it is not in the Bible.

(3) "He that believeth is saved, and may be baptized if he so desires." This statement may sound good to some people, but it is not Bible teaching. Jesus taught: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). The word "believeth" in John 3:16 is a comprehensive term which includes repentance, confession of Jesus' name, and baptism which inducts one into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

(4) Another statement which says, "One is saved by faith only, and not by any kind of works," is indeed home-made scripture. We are saved "by faith," but not "by faith only" (James 2:24; Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4). We cannot be saved by keeping the works of the law of Moses (Romans 3:20), nor by our own works of merit (Jeremiah 10:23), but we can be saved by working the works of God (John

6:28-29; Acts 10:34-35).

(5) "The church is a non-essential; one church is as good as another; hence, join the church of one's choice," is another sample of home-made scripture. This statement may represent the sentiments of many good, honest and sincere religious people; but it is not Bible!! The church is essential because Jesus died for it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23-27). Jesus built the church himself (Matthew 16:18-19; I Corinthians 3:11), and adds the saved to it (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). He will present the church/kingdom to the Father at his second coming (I Corinthians 15:24-28). What about the church of Christ's choice? Christ's church is described -- its origin, doctrine, practice, name, etc., -- in the word of God; but neither protestant denominationalism nor Catholicism can be found upon its pages. Through obedience to God's word, you should become a member of the church which Jesus built (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; Colossians 1:13-14).

(6) It is often argued that "baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace;" but the Bible knows nothing of such a statement. What is the purpose of such an assertion? It is an effort to circumvent or thwart the Lord's command of water baptism. Many denominational preachers feel compelled to somehow remove water from John 3:3-5. After these preachers have worked hard and long to eliminate "water" from John 3:3, 5, these verses still read the same. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man" (not an infant) "be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The new birth equals remission of sins or salvation or conversion. Whatever a man must do to obtain remission of sins, or salvation, or conversion to Christ, is what a man must do to be "born again," or to be "born of water and of the Spirit." A well-known axiom states: "Things that are equal to the same things are equal to each other." This axiom is taught in every accredited school in the United States, and is recognized universally.

The "baptism" mentioned in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21, cannot be Holy Spirit baptism. The baptism of these passages is water baptism because this baptism is administered by man. Read these passages closely and you will understand. Only Jesus Christ had the power to administer Holy Spirit baptism (John 1:33), and that baptism was limited to the apostles and the household of Cornelius (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44; 11:15).

(7) "There is nothing in a name." This home-made scripture represents an effort to justify denominational jargon. Personal checks, deeds, abstracts of title, et al., are all worthless without proper signature. Forgery can land one in jail. Would it have been a sin for the Pharisees to change Jesus' name to Beelzebub? (Cf. Matthew 10:25; 12:24). Disciples were called of God "Christians" in New Testament times (I Peter 4:11, 16, Acts 11:26; 26:28), not by denominational names.

—P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH WITH YOU ON SUNDAYS!

A Tribute To J. G. Pounds, Sr.

Trenton McCluskey

Garland Pounds has enjoyed a rich career of preaching the gospel. Not "rich" in the sense that he obtained great wealth in material goods. Garland Pounds enjoyed the richness of preaching in the lifetime of such giants as N. B. Hardeman, Marshall Keeble, and Gus Nichols.

Brother Pounds preached for some 50 years. He has helped to train several preachers as we began to speak publicly. A case of his

laryngitis gave the Editor of this good paper the opportunity to preach his first sermon. During his active preaching years he preached at Detroit, Carbon Hill, White's Chapel, Fayette, Brilliant, Aldridge, Parrish, Hatt, Cedar Creek, Dovertown, Deason Hill, Oakman, Tubbs, Mount Hope, -- all near Jasper, Alabama; and DeQuincy, L.A.; Adairsville, Ga.; and New Hope, Mississippi. He spoke at various meetings, and had several

debates.

Among the gems of his rich preaching career would have to be his first gospel meeting. At that time Brother Pounds was paid six dollars and one pig. Many of the fine men preaching in that age were paid in this fashion. I recall hearing of Brother Gus Nichols traveling for meetings and selling his own Bible for his train fare.

It is hard for me to think of Brother Pounds and not think of Sister Lois Pounds. Most of the Walker County area has come to know and love sister Pounds as "Ma" Pounds. Her teaching abilities are most effective and needed. She has served as a teacher of young children at Indian Creek Youth Camp since the camp's beginning. She has added a delightful phase to Brother Garland's ministry at various congregations. She makes her own charts and teaching tools. During the travels of brother Pounds, sister Pounds was often at home rearing their children. They have four sons and two daughters.

There are so very many things which could be said in recognition of their efforts. I will always love and cherish the instruction I received, as well as the encouragement, from "Ma" and "Pa" Pounds.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Romans 10:15).

Brother Garland and his sister Lois Pounds live at Rt. 2 West, Cordova, AL 35550.

Let them hear from you.

—5697 Williamsburg Trace Atlanta, Ga. 30349.

Who's Watching The Children

Continued from page 2

automobiles, live in certain kinds of houses, and so on. Fewer and fewer members of the church encourage their sons to be preachers of the gospel because "preachers are not paid enough," and "preachers are forced to move too often."

When we read or hear of a case where a child is physically or sexually abused in some way, we become extremely angry. We seek swift and severe punishment for those who are perpetrators of physical child abuse. Yet, what many parents fail to realize is that they shall stand before God and give an account of "abusing" their children in a way that is much worse than any physical abuse one could imagine -- that is SPIRITUAL abuse!

Perhaps the most prevalent form of spiritual child abuse is NEGLECT. Children must not be neglected when it comes to basic BIBLE TEACHING. Paul stated that Timothy had an "unfeigned faith" (II Timothy 1:5). The reason Timothy had an unfeigned faith is given: from a child he had been taught the holy scriptures (II Timothy 3:14-15). If children do not learn God's plan of salvation, or if children do not know about the church, it is quite simply because their parents have not taught them about it.

Children must also not be neglected when it comes to the EXAMPLES parents set before them. Timothy had not only been "taught" the scriptures, but he had seen them demonstrated in the lives of his grandmother and his mother. Timothy had seen the scriptures lived in women of two generations. What kind of faith do you suppose Timothy would have had, if his grandmother and/or mother had TAUGHT him the scriptures and then had DONE exactly the opposite? The old saying that "Actions speak louder than words" is most certainly true! How strong do you suppose Timothy's faith would have been if he had seen his grandmother or mother dressed immodestly as many women do today? or, acting in a way that does not befit holiness or purity? Many Christian mothers today are not only allowing their daughters to wear split skirts or mini-skirts, but are wearing them themselves.

Mothers (and fathers) who dress themselves immodestly, or allow their daughters to dress immodestly, should not be surprised when their daughters experiment with premarital sex, or become pregnant out of wedlock.

Children must not be neglected when it comes to DISCIPLINE. The Bible says for fathers to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). A judge in Nashville, Tennessee, stated that discipline must start in the play pen, or the child may learn it in the State Pen. Said discipline could be

a much-needed spanking, grounding, or (in some cases) just talking to that child. Any parents who do not properly discipline their children cannot say they love that child, for a child is disciplined because it is loved, and because these parents want that child to do right.

Children must be instructed to set the RIGHT PRIORITIES. I Timothy 6:10 states: "The love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." The American Standard Version says "... all kinds of evil." It is not uncommon for individuals to spend thirty-to-fifty dollars on a sporting event any given Saturday. Those same individuals will put a fraction of that amount in the collection plate on Sunday because they had spent too much the previous day. Children must be taught the proper concept of what it means to be a good and faithful steward. Children must be trained to have their priorities set on things that are spiritual, rather than on acquiring material wealth, and personal pleasures.

Many children have been spiritually neglected in regard to Bible teaching on marriage. God's plan is one man and one woman for life (Genesis 2:23-24). The only reason a person may put away his/her spouse, and marry another, is for fornication (Matthew 19:9). That children have been neglected regarding the Bible doctrine of marriage is evidenced by the fact that more and more children of God are divorcing for any cause; and more and more children of God are entering marriages that God has not given them the right to contract.

Parents desperately need to teach their children of the importance of the CHURCH. In increasing numbers, members of the church are asking: "Is the church really all that important?" Knowing that Jesus died for the church and gave his precious blood for it (Acts 20:28), how could anyone ask such a question?

When are parents and grandparents going to wake up and understand the importance of training their children in spiritual things? Parents will get very upset when their children make C's, D's, or F's on their school report card, but never raise an eyebrow when those children do not even study their Bible school lessons!

Physical child abuse hurts; but spiritual abuse of children hurts much worse than anything physical you could ever imagine! Why, you ask? Because the consequences are eternal!

—Route 2, Box 514, Henagar, AL 35978.

Understanding The Holy Spirit

The true nature and work of the Holy Spirit is little understood. Many superstitions and mysterious ideas have been mixed in the traditions of religious dogmas. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit embraces the whole Bible. We read in Genesis 1:2: "... and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In Revelation 22:17 the statement is made,



W. Edwin Kearley

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." THE BIBLE IS A PART OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK. All sixty-six books are inspired. Paul wrote to Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God. . ." (II Timothy 3:16).

Peter stated, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy

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Pope Claims Forgiveness Can't Be Obtained Directly From God

An associated press article dated Dec. 11, 1984, said, "Pope John Paul II, in a 138 page document, today attacked the idea that Roman Catholics can obtain forgiveness directly from God without going through the church . . ." This article went on to say, "The pontiff said confession was being undermined by several factors, including the obscuring of moral and religious conscience. On the other hand it is being undermined by the sometimes widespread idea that one can obtain forgiveness directly from God."



Demar Elam

Standing on the solid ground of scripture, I would like to refute the Pope's claim that Christians need go through any man on earth to obtain forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sin is obtained by the grace of God through the shed blood of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews said:

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9:12, 14, 22, 28).

Jesus stated in Matthew 26:28:

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Paul to the Colossians said:

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Colossians 1:20).

We learn from I Peter 1:18-19:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Catholics have long held the belief and doctrine that forgiveness of sins must be obtained from their local priests. So, the Pope's claim is not new. But what caused them to make such an extraordinary claim in the first place, so contrary to scripture? I think it goes back to a very false concept they have about the headship of the church. This leads them into many doctrines contrary to plain and simple scriptures.

Pope John Paul claims to be the head of the church on earth, the visible vicar of Jesus Christ. When he speaks from the throne,

ex cathedra, he claims infallibility in all his utterances concerning morals and dogma! However, the diligent student of the Bible knows that Christ is the head of the church on earth, ruling at the right hand of God in heaven. It would be difficult to misunderstand Ephesians 1:22-23 which says: "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." And Colossians 1:18 states: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

The Pope has no right to lay claim to the headship of the church that Jesus purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28). It certainly is not the Pope's church, because Jesus said: ". . . I will build my church . . ." (Matthew 16:18). Christ died to build, establish and purchase his church! In speaking of

Understanding The Holy Spirit

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Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

The judge and prophet, Samuel, recorded that King David, said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and his word was in my tongue" (I Samuel 23:2).

When we read the Bible, we read the teaching of the Holy Spirit himself. Paul taught: "But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in WORDS which man's wisdom teacheth, but WHICH THE SPIRIT TEACHETH; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (I Corinthians 2:12-13, H.V.S.).

This passage teaches plenary verbal inspiration. Therefore, the Bible is the inerrant revelation of God. To the Ephesians Paul said the reader can understand what he reads. He wrote "how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PART OF THE GODHEAD. The expression "Godhead" is found three times (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; and Colossians 2:9) in the King James Version of the Bible. Other versions translate "hupavxontes tou theou" as "divine being" or "deity."

"The Trinity" have always worked together. The three are God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. In the creation of the world, we see God the Father as the designer (Genesis 1:1; Psalms 19:1); God the Son was and is the executor of the design.

Paul stated "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, . . . all things were created by him, and for him" (Colossians 1:16). The context shows the pronouns "him" refer to the Son of God.

John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14 informs us, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. . ."

These passages show the three personages of the Godhead were cooperating. God the Holy Spirit was the finisher of the Father's design. After the creation we read, "And the earth was without form, and void; and dark-

the man of sin, the son of perdition, Paul said: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:4).

Forgiveness of sins is not found in a Priest, nor the Pope, nor the Roman Catholic church. For the Christian, forgiveness of sins is obtained by genuine repentance and praying directly to God in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness. For the alien sinner, forgiveness is found in (1) Belief (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17); (2) Repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31); (3) Confession (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32-33); and (4) Baptism (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21).

Regardless of what the pope claims, we still have the words of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

—Forest Park Church, Box 623, Atlanta, GA 30050.

ness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. . . ." (Genesis 1:26). We bear the image of all three personalities of deity.

ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE GODHEAD ARE ONE. They are eternal in nature (Psalms 90:2).

They are one in their work and testimony. One apostle wrote: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three agree in one" (I John 5:7).

Paul concluded II Corinthians with these words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, amen" (II Corinthians 13:14).

They are three separate personalities. When Jesus was baptized, all three personalities were present in three different locations. Jesus was coming up out of the water; the Spirit was descending like a dove; and God the Father was speaking from heaven acknowledging Jesus as his beloved Son (Matthew 3:16-17).

Baptism under the great commission of Jesus is to be done "in the name of" (by the authority of) all three personalities (Matthew 28:19).

The inspired Peter tells that the resurrected Son has been exalted at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit came in the baptismal manifestation (Acts 2:33).

All three are holy and divine.

We need to note the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Ghost." Holy Ghost appears only in the King James version. It was translated during an age of mysticism. The Greek word is Pneuma, and should be translated "spirit."

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON, AS MUCH SO AS IS GOD OR CHRIST. The King James version is inconsistent in referring to Holy Spirit as "it." The Holy Spirit has the same feelings as God, or Christ. Isaiah 53:10 speaks of putting the Lord to grief; and Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Paul taught, "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thessalonians 5:19).

Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit concerning his gift (Acts 5:3).

—103 Lena Bay St. Louis Miss. 39520.

(To be continued).